THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

LVII (1934)

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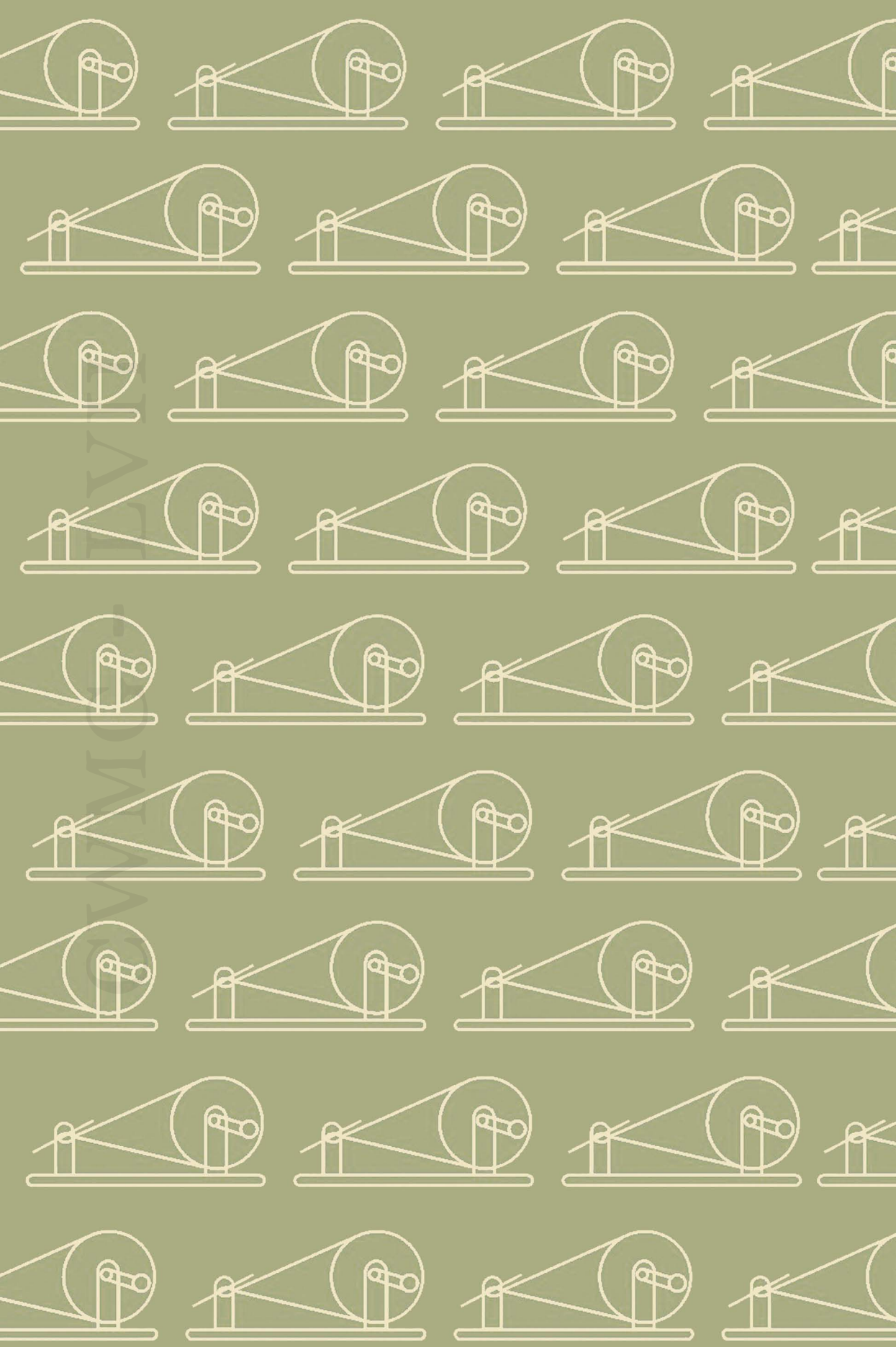
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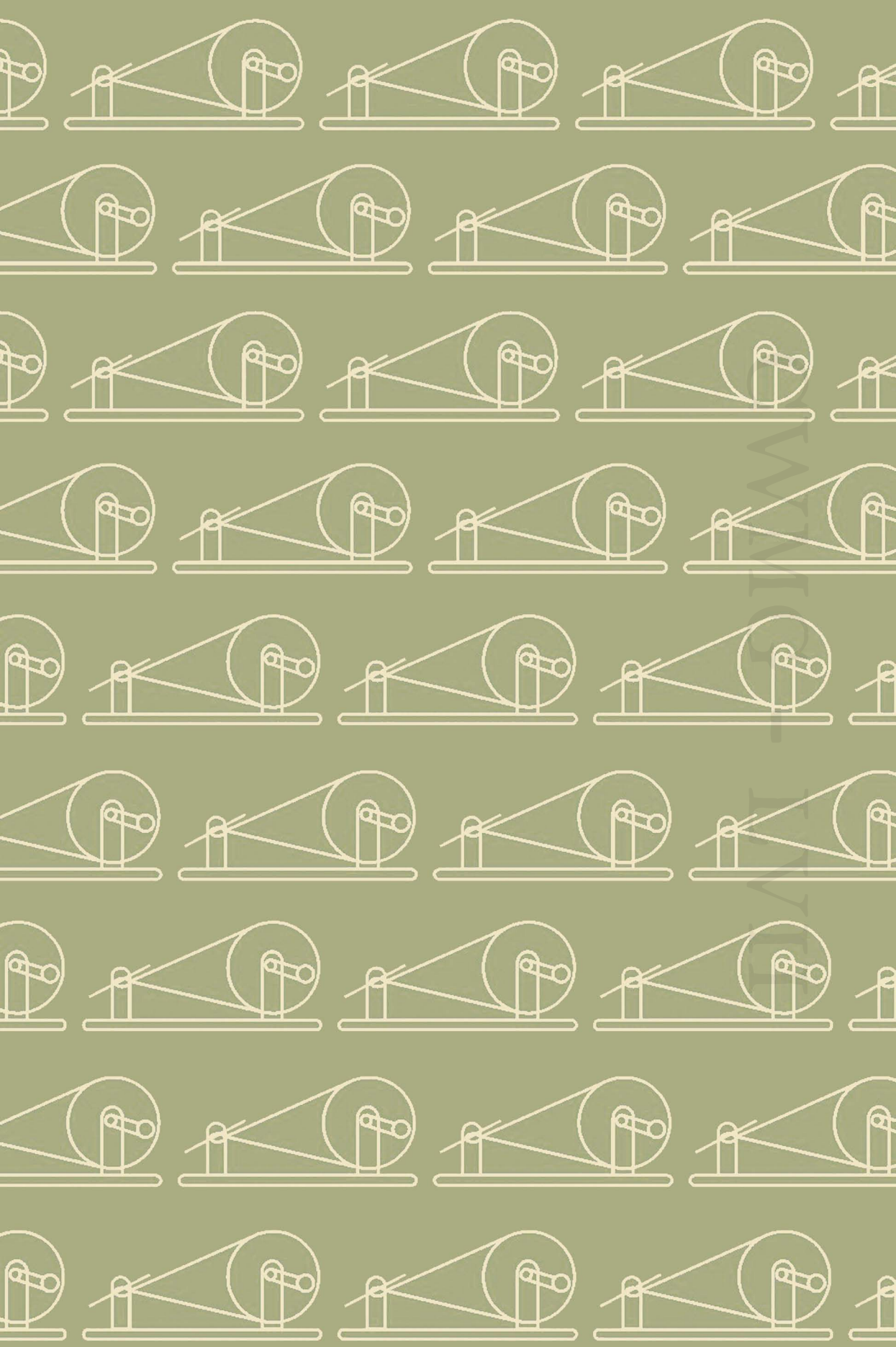
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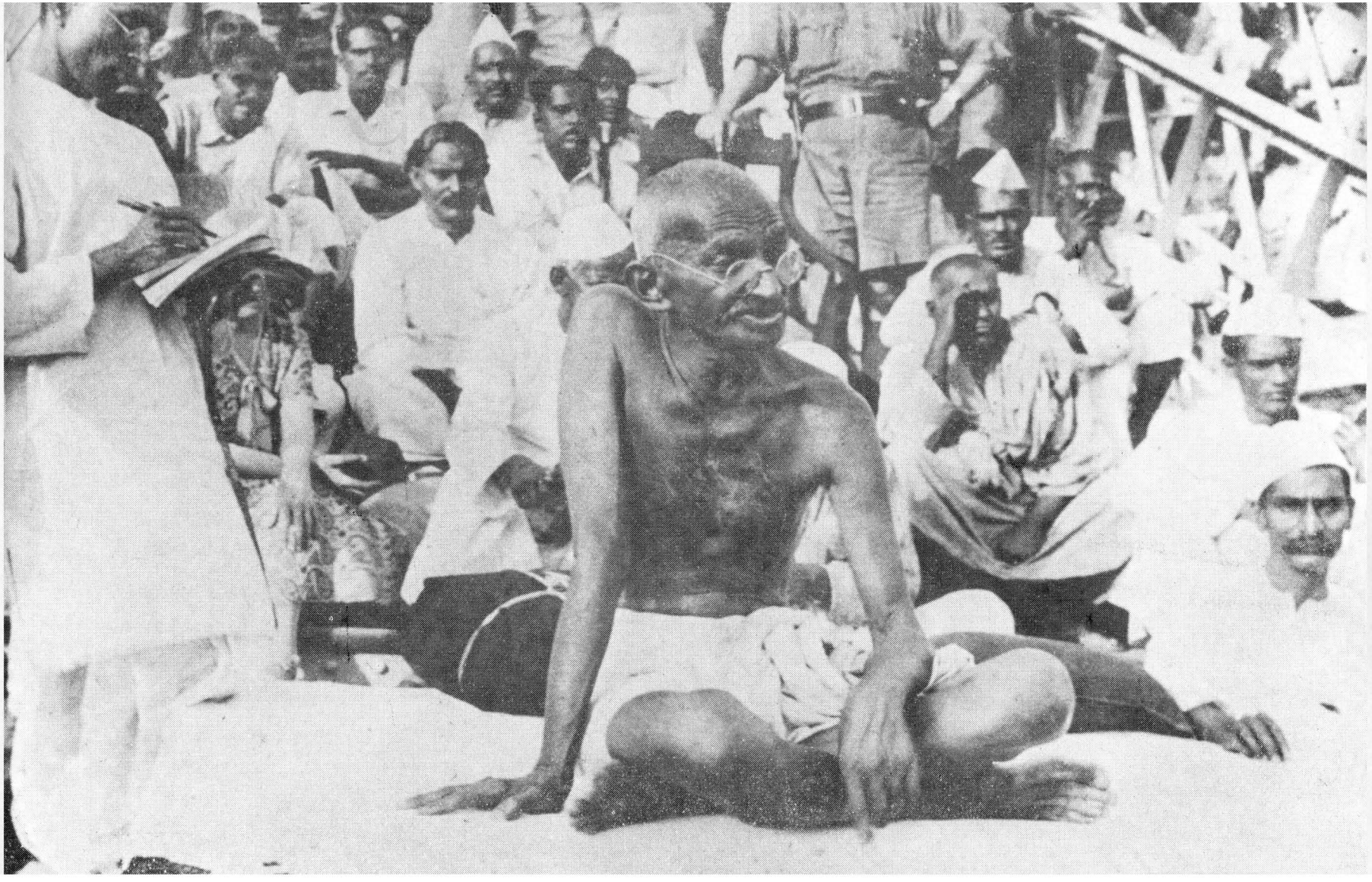
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PREFACE

During the period of four months (January 16 to May 17, 1934) covered in this volume, Gandhiji continued the tour which he had begun on November 7 of the preceding year and which had already taken him over the larger part of the Central Provinces and Andhra. The present volume covers the tour of Malabar, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Coorg, before the stricken Bihar called him.

Firmly holding to the resolve to remain politically inactive till August, when his incarceration but for his premature discharge should have ended, he bent all his untiring energy to the cause of eradication of untouchability from the face of India. Describing the movement as one of "reformation and purification of Hinduism" (p. 11), he called upon the *savarna* Hindus "to purify themselves by fraternizing with Harijans" (p. 106) and to remove those disabilities—social, moral and economic—under which they laboured. His programme was "to provide for them schools, hostels, medical aid, facilities for water—generally to do everything that would put them on a par with others" (p. 42). Although he was "a Hindu revolutionary appearing on the scene and revolutionizing Hinduism" (p. 43), he had not started the campaign against untouchability out of any narrow concern for the survival of Hinduism. Speaking at Alleppey he said: ". . . I am wholly indifferent whether Hindu religion is strengthened or weakened or perishes . . . I have so much faith in the correctness of the position I have taken up that, if my taking up that position results in weakening Hinduism, I cannot help it and I must not care" (p. 17).

At meeting after meeting, often as many as five in a day, Gandhiji carried on the campaign. And as the movement gathered momentum, an awakening could be noticed. Recruits came forward for the cause, donations to the Harijan purse swelled. In Tamil Nadu alone the collections amounted to well over a lakh of rupees (p. 189), and it began to appear as if the edifice of untouchability was already crumbling. The change in the attitude of *savarna* Hindus was "phenomenal and even beyond expectations" (p. 84). "I think", Gandhiji noted, "that the velocity with which the Hindus are responding to the call for repentance is satisfactory" (p. 339).

But in the process Gandhiji aroused the wrath of the orthodox. They challenged Gandhiji to debates with Shankaracharyas and others. They held black-flag demonstrations, staged incidents at meetings and, at places, such as Jashidih and Buxar in Bihar, even offered physical violence to Gandhiji and his entourage. Gandhiji "felt sorry and humiliated to find sanatana dharma so vulgarly and violently represented" (p. 459) and implored the guilty demonstrators "to repent of their behaviour in the sanctuary of their hearts" and to desist from such behaviour, while he advised his co-workers to "win them over by your patience, gentleness and personal purity" (p. 437).

As for public debates with the sanatanists, Gandhiji refused to be drawn into them (p. 91). But he clung to his position that untouchability, as practised, could not have the authority of the Shastras behind it. He said: "If I discovered that. . . Vedas, Upanishads, *Bhagavad Gita*, *smritis*, etc., clearly showed that they claimed divine authority for untouchability . . . then nothing on this earth would hold me to Hinduism . . . . The very thought that the *rishis* . . . could ever conceive of any such thing as untouchability . . . must be repugnant to every intelligent person. But prejudices and superstitions die hard. They cloud the reason, befog the intellect and harden the heart. And so you find learned men defending untouchability" (p. 7).

An important issue in the anti-untouchability movement was that of temple-entry. But to Gandhiji temple-entry in itself was of no consequence. The acid test was "of a change of heart on the part of the caste Hindus" (p. 189). He did not, therefore, want to force the pace here. He said: "Temple-entry is a question purely for the caste Hindus to solve. If caste Hindus say as a body that Harijans shall not enter the temples, I shall say it will be unfortunate . . . but, so long as that opinion persists, no Harijan will enter any temple" (p. 161). But such a state of affairs could not last. He said: ". . . I know that public opinion is rising fast in favour of opening temples to Harijans, and I would like you to persevere in formulating public opinion till it becomes so irresistible that, pandits and trustees of temples notwithstanding, temples will be opened to Harijans" (p. 192).

Gandhiji's views on any legislative action in this matter were equally categorical. Referring to the Temple-entry Disabilities Removal Bill, then before the Central Legislative Assembly, he wrote: ". . . I for one would not desire to see it carried by a mixed majority vote. All that I contend is that Hindus who have faith in temples have the right and owe it as a duty to enforce

their opinion . . . . And if there is a legal hindrance, . . . it can only be, and therefore should be, removed by law'' (p. 335).

On January 15 calamity struck Bihar in the shape of an earthquake of devastating intensity. As Gandhiji later described its effect, ''. . . nearly 25,000 died in the twinkling of an eye . . . . Tens of thousands of people are living homeless and clothless. . . . Palaces have been desolated, and thousands of homes are nothing but a mass of debris'' (p. 111). Gandhiji's reaction, which he first expressed at one of his meetings, was: ''You may call me superstitious if you like; but a man like me cannot but believe that this earthquake is a divine chastisement sent by God for our sins. . . . nothing but divine will can explain such a calamity'' (p.44). Elsewhere he said: ''For me there is a vital connection between the Bihar calamity and the untouchability campaign. The Bihar calamity is a sudden and accidental reminder of what we are and what God is . . .'' (pp. 45-6). At meeting after meeting he reiterated this belief, (pp. 51, 54, 60, 87, 101, 318, 351 and 392) even as he appealed for donations for the victims of the disaster. He could not say why God chose to mete out the punishment in that particular way. As he wrote in *Harijan*: ''I am not God. Therefore I have but a limited knowledge of His purpose. . . . It is an ennobling thing for me to guess that the Bihar disturbance is due to the sin of untouchability. It makes me humble, it spurs me to greater effort . . .'' (p.87).

Gandhiji's thus associating ''ethical principles with cosmic phenomena'' (p. 503) provoked strong criticism in some quarters. Rabindranath Tagore expressed his pain and surprise in a statement saying he was ''profoundly hurt'' that such words coming from Gandhiji's mouth might ''emphasize the elements of unreason'' in the minds of his countrymen—''unreason, which is a fundamental source of all the blind powers that drive us against freedom and self-respect'' (p. 504). Gandhiji was unrepentant. Answering the Poet he said: ''. . . I cannot help myself. I do believe that superphysical consequences flow from physical events. How they do so, I do not know'' (p. 95). He did not by this mean ''that we can with certainty attribute a particular calamity to a particular human action. . . . All that I mean to say is that every visitation of Nature does and should mean to us Nature's call to introspection, repentance and self-purification'' (p. 318). Answering a science student he made the same point: ''The golden rule is for each one of us to regard them as punishment for one's individual and social sins. It is pride and ignorance if one says, 'This happened because of your sins'; but it is humility, it is wisdom, if one

says, 'It happened because of my sins.' . . . My job is over if I could convince the reader that the earthquake is the result of our sins" (p. 392).

Gandhiji was in Bihar from March 12 to April 9 and then again from April 22 to May 5. Here, along with his little band of co-workers, some of them inmates of the Ashram, he toured the parts most affected. The accent in his speeches was on "the all-important question of alleviating human suffering" (p. 290). At the meeting of the Central Relief Committee he exhorted the workers to sink all differences and co-operate with all persons and institutions engaged in relief work, including the Government. "The author of non-co-operation as I am," he said, "I have recommended co-operation in the task before us without the slightest hesitation" (p. 288). Calling upon workers to forget the name of the Congress for the time being, he said: "The hungry will eat and the thirsty will drink from whatever hands they get it. Let them receive help from all. We must co-operate with Government in our work of relief" (p. 336).

But even as he was organizing the work of relief, asking for huts to be built here, wells to be dug there, he had not forgotten his great crusade against untouchability. "I would like you to remember", he said in a message to the afflicted Bihar, "that the quake of untouchability is much worse than that of Mother Earth" (p. 266). God had made no distinction in His destruction between the high and the low (p. 337), so how could they? "Nature utters its warning to us in a voice of thunder. It flashes it before our eyes in letters of flame. But seeing, we see not, and hearing, we do not understand" (p. 342).

The period is marked by two important decisions which Gandhiji announced during his sojourn in Bihar, and which created not a little commotion among political workers. These were: (1) that he, and he alone, might resort to civil resistance over questions bearing upon the struggle for freedom, and (2) that those among Congressmen who had faith in the Council-entry programme should be free to pursue that programme.

Of course Congressmen not resorting to satyagraha would not mean that the Congress was to give up the satyagraha programme. That might be suicidal. ". . . the Congress", Gandhiji said, "has no organization at all today. It is in a state of anarchy. Hence, this is the only way if the light of the Congress is to continue to shine" (p. 305). All that he advised was that those who wished to resort to satyagraha should do so, during his lifetime, only under his direction. He said: "I feel that the masses have

not received the full message of satyagraha owing to its adulteration in the process of transmission. It has become clear to me that spiritual instruments suffer in their potency when their use is taught through non-spiritual media'' (p. 349). And again: ''. . . the indifferent civil resistance of many, grand as it has been in its results, has not touched the hearts of either the 'terrorists' or the rulers as a class'' (p. 350).

The situation in the country bore out Gandhiji's words. In September the previous year a District Magistrate had been assassinated in Midnapore. The reprisals that followed had ''dazed'' Gandhiji. In a letter he wrote: ''The measures the Government have adopted to crush the spirit of the people defy description'' (p. 77). Writing to Nehru he said the same thing, adding: ''The measures appear to be worse than the Punjab measures of 1919'' (p. 30). On April 8, shots were fired at Sir John Anderson, Governor of Bengal, and the incident provoked still more severe repression by the Government. The people's acquiescence in this exercise of brute strength pained Gandhiji more than the severity of the measures themselves. ''Our cowardice'', he said in a letter to Rabindranath Tagore, ''chokes me'' (p. 29).

As for giving his approval to the Council-entry programme and the revival of the Swarajya Party, it appeared that Gandhiji could have done nothing else. There had always existed in the Congress ''a body of men who believe in Council-entry and who will do nothing else if they cannot have that programme'' (p. 388). He had noted, too, ''the paralysis of the intelligentsia'' (p. 388), and how personal aspirations and ambitions were playing their part, even though ability was limited (p. 425) and thought it better that they should have their way rather than they ''should be made sullen, discontented and utterly inactive'' (p. 338). This did not mean that Gandhiji was revising his views on the utility of the legislatures in the existing state. They remained, as he said, what they were in 1920 (p. 353). The democracy of his conception, he said, ''can be moulded outside, not inside the legislatures. . . . I want to have legislatures that will follow the wishes of the people'' (p. 396). For the present, therefore, he was only asking people to recognize the fact that ''a parliamentary party is as inevitable as a khaddar party or prohibition party'' (p. 389).

Of course what the Swarajists would have preferred was for Gandhiji to agree to the Congress giving up the programme of civil resistance altogether, or, if he insisted on offering civil resistance in his own person, for him not to do so in the name of the Congress. They did not want to disown him. All they wanted

was that he should release the Congress from it, which was "unable to bear the burden" (p. 450). But Gandhiji was firm. "I cannot suspend it in my own person," said he, "nor can the Congress. The Congress dare not suspend it, because thousands of persons have ruined themselves in this movement" (p. 451).

The volume contains the usual quota of letters, written at such free moments as Gandhiji got in the course of his tightly-scheduled and crowded engagements or very early in the morning, a good many between the hours of two and three, when, doubtless, the addressees slept! These letters contain advice, guidance or enquiry as to the problems of the persons concerned, domestic or relating to their work and on questions of public importance. He advises K. M. Munshi that astrologers "ought to be shunned" (p. 268). With regard to Vithalbhai Patel's will, over which there was dispute, Gandhiji wrote to Vallabhbhai Patel: "My own attitude is that, if Bose gets the money we shouldn't mind" (p. 356). He said the same thing also to Dahyabhai Patel (p. 358). To Vallabhbhai Patel he writes about a co-worker: "Bhansali has got his lips stitched up. He mixes flour and water and drinks the liquid with a straw. He says he got a tailor to stitch up his lips" (p. 155). He does not spare himself either. To Bhagwanji Pandya he says: "I feel ashamed of my letter. . . . It is sheer violence to write letters in such bad handwriting. . . . Some unconnected sentences . . . have crept in. . . . Your letter will have served its purpose if it makes me more alert" (p. 428).

The weekly letters to Kasturba, who was in jail, give detailed news of his movements and how, where and how occupied the various members of the family and co-workers are. She had been reluctant to go to jail and would have preferred to accompany Gandhiji on his tour to look after his needs. For Gandhiji, however, the claims of dharma took priority over those of love or personal attachment, and through these letters and the discourses on the *Gita* which follow some of them he probably wished to steady her on what he considered to be the path of duty. Summarizing the essence of religious living in one of the discourses, he says: "We should, therefore, always wish the world's good all the hours of the day whether in jail or outside, and do whatever service may fall to our lot in order to advance it" (p. 120). Gandhiji also suggests to Kasturba the practice of Ramanama as an unfailing means of spiritual support, explaining to her the meaning of the Hindu faith in the power of a holy name. "Tulsidas has said that the name Rama is more powerful than Rama himself. . . . the man called Rama who lived in the past was subject

to limitations . . . but the attributes of God signified by Ramanama have no limit'' (p. 197). He grows almost lyrical while recommending Ramanama to an audience in Gumia. Ramanama, he says, was ''familiar to the very animals and birds, the very trees and stones of Hindustan through many thousand years. . . . You must learn to repeat the blessed name of Rama with such sweetness and such devotion that the birds will pause in their singing to listen to you — the very trees will bend their leaves towards you, stirred by the divine melody of that Name'' (p. 446).

The deep attachment to Hinduism which these sentiments betoken did not affect Gandhiji's belief that all religions are true. ''Religion'', he said, ''is one tree with many branches. As branches you may say religions are many; as tree Religion is one'' (p. 17). In another speech he explained: ''God has made Nature so that we are one in many''. ''But'', he added, ''so long as there are different faiths and we belong to one faith, there are special obligations attached to that faith'' (p. 11). Gandhiji's attitude in this matter is fully illustrated in the advice he gave to a German lady, who seems to have expressed a desire to become a Hindu: ''You do not need to be a Hindu but a true Jewess. If Judaism does not satisfy you, no other faith will give you satisfaction for any length of time'' (p. 278).

The violent attempts by sanatanists at Buxar and Jashidih to obstruct Gandhiji's tour made him decide to finish the rest of it on foot. The idea of a walking tour seems to have had a strong attraction for his mind, partly because he could thereby ''demonstrate'' to the sanatanists ''that the movement is essentially religious in conception and execution'', and partly because of his faith that ''if my message comes from the heart, it will travel faster on foot than by rail or motor'' (p. 466). In a letter to Mathuradas Trikumji, Gandhiji expressed his faith in a vivid metaphor: ''Dharma does not use even a bullock-cart. He may only limp, but ever goes forward in his journey'' (p. 495). In another context he stated his ''conviction'' that no religion ''can be sustained by brute strength. . . . Religion is a mighty tree which derives all its sap from the moral height of those who profess that religion'' (p. 218).

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.

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. MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF MALABAR[1]

[*January 16, 1934*][2]

Having travelled throughout Malabar I have no doubt that the removal of untouchability entirely rests with workers. If they will prove their faith through character that is above reproach and through devotion that counts no sacrifice too great, the hearts of opponents will be melted.

The Bombay Chronicle, 20-1-1934

2. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

January 16, 1934

BA,

There is no letter from you probably because Devdas visited you. But I hope you received my letter. I have been writing every week regularly and also sending the discourses.[3] Devdas came and saw me. He arrived yesterday. Lakshmi also has come. Both are well. We shall part today. I think they will both go to Delhi after meeting Rajaji. But it is not finally decided. Devdas told me everything about you. It is rather strange that they did not permit you to get oil for massage from outside. But I was glad to learn from Devdas that you remain cheerful whether or not you get the oil or whether the food is good or bad. If the reading of the *Gita* and other sacred books did not bear even this fruit, it is the same whether one had read them or not. My discourse this time will therefore be about reading books. We read in many works that reading of holy books by itself earns merit for one. Such statements are intended to encourage us. If we take them literally, we shall benefit nothing by reading them. One should ponder deeply over what one reads. Pondering deeply means thinking how we can apply their teaching in our life. But

[1] This was given to *Mathrubhumi* for publication.

[2] Gandhiji gave this message before he left Calicut for Cochin on January 16, 1934.

[3] The first discourse appeared in the letter dated December 25, 1933; *vide* Vol. LVI, p. 398.

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today I have been having a large number of visitors and so I don't write more. We are in Calicut today. I am sure you remember Shyamjibhai. Vali is doing some public work. Narmada, too, is engaged in the same work. We shall be leaving Calicut this evening. Urmila Devi is here. They all inquire after you.

Blessings to all from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Bane Patro, p. 9

3. LETTER TO MANIBEHN N. PARIKH

January 16, 1934

CHI. MANI[1],

Give me detailed news about yourself. How did you spend your time, what did you read and what did you think about? Write about the children, too, and tell me whatever you wish to.

Everybody may do as he or she wishes. There is no time to write more.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5975. Also C.W. 3292. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

4. LETTER TO GOVINDDAS

January 17, 1934

BHAI GOVINDDAS,

I have your letter. I was delighted. I too wish to meet you. The itinerary is enclosed. The dates for U.P. are not fixed. Utkal is followed by Bengal, Assam and Bihar.

God sustains me.

I trust you are keeping well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 9709. Courtesy: Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi

[1] Wife of Narahari Parikh

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5. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TRICHUR

January 17, 1934

FRIENDS,

It gives me very great pleasure to renew my acquaintance with you after so many years. But that pleasure is not unmixed with pain because of the fact that in an enlightened State like Cochin untouchability is still flourishing. It was perhaps whilst I was driving through the streets of Trichur this morning, to speak a few words to you, that I saw a Nayadi in flesh and blood. He was shivering with fear. It was a sign of humiliation for you, for me and for all Hindus. It is high time that you wipe out that shame. It is also a shame for us that there should be even at this stage men—I don't know anything about women—defending untouchability, unapproachability and invisibility in the name of religion. I venture to suggest to you that throughout the civilized world such a sin cannot possibly be hinted at in the name of religion.

His Highness the Maharaja by himself cannot possibly change your hearts, and I would be wholly wrong were I to go away with the belief that untouchability could be removed by a stroke of the pen. Nor can this change be brought about by any sort of compulsion. Therefore I would say to our sanatanists, or rather those who call themselves 'sanatanists', that they need not fear the propaganda that I am carrying on. I have to appeal to your reason and to your hearts and urge you to do your best. The Hindus claim to be essentially a nation of toleration. And if there is such a thing as untouchability in Hinduism, it will become a religion of intolerance.

I therefore respectfully put to those who are today intending to do this propaganda against untouchability to wipe out this blot on Hinduism. I have received several letters on this matter and most of the pricking letters that I have received on this problem are from Travancore and Cochin.

One word to reformers. If we have sense of our own conviction, if we only understand the sanatanists, we should tolerate what our brethren may say of us. After all it will depend upon the character of the reformers as to what is to be the nature of the

reform that they are making. The goal of this campaign against untouchability depends on the purity of the reformers in this campaign. If they stick to their present character and ceaselessly endeavour in their task, then this monster of untouchability will be wiped out. But patience is required on the part of the reformers. Surely, they must not lose faith though there is no support from the surroundings.

One word to Hindi friends. I really expected that there would be so much atmosphere in Malabar about Hindi and so many Hindi scholars, that it would be easy for me to speak in Hindi altogether. I was astonished, however, to find that there was no translator who would translate my Hindi speech, and there was so much disinclination on the part of the audience to allow a Hindi speech. May I suggest to you that this disinclination also bars our way to progress in the campaign against untouchability? I shall simply put it in one sentence. There must be exchange of workers between North and South. Though we have an inexhaustible supply of workers amongst the Hindi speaking people, if workers from the North cannot possibly come here and explain, it becomes an impossible barrier. You may retort, 'what about you when you go to the North? Why should not they understand our speech?' If you will think a little deeper, you will realize that it is an impossible demand. Among Malayalam, Telugu, Canarese, Tamil, what speech should the Northerner adopt? I am myself a lover of all Indian languages. And I have attempted at the age of sixty-five to learn all these languages. I have become a special lover of Southern languages. But my intimate knowledge of this state of affairs demands that, if we are to work for such reform as [eradication of] untouchability, a common knowledge of Hindi is absolutely indispensable, because it is a language spoken by twenty crores out of thirty crores of people, and since we call ourselves Indians we can expect the thirty crores to try to understand the speech of twenty crores of people.

The Hindu, 19-1-1934

6. SPEECH AT KURUKKANCHERI[1]

January 17, 1934

It is a matter of exceedingly great pleasure for me to renew your acquaintance. The names Ezhavas and Thiyyas are not new to me at all, nor is the name of Shri Narayana Guru new to me. I had the honour of meeting him and having long discussions with him while he was on this earth. It was at that time I came in close contact with many Ezhavas and Thiyyas. I met the leaders and had many friendly discussions with them. I have very pleasant recollections of the affection I received from them without exception. Since then constant correspondence has been kept up between them and myself. Whilst some have differed from the view I have expressed, their affection has not suffered in any way. I treasure that affection. Therefore I am glad that I am once more in your midst.

I have carefully read the whole of your address. All the remarks that you have made about the institution of caste, as you have interpreted it, have my fullest sympathy. But you know from your experience that the vast majority of questions in this world have at least two sides. They appear differently and bear different meanings also. Caste, in so far as it is based on untouchability, is an institution of the devil, and we must get rid of it at any cost. But I have explained repeatedly that caste expressed as varnadharma is an eternal law which we may not break except at our own risk. There are many laws of Nature, which are still hidden from us. That does not mean that they are not in existence or that they do not operate in our lives. The law of varna was discovered by our ancestors ages ago; and, as I have understood and interpreted it, it has appeared to me a wholly beneficent law. But like many laws and institutions of Nature this law of varna has been distorted, and we see it today in its hideous form. Man—Hindu man—has disfigured it and made it doubly hideous by tainting it with untouchability. Varnadharma is an economic law. It is my certain conviction that, if the whole world followed that law, the strife that we see around us

[1] This was in reply to the address of welcome by Thiyya Harijans. A report of the speech was also published in *The Hindu*, 19-1-1934.

would cease at once. It is pre-eminently a law of concord, never of discord.

But I have not come here to give you a dissertation on the law of the varna. I simply want to say that I am in full agreement with you in your fight against untouchability. I entirely endorse your remarks that it has corrupted not Hindu society alone, but has affected other societies also. The assumption of superiority of one class over another is a poison slowly killing us. When Narayana Guru Swami enunciated his formula of one caste, one religion and one God, he had, in my opinion, no other meaning in his mind. He said, 'I will not tolerate this assumption of superiority on the part of anybody.' I do not recall in my many discussions with him that he had anything to say against the beneficent interpretation of varnadharma that I have given.

Let us not, therefore, destroy the tree for its bad or poisonous branches. If you know anything whatsoever of gardening, you know that a gardener who finds diseased branches prunes them. He deals with the whole tree if he finds the tree rotten at the root. He will be considered a foolish gardener deserving summary dismissal who, because he sees some diseased branches, lays the axe at the root. In our society let us act as wise gardeners. Let us understand the disease that is corroding Hinduism. Let us get rid of untouchability or, in other words, of the evil of superiority and inferiority. Let us first get rid of this evil and purify our hearts. And when we shall have successfully done so, we shall be able to pronounce opinion on the working of the law of varna as I have explained it. Today we know it chiefly as a species of untouchability. Lastly, it is my conviction, and I want you to be infected with that conviction, that untouchability as I have described it to you is fast going. And if you are fired by that conviction, I want you to put forth your best effort to exorcize that devil.

Harijan, 9-2-1934

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7. SPEECH AT UNION CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, ALWAYE

January 17, 1934

It is a matter of great pleasure to me to renew acquaintance with the students and professors of this college. I have very pleasant recollections of my meeting with the students that were in the college at the time of my first visit. It was good of you to think of me while I was passing through this part of the country.

My message is exceedingly simple. It is no new truth that has dawned upon me today. I have to the best of my ability striven to live up to it for the past fifty years. And the more I have succeeded in living up to it, the greater has been my inward joy. Nor is it for the first time that I am delivering this message to India. But because of some incidents in the recent past, it comes to the people as a new thing. My message is simply this that *savarna* Hindus, who have been considering themselves superior to those whom they have called untouchables, unapproachables, invisibles or *avarna* Hindus, should realize that this arrogation of superiority has no sanction whatsoever in the Shastras. If I discovered that those scriptures, which are known as Vedas, Upanishads, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Smritis*, etc., clearly showed that they claimed divine authority for untouchability as I have described it to you, then nothing on this earth would hold me to Hinduism. I should throw it overboard as I should throw overboard a rotten apple. My reason is offended and my heart is wounded at the very thought that God Himself, who has created both *savarna* Hindus and *avarna* Hindus, should impose this bar sinister between His children. The very thought that the *rishis*, who gave the Vedas and the Upanishads and who in every *mantra* that they pronounced taught the unity of God, could ever conceive of any such thing as untouchability as it is practised today in Hinduism must be repugnant to every intelligent person. But prejudices and superstitions die hard. They cloud the reason, befog the intellect and harden the heart. And so you find learned men defending this untouchability.

But you, students, should know that behind this message there lurks also a much greater message. This monster of untouchability has invaded every form of society in India; and the

idea behind this message is that there should be not only no untouchability as between Hindus and Hindus, but that there should be no untouchability whatsoever between Hindus, Christians, Mussalmans, Parsis and the rest. I am convinced that, if this great change of heart can be brought about among millions of *savarna* Hindus and their hearts can be purified—as certainly they will be purified—we should live in India as people trusting each other and without any mutual distrust or suspicion. It is untouchability with all its subtle forms that separates us from one another and makes life itself unlovely and difficult to live.

You can now, therefore, understand why I am drawing upon the sympathy of all Indians, to whatever faith they may belong. Indeed I have not hesitated to ask the support of the whole world, not by way of pecuniary offering but by their sympathy, their prayers and their study of the question with all its implications. I want their heart sympathy, which is infinitely greater than any pecuniary offering. I do not stretch out my hand before them for money because they are not debtors to Harijans. It is for *savarna* Hindus to discharge this debt.

To conclude, this prayerful support and sympathy can only be given by non-Hindus, if they have no distrust of this movement and if they are satisfied that this is a movement of inward purification and deeply religious. Remember that I have not idly given this message which has come straight from the heart. I have gladly taken your purse which is a spontaneous offering from you. But I have accepted it as a bond between you and myself and as a token of your determination to give me the fullest support you are capable of giving. And since I am a good accountant, I shall ask an account from you and shall want to know from time to time what part you have played in this movement.

Harijan, 26-1-1934

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8. LETTER TO HARIJAN WORKERS OF KUPPAM[1]

[Before *January 18, 1934*][2]

DEAR FRIENDS,

It is altogether wrong and reprehensible for people to threaten to fast if I do not go to a particular place. You can easily see that if many people issued such threats they can make it impossible for me to go anywhere. I hope, therefore, that you will apologize and withdraw your threat.

The Hindu, 18-1-1934

9. MAY THE OLD MAN LIVE FOR A HUNDRED YEARS[3]

[*January 18, 1934*][4]

You would add to the glory of Gujarat and its people by celebrating the eighty-first birthday of Abbas Saheb. No one can compete with Abbas Saheb in zeal, self-sacrifice and generosity. I came in contact with him during the inquiry regarding the Punjab Martial Law. Knowing that he belonged to the Tyabji family and had been a Congress worker for a long time, I suggested his name for the Committee. Though a staunch Mussalman, he can live with a staunch Hindu like his own blood-brother. Among such Hindus I am as one of his family. His secrets are not unknown to me. Everyone in his family contributes to the national service according to his or her capacity. May the old man live for a hundred years!

[From Gujarati]

Gujarati, 28-1-1934

[1] Sundarraya Iyengar and other Harijan workers in a letter had informed Gandhiji of Iyengar's intention to go on a fast from February 8, in case Gandhiji did not visit Kuppam during his forthcoming visit to Tiruppattur.

[2] The newspaper report is dated January 18.

[3] The message also appeared in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 25-1-1934.

[4] The date is from Chandulal Dalal's *Gandhijini Dinvari*.

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10. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

January 18, 1934

PS.

I was forgetting one thing completely. I cannot give the right decision on the question of closing of the Prakashan Mandir. The matter was discussed in my presence. I had expressed the view that, if some people took up the task of propagating Gandhi literature, we could leave it to them and let those who wished to court arrest do so. We do not wish to stop anyone from courting arrest so that we can carry on the work of publication. But the converse of this also may be worth considering. We can decide about that only after taking into account all the relevant factors. I cannot judge about them from this distance. You should, therefore, pay no attention to my opinion but do what all of you think is best. If there are strong differences of opinion among you, send me the views of all together with their reasons. I shall then be able to give the final decision. There is no need to do anything in a hurry. But I have no doubt about one thing. No one should give up his responsibility and court arrest. The view which Mahadev has expressed from jail could not be different from what it is. It should, therefore, be ignored and everybody should think for himself or herself. Mahadev may not have the necessary data to enable him to form the right view.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9934. Also C.W. 6909. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

11. SPEECH AT PALLURUTHY[1]

January 18, 1934

I am thankful to the organizers for having taken me through the school building and the temple. I am thankful also for the frankness with which your opinion is expressed in this address.

[1] This was in reply to the address presented on behalf of Shri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam. The speech was also reported in brief in *The Hindu*, 20-1-1934.

CWMG-LVII

I am glad that this address is really more in the nature of advice to me than anything else. The best way to reciprocate is to tell you frankly what views I hold. You have advised me not to conduct this campaign in the name of Hindu religion. I am very sorry I cannot endorse your advice. It is wholly wrong to say or even think that this movement is conducted in order to consolidate Hindu religion or consolidate anything. If I commit sin and want to do penance, I do it not to consolidate myself but to purify myself. For me, this untouchability is a sin that Hinduism commits against the untouchables. It becomes and remains a sin inasmuch as the *savarna* Hindus consider the untouchables, whom I now call Harijans, as untouchable Hindus. Therefore I can only call this a movement of reformation and purification in Hinduism. I become a debtor only to those who call themselves Hindus. I do not become a debtor to those who have nothing to do with Hinduism. You just now took me to the temple and there showed me everything including the worship that is done according to the Hindu traditions. If your form of worship is the same as mine, my heart naturally goes out to you. But if you say you are no longer Hindus and you have adopted some other faith, my obligation to you as Hindus ceases. My obligation to you as fellow-beings, of course, does not cease.

There is that fine and necessary distinction which you cannot get over. God has made Nature so that we are one in many. There are different faiths in this world. I believe them all to be true. But so long as there are different faiths and we belong to one faith, there are special obligations attached to that faith. That does not mean that I would not work for Mussalman fellow-men or Christian fellow-men or Parsis or Jews or any other. But I can realize unity with no one if I loose my foot from the platform on which I am standing. I believe in God much more than I believe in the fact that you and I are alive and that I am speaking to you. I may give you an illustration of what I mean. In appearance, I am speaking to you and you are listening to me. In reality, your hearts and minds may be somewhere else. My heart also may be somewhere else and my mind may be in something else. Then my speaking or your listening would be a deception. Therefore my speaking and your listening, though they are an appearance, may not be a reality. But my heart, word and deed are pledged to the Being called God, Allah, Rama or Krishna. You will now easily recognize that it is true when I say that my belief in God is far more a reality to me than this meeting which I am addressing.

But I must not take you into deeper waters. The sum and substance of what I say is this. If I appear to you as a Hindu, I do so in order to discharge an obligation I owe to you. I am supposed to have been born in a *savarna* family. As a *savarna* Hindu, when I see that there are some Hindus called *avarnas*, it offends my sense of justice and truth, and it cuts me to the quick. It is an abhorrent thought to me that in the faith in which I was born and nurtured there should be a single human being considered lower than myself. Therefore I have become an untouchable by choice, and if I discover that Hindu Shastras really countenance untouchability as it is seen today, I will renounce and denounce Hinduism. As a student of Hindu religion and of comparative religions, I see no such warrant in Hindu Shastras. But Hindus today practise untouchability. Therefore it becomes my duty to warn them against that evil. If, however, you embrace any other faith, or have no faith whatsoever, I can have no appeal for you. You cease to be untouchable Hindus. If you want to cut adrift from Hinduism, you are absolutely free to do so. I cannot hold you to Hinduism by force. I can only hold you by the force of love. I may so endear myself to you by my service that you may feel that, although you have been classed as untouchables by certain Hindus, there is no untouchability in Hinduism. It may be in God's dispensation that I have come to you too late. But God will not punish me for that, because He knows that for the last fifty years I have rebelled against untouchability. Now, I think, you fairly understand what I stand for. The movement is not anti-Mussalman, anti-Christian or anti-Jew. It is anti-humbug. That is what I stand for.

A concluding remark as to the use of the word 'Harijan'. It is not a word of my coinage. It was suggested by an untouchable. Untouchability is a hateful and detestable thing; but, so long as one has to talk of those who are considered today untouchables, it is surely better to use an unoffending name than an offending one. I give you an illustration from life. In South Africa, Indians were not called Indians but coolies. I was called not an Indian lawyer but a coolie lawyer. To the Whites, the words coolie and Indian were synonymous. I protested against the word coolie, just as this untouchable brother protested against the word untouchable, and I suggested that the word Indians should be used to designate the inhabitants of India. So long as men were known by their countries, some name was necessary to signify the inhabitants of India. 'Indians' was an unoffending designation. Precisely in the same manner the word 'Harijan' is used.

Lastly, let me in all humility tell you that I have not come to help those who feel their strength. I know that no word of offence which you use against the *savarna* Hindus will be too strong. I know also that, if your resentment expresses itself in acts, *savarna* Hindus will deserve those acts. But I know infinitely more than you do what Harijans are, where they live, what their number is and to what condition they have been reduced. You can speak of this place, possibly of the whole of Cochin, possibly of Cochin and Travancore, still more possibly of Malabar. But I claim to be able to speak of Harijans from the North to the South, the East and the West of India, and I know their abject position. My only business is, if it is at all possible, to lift those who are in the mire. I want to do it because I want to lift myself. With their abjectness I feel myself also abject. I know that, if Hindus were freed from the coil of untouchability, you would find that all the corroding distinctions, not between Hindus and Hindus only, but also between Hindus and non-Hindus, will disappear as if by a magic touch. I have delivered during the brief period at my disposal the whole of my message. The choice is entirely yours. You may accept this reparation or it is perfectly open to you to reject it.

If you still fail to understand me, I can only pray in the lines of a celebrated English hymn:

> We shall know each other better
> When the mists have rolled away.

Harijan, 2-2-1934

12. SPEECH AT THURAVUR[1]

January 18, 1934

In the course of his reply, he asked the audience if they knew anything about the story of the purse presented to him then. The real collection, he said, was Rs. 420, out of which a sum of Rs. 195 was reported to him to be expenses for the reception. The purse was only the balance of the collection. That meant that nearly 50 per cent of the collection was devoted to expenses in feeding him and entertaining him otherwise. Neither they nor he could justify those expenses. The Reception Committee should have spent the amount they collected as a miser. They should render to him an account of their expenses. Till recently, he was not able to go through the accounts of

[1] This was in reply to addresses of welcome and a purse of Rs. 225.

each of the districts on account of great pressure of work he was in. But immediately he got the time, he began to enquire. He had received a rough account of the expenses of this place. They collected Rs. 420 and spent Rs. 159 out of it for his reception. At this rate, he would have to tour with his food in his pocket as had been his wont some time ago. The cost of that pandal came up to Rs. 80. Of course, a portion of that amount could be realized by the sale proceeds of the pandal after the function was over. The pandal was an avoidable item. There was no justification whatever to spend a single pie from the Harijan purse for the pandal and other reception luxuries. Another item was Rs. 25 spent for volunteers. Another item was Rs. 20 spent on printing. The last two items of expenditure were Rs. 35 for conveyance and Rs. 35 for miscellaneous. The last item was the last straw to break the camel's back. It may be that all these amounts were spent legitimately. He meant no reflection at all on the integrity of the workers, but it reflected indeed on the want of forethought or want of consideration for the cause on their part. They had not thought of the religious nature of the programme, they had not thought of the reparation to be made to the Harijans. Reparation meant reparation and nothing else. The *savarna* Hindus should consider themselves as the debtors of the Harijans; those who did not feel as debtors should be deemed to be not in sympathy with the cause. He did not wish to receive anything from those who had no sympathy for this cause.

The Hindu, 21-1-1934

13. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, ERNAKULAM

January 18, 1934

Mahatmaji, replying to the address[1], said that he saw the destruction of Hindu religion and Hindu dharma in the custom of untouchability. The Hindus brought into being the untouchable Harijans and later proclaimed they were created by God. The Shastras did not sanction caste or untouchability which was the root cause of all the evils the country was subject to. He did not want to fight with the Christians or Muslims for greater rights for the Hindus. It was a movement of self-purification for the Hindus. Cochin could be converted to a *punyakshetra*. They had the seashore on one side and the *rishis* had proclaimed such tracts to be holy. *Suryanarayan* was shedding his radiance from above, and that was the best time for them to take a vow that they would consider no one inferior to them. He felt deeply grieved that in such States like Cochin and Travancore ruled by far-seeing, enlightened and benevolent Hindu rulers, whose ideals and simplicity of life were remarkable, untouchability should have found a place. It was not the duty

[1] Presented by the Municipality

of rulers alone to get rid of the evil. As long as they had in their hearts the thought of untouchability, the rulers were helpless. He did not care very much for their addresses and presents. What was required was their whole-hearted co-operation in the removal of the curse of untouchability.

The Hindu, 20-1-1934

14. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, ALLEPPEY[1]

January 18, 1934

In the course of his reply, Gandhiji thanked the temple authorities for placing the temple premises at the disposal of the Reception Committee and he was thankful that the temple premises being in the possession of the Thiyyas or the Ezhavas of the locality, there was no trouble on that score. Then about the preference of a reply in English, Gandhiji opined that the Alleppey public was not singular in the choice of that language. He added:

You want to examine me and know how well or ill I speak in English. I do not pretend to be a scholar of the English language. In spite of my great love for the English tongue and English people, I have failed to master that language up to now. I commit mistakes in spelling the English words and my English idioms have often been inaccurate, the English words I use are not always appropriate. How can I do otherwise? I learnt the English language not to become a scholar but to convey my thoughts. I consider myself to be a practical man and use the English language as occasion arises to serve my purpose. If I speak in Hindustani, the audience will appreciate my speeches more. Anyhow, often I yield to the wishes of the English-educated people since I want them to work for me. If I were to take a referendum to know the mind of the audience, I know they would record a thumping majority for the Hindi language. Hundreds of words are common to Malayalam and Hindi. I follow my Malayalam translators rather closely and correct them, if they committed mistakes. Even today, I had to do this correction business more than twice, because the translator did not get at the spirit of my speeches. One point I have to bring home to you, i.e., please pick up at least an elementary knowledge of the Hindi language so that you may be enabled to get into

[1] The meeting, according to *The Hindu* which also published a brief report, was held at the Kidangamparambu Maidan. Addresses of welcome on behalf of the public of Alleppey, Hindi Premi Mandal and Kudumbi Association were presented to Gandhiji. Gandhiji began the speech in Hindi but had to switch over to English on public demand.

the hearts of the twenty crores of your brethren in India. Maybe, it is not a substitute for either English or Malayalam. Malayalam is your mother tongue. It is a sin not to know it and not to know it well. Only, if you have an all-India heart or an all-India will, Hindi could be learnt. English helps us to become internationalists for that is the language of the international commerce of the day. Each is good in its own place and will serve its purpose accordingly. May I illustrate this point? Malayalam in the Punjab is useless, so is English for a Punjabi farmer. But if you speak to the Punjabi in Hindi, e.g., *Salamalikum*', he will smile at you and he will say, 'I know him'.[1]

Instead of dealing with the several addresses presented here, I deal with the addresses or letters not presented here but showered on me from outside this audience. I hold two letters in my hand. One is a printed letter written from Shertalai, the other, a typewritten one, from Alleppey. Now this is how the printed letter starts : "We beg to state that your present attempt to strengthen the Hindu religion by removing the evil of untouchability will end in utter failure." Then follows the advice after this introduction. The second letter has this: "You are well aware of the fact that the greatest obstacle in the way of the creation of a united Indian nation is religion." I am not a stranger to this kind of advice. I had had letters from Travancore and Cochin even when I was in Poona, ailing. They were all nicely and courteously worded, but strong in their emphasis on their belief that religion was the greatest obstacle in the way of the country's progress. Ever since I have set foot on the Cochin-Travancore soil, I have been flooded with communications of this sort. I cannot possibly disregard all these letters. I know that for this belief, which is evidently growing upon some young men in Cochin and Travancore, the *savarna* Hindus are primarily responsible. They have dignified irreligion in the name of religion. They have defended sin as if it was virtue with divine sanction. These young men have felt, in their impatience, that, if religion is as *savarna* Hindus describe it to be and practise it, religion is an evil. Having become impatient and angered, they have not stopped to think out the question and have condemned religion wholesale. If I have real religion in me, I have got to be patient and gentle to these brethren of mine. I have reasoned with them by correspondence, and reasoned with them today at Palluruthy.[2]

[1] This has been taken from the report published in *The Hindu*, 21-1-1934.
[2] *Vide* "Speech at Palluruthy", pp. 10-3.

I must tell these friends that my present attempt has nothing to do with the strengthening of Hinduism. I ask you to take me at my word when I say that I am wholly indifferent whether Hindu religion is strengthened or weakened or perishes; that is to say, I have so much faith in the correctness of the position I have taken up that, if my taking up that position results in weakening Hinduism, I cannot help it and I must not care. I tell you what I want to do with Hindu religion. I want to purify it of the sin of untouchability. I want to exorcize the devil of untouchability which has today distorted and disfigured Hinduism out of all recognition. I know that, if this evil can be removed root and branch, those very friends who say religion is the greatest obstacle to the progress of India will immediately change their minds. But if it is any consolation to these friends, I tell them that, if I came to the conclusion that Hinduism sanctioned untouchability, I should denounce it. But even then I would not go so far with them as to say that religion itself is useless and that God is not God but devil. For me the result will be that I shall lose faith in Hindus and Hinduism, but my faith in God will be strengthened. And I want to tell you why it will be strengthened. Faith is not a delicate flower which would wither under the slightest stormy weather. Faith is like the Himalaya mountains which cannot possibly change. No storm can possibly remove the Himalaya mountains from their foundations. I am daily praying for strength from God to be able to say to God, when Hindus disappoint me, 'Although Thy own creation has disappointed me, I still cling to Thee as a babe clings to the mother's breast.' And I want every one of you to cultivate that faith in God and religion. It is my conviction that all the great faiths of the world are true, are God-ordained and that they serve the purpose of God and of those who have been brought up in those surroundings and those faiths. I do not believe that the time will ever come when we shall be able to say there is only one religion in the world. In a sense, even today there is one fundamental religion in the world. But there is no such thing as a straight line in Nature. Religion is one tree with many branches. As branches you may say religions are many; as tree Religion is one.

What is at the bottom of this movement for purification in Hinduism? It is not designed as a movement hostile to any religion. It is designed to bring all faiths nearer together. Do you for one moment suppose that, if *savarna* Hindus make reparation in the terms that I have suggested and if they forget the distinctions of high and low, they will forget those distinctions only in regard

to Harijans and not in regard to others? Today this poison of untouchability has overtaken the whole of Indian society. Harijans are not the only untouchables. They are on the extreme fringe. But all Hindus are untouchables to themselves, and all Hindus to non-Hindus. Non-Hindus have noted this fact; and I suggest to you that our differences and quarrels today have their main root in this canker of untouchability. I ask you to believe me implicitly when I say that, if untouchability is removed, it must result in bringing all Indians together and, if I may say in all humility, all humanity nearer. It is not a small movement, but a big movement fraught with great consequences. Can you imagine that, if it were otherwise, as a wise man, which I consider myself to be, I would ceaselessly wander from place to place in the evening of my life to deliver a message which has the consequence of strengthening Hindus for fighting against Mussalmans, Christians, Jews and Parsis, among whom I have friends as dear as blood-brothers? I have that implicit faith in my mission that, if it succeeds—as it will succeed, it is bound to succeed—history will record it as a movement designed to knit all people in the world together, not as hostile to one another but as parts of one whole.

I think I have given sufficient answer to those who have sent me these letters.

Harijan, 26-1-1934, and *The Hindu*, 21-1-1934

15. KAUMUDI'S RENUNCIATION

It has been my privilege to witness many touching and soul-stirring scenes during a busy life packed with a variety of rich experiences. But at the moment of writing this, I cannot recall a scene more touching than that of the Harijan cause. I had just finished my speech at Badagara. In it I had made a reasoned appeal to the women present for jewellery. I had finished speaking and was selling the presents received when gently walked up to the platform Kaumudi, a girl 16 years old. She took out one bangle and asked me if I would give my autograph. I was preparing to give it, when off came the other bangle. She had only one on each hand. I said, "You need not give me both, I shall give you the autograph for one bangle only." She replied by taking off her golden necklace. This was no easy performance. It had to be disengaged from her long plait of hair. But the Malabar girl that she is, she had no false modesty

about performing the whole process before a wondering public counting several thousands of men and women. "But have you the permission of your parents?" I asked. There was no answer. She had not yet completed her renunciation. Her hands automatically went to her ears and out came her jewelled ear-rings amid the ringing cheers of the public, whose expression of joy was no longer to be suppressed. I asked her again whether she had her parents' consent to the sacrifice. Before I could extract any answer from the shy girl, someone told me that her father was present at the meeting, that he was himself helping me by bidding for the addresses I was auctioning and that he was as generous as his daughter in giving to worthy causes. I reminded Kaumudi that she was not to have the ornaments replaced. She resolutely assented to the condition. As I handed her the autograph, I could not help prefacing it with the remark, "Your renunciation is a truer ornament than the jewellery you have discarded." May her renunciation prove to have been an earnest of her being a true Harijan *sevika*.

Harijan, 19-1-1934

16. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

January 19, 1934

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

You do not receive my letters at all. What does that mean? I wrote three letters to you which you have not acknowledged. I have written to Jayaprakash also. I shall now be going there in a short time. We shall meet then. I am well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3441

CWMG-LVII

17. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KOTTAYAM[1]

January 19, 1934

Gandhiji, in the course of his reply, said that the organizers should produce a certificate from the Harijans before he could believe whatever they had stated in the address. The address attempted to show that the Harijans were perfectly all right. But the case of Harijans was not really so. He warned the *savarnas* against entertaining any false belief. Things were not as rosy as had been depicted. He had received bitter complaints from the Ezhavas and Thiyyas. Some of them wanted to destroy God from their and others' religion. He did not blame them for entertaining such a misconception. Gandhiji emphasized the need for the economic uplift of the Harijans and pointed out that temple-entry would not solve their problems. Economic uplift alone would make the Harijans conscious of their degraded position. He expressed his belief that the address was not a true expression of the feeling of the public that had assembled.

Continuing, Gandhiji said that the campaigning against untouchability was not an easy job. Its virus had upset the whole society. He had received piteous wails from Christian Harijans. If Christians had grades of untouchability, even for that sin *savarnas* were responsible. There was no use in reminding him that there was in Kottayam a church, a mosque, and a temple existing side by side. They existed in many other parts of India and even outside India. He made an earnest plea for the removal of untouchability from "this land of Dharma Rajya". He had heard with considerable strain that there was a Christian party and a Nayar party in the State that did not work for the common end. People had been repeatedly dinning into his ears that there were mutual jealousies and rivalries in their midst. The Maharaja and the officials would be unable to remove those evils. The people themselves had to remove them root and branch. If untouchability was removed from the heart, all other ills would also be removed. He would not go away satisfied if the opening of the roads and temples were not a token of the heart-unity among them.

Gandhiji said that he had received from Travancore the most hair-splitting letters on untouchability. It was not a matter for surprise that religious faiths of the Ezhavas were being rudely shaken. He did not want them to surren-

[1] The meeting, which was held at the Municipal Maidan, was attended by about 2,500 people. An address of welcome was presented to Gandhiji along with a purse of Rs. 30.

der reason and import interpretation. A reproduction of the Vedic life of old on the part of the *savarnas* was necessary before they could impart religion to others. He asked them to pray to God to give them the strength to confess their guilt, purify their heart and discharge the duty they owed to the Harijans.

The Hindu, 21-1-1934

18. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR MORARJEE

January 20, 1934

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

I got your letter. You must have left the hospital now and are probably able to walk about. I have come to such a distant place that letters take four days to reach me.

I have heard about Dr. Mulgaonkar, but I don't know him much personally. Please give him my compliments for wearing khadi. Ask Gokibehn to write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4722. Courtesy: Shantikumar Morarjee

19. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, PONMANA[1]

January 20, 1934

Speaking in Hindi, Gandhiji expressed pleasure at having received a Hindi address. That was an oasis in a desert. He was glad to note that five private temples in the State had been thrown open to Harijans. The temple and the Ashram, under whose shadow they were sitting, were also open to all castes. The address had stated that many people had taken to khaddar. He doubted if the people in Travancore had heard of that word when he visited them last time. It was the hope of the Harijan Seva Sangh to save Hinduism from ruin. Purification of the heart was all that was needed. The *savarnas* were one in the matter of extending every help to the Harijans except temple-entry. That indicated that the *savarnas* did not want to remove the distinction of high and low. If Harijans were Hindus, as they considered them to be, it was necessary to give them also admission to the temples.

[1] The meeting was held in the morning in the Chatambi Swami Ashram.

Referring to a charkha that was placed on the platform, Gandhiji remarked that the charkha was still capable of improvement. If everyone would introduce and popularize the charkha in his home, then it would go a great way to solve India's problems. Every endeavour was being made to uplift Harijans. In that endeavour the Harijans had also to co-operate. The Harijans had to give up habits of drinking and eating carrion.

The Hindu, 22-1-1934

20. SPEECH AT QUILON

January 20, 1934

Gandhiji expressed his gratification to the Government for throwing open all public roads, tanks, etc. It was most appropriate on the part of H. H. the Maharaja. But much more remained to be done by the people themselves. He, however, pointed out that, if the hearts of the people were not pure, the orders of kings would be of no avail.

He felt obliged to the organizers of the meeting for the honest statement that they had not made much progress in the removal of untouchability. The reason ascribed was lack of funds. Before untouchability could be removed, the hearts had to be purified. For the purification of the heart no money was needed. True, the funds made available were not proportionate to the magnitude of the task. The duty of the *savarnas* was to teach the Harijans and give them free education. Harijan *seva* was *atmashuddhi*. Removal of untouchability ought to be the ultimate goal of all. The Shastras did not sanction untouchability. It was necessary to open temples. But more important than that was the removal of untouchability.

The Hindu, 22-1-1934

21. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TRIVANDRUM[1]

January 20, 1934

I am no stranger to Travancore or Trivandrum. If you will permit me, I should say I am with you a fellow citizen of Travancore. And I shall tell you why I would love to become a citizen of Travancore. I have had the audacity, if you like to call it, or courage as I would call it, to say that Malabar,

[1] Over ten thousand people were present at the meeting which was held at the Municipal Maidan. Addresses of welcome on behalf of the public and the Hindi Prachar Sabha were presented to Gandhiji together with a purse of Rs. 1001. A report of the speech also appeared in *The Hindu*, 23-1-1934.

which includes Travancore and Cochin, was the blackest spot in the untouchability map of India. The worst forms of untouchability are to be found in Malabar. And Malabar is the home of Shankaracharya, the teacher of the *advaita* doctrine. How untouchability of the worst type can be consistent with the teaching of Shankara passes my comprehension. But, since I have become a Harijan by choice, I should love to suffer with the Harijans who are supposed to occupy the lowest rung of the ladder even in the Harijan scale. I cannot possibly do so unless I could take out a naturalization certificate and become a citizen of Travancore. For, do you know what I saw this morning when I went to a Harijan school? There I saw two Harijan boys, belonging to what are called the Vetas. One lives and learns on this earth. I learnt then and there that Vetas are invisible like the Nayadis—synonymous terms. In the note that was passed to me, it was stated that Vetas had the greatest difficulty in finding pure drinking water. Once during the Boer War, as a humble member of the Ambulance Corps that I was, I found myself in the position of the Vetas. Not that there was any prohibition against the soldiers and ambulance men who were marching through that scorching country, but it happened to be a waterless desert; it was a decree of prohibition from Providence itself. The midday sun shone scorching overhead. We were all—white soldiers and brown ambulance men—parched with thirst. Suddenly we came upon a little pool filled with dirty water. That was to serve as drinking water for us. This morning I immediately recalled that scene and said to myself how infinitely worse the Vetas must feel when day in and day out they are consigned to dirty pools for drinking water, not in a waterless desert, but in a place where ample fresh water is perennial. Are you now surprised that I should love to identify myself with a Veta and feel with him by living with him and seeing what you feel when you see fresh water all around and are debarred from using it? If God wills it, He will give me the strength and the will to go through the fire. You now understand the nature of the message that I want to deliver to you this evening.

But there is always a ray of light even through apparently impenetrable darkness. The communique of the Maharaja's Government in connection with this untouchability business was this morning placed in my hands. I was able, at the meeting, where I saw the order of His Highness the Maharaja's Government, to tender my congratulations. As I then read this order, it seemed to me in short that there would be no State

recognition for those public institutions which debarred untouchables from their use. Whilst it was possible for me to tender my congratulations, you must not run away with the belief that such relief of a very modified type can give me satisfaction. This deep-seated disease requires not a temporizing but a drastic remedy. If the Hindu patient is to live, then this disease has to be removed root and branch. I wish that the young Maharaja and his advisers may take courage into their hands and apply the only remedy that can undo this mischief. The remedy is incredibly simple. They have simply to say that there will be no State recognition in any shape or form of untouchability, unapproachability or invisibility. As an ex-lawyer, who still has some memory of legal lore, I make bold to say that such a legislation or such a proclamation will not amount to any interference with any single individual's religious belief or practice. It is the bounden duty of a State which has subjects entertaining different faiths to take an impartial and detached view in matters of religion. By identifying itself with practices prevalent among a section of its subjects and by giving legal protection to those practices, the State interferes with the progress of reform and interferes with the free play of people's conscience. All that the State has got to do is to say to its subject, 'The State has nothing to do with your religious beliefs and practices. We will interfere when you, in prosecuting your religious practices, interfere with common law rights or with the peace of the State.' But the existing State-recognition of untouchability makes it a current coin.

I feel that an extremely heavy responsibility rests upon Hindu princes when, as I feel, the very Hindu religion runs the risk of being utterly destroyed if this virus of untouchability is not expelled from the Hindu body. Those who feel as deeply as I do about this matter cannot possibly rest until the so-called Harijans are clothed with precisely the same rights as non-Harijan Hindus possess today.

Now one or two words only with reference to the individual duty of everyone in this audience, man or woman. This is a movement essentially of self-purification, of *savarna* Hindus frankly acknowledging the debt that they owe to Harijans, and rendering full reparation to them. This can only be brought about by a complete change of heart on our part. As I have already described to you, the State aid can only be of a negative character. The State cannot possibly change the individual heart. That can only be made by prayer to Almighty. It is not possible for a single human being to change the heart of a fellow being. I

know that I cannot do it. I can only make an appeal to your reason and to your heart. But it is God alone who can arm the word that I speak to you with the power to shoot like an arrow and make a lodgment in your heart. If you can believe the word of a man who is perpetually seeking after truth, believe me that throughout all my waking hours, and if I can say so, during my sleep also, my one constant prayer to God is that He may give that power to my words, so that the Hindu heart can be touched and it may be purged of the virus of untouchability and Hindus and Hinduism may be saved from this impending doom.

Please remember that your duty and my duty does not end with merely recognizing the Harijans as blood-brothers and blood-sisters. That is the beginning of the end. The end is that we should rid ourselves of every form of untouchability that is eating into the vitals of Hindu society. As an address reminded me only this morning, it was not enough to treat Pulayas, Nayadis and others as blood-brothers; for, untouchability existed among *savarna* Hindus themselves, caste against caste. It is true that the poison has gone so deep that it has corrupted the whole of our society. It has even affected our fellow-countrymen—Mussalmans, Christians, and others. What, therefore, you and I have to do is to forget that there is anybody high or low on this earth. Then, being the children of the same Creator, the same God, no matter to what faith we may belong, no matter what hue we may have, we are all equal in the eyes of our Maker. Do you not see that, when we have been able to purge ourselves of this virus, not only shall we, Hindus, be able to look the world in the face but we shall also be able to live in peace with our neighbours, be they Mussalmans, be they Christians, Jews, Parsis or others?

Now you will understand why I consider insignificant the purse you have been good enough to give me, considering that Trivandrum is the capital of a great State of India. Do you know that both Bangalore and Calicut have given no less than six or seven thousand rupees to the Harijan purse? If you were to tell me that poverty had hit Travancore harder than Calicut or Bangalore, I must refuse to believe it. Bangalore at least is not a land flowing with milk and honey as Travancore is. As somebody was saying, no man need die of positive hunger in Kerala. You have got the richest milk that mother coconut can yield, and you can have all the sweetness you desire from the banana, which is very cheap here. When I was travelling through the South in 1915, I lived for days together on bananas and coconuts;

and as an expert diet reformer, I can tell you that you can well hold body and soul together for many days, indeed many years, on bananas and coconuts. So if you were to advance the plea of poverty as against Harijans, you would be absolutely out of court. While, therefore, I am in Trivandrum, I expect all of you, who are here and who have listened to me, to make up for this very serious defect in your purse. Sisters can copy little Kaumudi,[1] who lives not very many miles from you, and discard all the jewellery that they wear. And you, the citizens of Travancore, can put your heads together and decide that your purse should be the richest, because you represent the blackest spot, and you can undertake to make up for the defect I have shown to you.

But you will permit me to point out another serious defect. Since I have been travelling in Travancore, I have discovered that the people have paid like misers, but the organizers have spent money like spendthrifts. Therefore, as it has astounded me, it will astound you to learn that the feeding charges of my party, which certainly descends like locusts on a field, and such other expenses which should never be deducted from purses given for the Harijan cause, have been deducted. You will be astonished to know that in many cases more than 50 per cent has been spent. What would God tell me when I say to Him that in the name of Harijans so many thousand rupees were collected and 50 per cent were deducted for feeding and entertaining me? I know that, if I did not protest against such expenses my claim to represent the Harijans would be summarily dismissed by Divinity. The fact of the matter is that you have not treated this Harijan question as seriously as it should have been treated. It is a deeply religious question. It affects the well-being of the poorest in the land. It affects the well-being of those who are despised by society.

I wish you and I and every one of us would hang down our heads in shame, if we were guilty of misusing or using improperly a single pie collected on behalf of the Harijans. I assure you that I do not want a single convenience which cannot be cheaply supplied. One little flickering light will suffice for my purpose. I want no flags or buntings for me and my party. If you gave me the open sky and the velvety sand of Travancore to lie upon, I should never utter a single word of reproach. But I will reproach everyone connected with this cause who misspends a single pie when it might have been saved for the Harijan cause. I want you all to understand the seriousness of this mission.

[1] *Vide* pp. 18-9.

I want you then to bestir yourselves, put your shoulders to the wheel and make a Herculean effort, whilst there is yet time, to save ourselves and the ancient faith from the impending doom. I do not wish to convey the meaning that only the Committees in Travancore have been guilty of useless expenditure. God alone knows how many other Committees have been guilty of this. But this I can tell you that, ever since this tour began, I have been cross-questioning every Committee, and I have called for accounts of receipts and expenditure from every Committee and am awaiting accounts from them. There is no reflection here on the honesty of a single person. But those of you, who are studying law or who are lawyers, will at once understand when I say that neglect or carelessness on the part of a trustee, which everyone connected with this movement is, amounts to a crime. A trustee is expected to give greater attention and care to the protection of his ward than he would bestow on his own protection.

Harijan, 2-2-1934

22. *INTERVIEW ON TRAVANCORE GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUE*[1]

TRIVANDRUM,
January 20, 1934

Interviewed on the communique of the Travancore Government, declaring public tanks and wells open to all castes, Gandhiji said:

I have already tendered my congratulations to His Highness and Government on the communique but I have also said that it cannot possibly satisfy me, much less the Harijans. There

[1] The communique read:

"In their report, the Temple-entry Enquiry Committee have recommended, *inter alia*, prompt action on the following lines:

'Distance-pollution or *theendal* should be removed by appropriate legislative measures subject to reservations in the matter of entry into temples and into their adjuncts like temple tanks, temple wells, *homapuras*, *anakottils*, etc., and subject to the following provisos:

'(a) Public tanks used for bathing purposes should be thrown open, after separate cisterns are attached to them or portions of them are walled off, where people could wash their clothes, etc., before getting into the tanks for bath.

'(b) Public wells should be thrown open after they are provided with cisterns in which water should be stored from the wells by Municipal or Health Department employees and from which water should be drawn through taps.

can be neither satisfaction nor rest until the States refuse to recognize untouchability in any shape or form. That will not interfere with anybody's personal or religious freedom. But today untouchability receives State protection. I venture therefore to hope that H. H. the Maharaja and his advisers will at least take up an impartial attitude by withholding State recognition of untouchability.

With regard to one of the recommendations of the Travancore Temple-entry Enquiry Committee, relating to a reference to a *parishad* of learned men, Gandhiji said:

In my opinion, this is not a question to be decided by a *parishad* merely of learned men. Such *parishad*, if it is composed of men who are not merely learned but are also holy and wise, can guide the people but not the State, for in a composite society, such as ours is, a State has to adopt an attitude of perfect neutrality. Supposing that *parishad* gave it as its opinion that untouchability, such as we know it, is a Hindu religious obligation, then the State cannot clothe it with legal protection. Those who believe in it will observe it, but they shall not compel non-believers to do so. But the state of law today is such, that men who do not believe in untouchability are compelled to submit to it.

In reply to the question whether the temples in Travancore did not stand on a different footing from most in British India, and whether they were not really a trust property in the hands of Government, Gandhiji said:

Trustees are bound, so long as they retain that office, to carry out faithfully the conditions of the trust. All therefore that they can do is to resign their office, if they regard untouchability as a sinful practice.

'(c) Government *satrams* should be thrown open after they are provided with separate kitchens, as in the case of such as are already open to all classes.'

"Government share the view of the Committee that distance-pollution or *theendal* must cease and are of opinion that no general public funds should be spent by Government in the maintenance of public tanks, public wells, *satrams*, etc., admission to which is denied to any person by reason of his belonging to a *theendal* caste. They have resolved, therefore, that all public roads, public tanks, public wells, *satrams*, etc., maintained by them out of their general public funds shall be thrown open to all classes of people irrespective of the caste to which they belong. Measures to carry out these objects soon are being considered.

"2. The other recommendations of the Committee are under the consideration of Government."

Asked if Government in that case should give up the wardenship of temples, Mahatma Gandhiji said:

Most decidedly, Government should certainly give up their custodianship of temples.

The Hindu, 22-1-1934

23. NOTE

Is the Bulsar Municipality Failing in Its Duty?[1]

Nowadays I seldom see *Harijanbandhu*. But this issue happened to fall into my hands. It would be regrettable if the Bulsar Municipality has broken its pledge. If they have anything to say in their defence I shall publish it in these columns. I hope that a public institution will not ignore our scavenger brothers who cannot make their voice heard.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 21-1-1934

24. LETTER TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

January 21, 1934

DEAR GURUDEV,

The news about the Government measures[2] in Midnapur has dazed me. They appear to me to be worse than the Martial Law measures of the Punjab in 1919. I get here only *The Hindu*. Are you doing anything? Is Bengal doing anything? Our cowardice chokes me. Or do I see cowardice where there is none? Can you give me any solace?

I hope you are keeping well.

With deep love,

Ever yours,
M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

I am in Coonoor between 29th January and 5th February.

From a photostat: G.N. 4641

[1] A correspondent had stated that the Bulsar Municipality had done nothing towards the construction of a night school in spite of the resolution passed by it to that effect, and that it was delaying the implementation of another resolution regarding the construction of tenements for Harijans.

[2] Ordinances promulgated consequent upon the assassination of B.E.G. Burge, the District Magistrate, Midnapur, by three Bengali youths on September 2, 1933

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25. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

THE CAPE,
January 21, 1934

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have your three letters before me. As to the money, I thought you had it already. I had issued instructions. I am sending a reminder.

I hope the consultation in Calcutta has resulted in some good to Kamala.

I had no desire to apologize for you. The interview[1] represents the interviewer's impressions. But there is no apology there. I have given my full interpretation of your mind and actions. I do feel that your concrete programme is still in the melting pot. You are too honest to say: "I know the whole of my programme today." You have no uncertainty about the science of socialism but you do not know in full how you will apply it when you have the power.

You have unnecessarily raised the question of your place in the Congress. So far as I am concerned, you do not disturb me at all. I should be myself in a wilderness without you in the Congress.

More I need not say now. I have not the time either to give you a longer letter.

I have received your notice about 26th. I could not have issued it unless I was in a position to say definitely what to do. But I do not mind it.

A brief telegram in *The Hindu* about Government measures in Midnapur has however dazed me. The measures appear to be worse than the Punjab measures of 1919. The shock is almost unbearable. Our cowardice disconcerts me. Not knowing what the papers are saying, if anything at all, I may be wrong in my analysis. I have never felt so helpless as I do at the present moment.

I have written to Dr. Bidhan and to Gurudev.[2]

[1] *Vide* Vol. LVI, "Interview to the *Madras Mail*", pp.382-5.
[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

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I hope Mother is better.
What about Rafi?
Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Jayaprakash had written to me about his affair and I wrote to him at length. His brother will have the scholarship. With the burdens he has, he should really begin to earn. But he won't. I am keeping in touch with him.

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1934. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

26. LETTER TO RUKMINIDEVI BAZAJ

January 21, 1934

CHI. RUKMINI,

I got your letter. This postcard is just to let you know that all of you are constantly in my thoughts.

You must have completely recovered from the effects of your fever.

It is warm here but over there all of you must be freezing in the cold. Were any earthquake[1] shocks felt there?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Do you get *Harijanbandhu* or [*Harijan*] *Sevak*?

SHRI BENARSILAL BAZAJ
THATHERI BAZAR
BENARES CITY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9157

[1] An earthquake had rocked Bihar on January 15 and resulted in large-scale loss of life and property.

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27. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

January 21, 1934

BHAI JIVANJI,

Don't be in a hurry to spend that sum of Rs. 150. Please ask Miss Agatha Harrison, 2 Cranbourne Court, Albert Bridge Road., London S. W., whether she wants copies of the book for free distribution and, if yes, how many copies she requires. Then send them. It appears that I shall not be going to Belgaum after all. I don't at all feel like writing to the authorities for employing a Gujarati. You want me, don't you, to go through the articles written from Yeravda Mandir about untouchability and equal regard for all religions.

Please take proper care of Hamid. See that the others do not get the infection.

I am quite well.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. JIVANJI
NAVAJIVAN KARYALAYA
AHMEDABAD
B.B.&.C.I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9935. Also C.W. 6910. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

28. TELEGRAM TO RAJENDRA PRASAD

[On or before *January 22, 1934*][1]

YOUR WIRE HEART-RENDING. WISH I COULD BE WITH YOU AIDING DISTRESSED PEOPLE. HOPE YOU WILL GET ADEQUATE HELP FROM PUBLIC. KEEP ME INFORMED. HOPE YOU ARE BETTER.

The Searchlight, 24-1-1934

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", pp.37-8.

29. LETTER TO SRI PRAKASA

Unrevised *January 22, 1934*

MY DEAR SRI PRAKASA,

I am glad that you could not follow my article[1] on ornaments. That has enabled me to get a letter from you and also to have a confession from you that you do not read *Harijan*. I had thought that you would insist on reading it as a general weekly letter from me. It is never too late to mend. I recommend your getting it regularly and reading it.

Now for your argument. I never said that foreign cloth was in itself an evil. I did say and say it even now that the use of foreign cloth in India by Indians is an evil.

I do not put the use of ornaments in the same category as foreign cloth. But I do preach disuse of ornaments. Not having fundamental objection to the use of ornaments as to the use of foreign cloth, I do not mind selling ornaments to those who would wear them. It is enough for me if I get one woman to discard ornaments. You may not know that one-hundredth part of them are sold as ornaments, ninety-nine parts are melted and turned into gold and sold as currency. The other parts of your argument touch upon a wider field and involve a discussion of capital and labour, poverty and riches, etc. These I omit for want of time.

May I take your letter to mean that you are now quite restored and have got over the Slough of Despond? I hope Bapuji[2] is keeping well.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

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

[1] *Vide* Vol. LVI, pp. 368-9.
[2] Dr. Bhagwandas, addressee's father

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30. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

January 22, 1934

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I got your letter.

I am very much disturbed by the happenings in Midnapur.

Om[1] and Kisan[2] have become a wonderful pair. Om is always cheerful. She does not even know what it is to feel depressed. She can sleep for twelve hours, but I see nothing to object to in that. She does not seem to have any special likings. She eats whatever is served. Let us see how she shapes.

I am getting on quite well.

Please send Rs. 4,000 to Jawaharlal for the support of co-workers if you have not already done so.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2929

31. LETTER TO MADALASA BAJAJ

January 22, 1934

CHI. MADALASA,

Have you resolved not to write to me till I write to you? Are you testing me in this way or sparing me out of pity for me?

Tell me how you are in mind and body. Ask Vatsala to write to me. What are you studying? Do you take your meals at regular hours?

Om is quite happy. She is getting fatter.[3]

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 315

[1] Uma, the youngest daughter of the addressee

[2] Kisan Ghumatkar

[3] The source has these two sentences in the form of questions. Om, however, was with Gandhiji at this time.

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32. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

KUMARIKA, TRAVANCORE,
January 22, 1934

BA,

We are in Kumarika today. I got your letter. You have visited this place once in Urmila Devi's company. This is the farthest end of India. The Himalayas represent her head. We may, therefore, call this place Mother India's feet, which are daily washed by the sea. Since nobody lives here, perfect silence reigns. I bathed in the sea, and so did Om, Kisan and Chandrashankar[1]. There is no danger of cold here. Devdas and Lakshmi will most probably have gone to Delhi now. They went and met Rajaji. There has been no change in my diet and I keep very good health. I have secured a typist from Madras. He has been loaned to me by Anna[2]. He is good. As Thakkar Bapa has come now, Malkani has gone to Delhi. I have just received a letter from Ramdas and one from Nimu. At present they all seem to be well. Ramdas takes care of Sumitra's eyes. He has not yet recovered his peace of mind, but I think he will do so. There is no cause for anxiety. I understand about Dahibehn's health. Let us all remember that the mind has a powerful effect on the body. In jail one is a prey to too many thoughts, which one should learn to control. If one can preserve one's equanimity in all conditions, one can be happy. Shanta should by now have grown very wise. Tell her I want her to live for eighty years more and do service. I hope Lalita also is quite happy. Do not hesitate to request Premlilabehn[3] for any article of food you may require in the interest of your health. Kanti is better now and keeps cheerful. He has lost some weight, though. I will write to Jamnabehn. I have at present no news of Madhavdas[4]. There was a letter from him some days ago. Now that you have specially inquired about him, I will write to him in your name. I have received a letter from Manilal and one from Sushila.

[1] The source has "Chandrashekhar".
[2] Harihar Sharma
[3] Premlila Thackersey
[4] Brother of Kasturba Gandhi

There is nothing special in them. Both keep good health. Manilal is perfectly calm now. Surendra is still in Wardha. He is helping Jamnalalji there. All the women prisoners are expected to be released today. I have written a few words to each of them. And now the discourse.

The *Bhagavad Gita* says that the Lord's *bhakta* should cultivate solitude. This requires to be carefully grasped. We came into the world alone and shall leave it alone; why, then, should we yearn for anybody's companionship during the uncertain interval between birth and death? However, though we come alone we also see that we are not altogether alone. We have the company of our parents. Were it not for that, we would not be able to live even for a moment. When we grow up, we generally get married. That also gives us similar company. Then we get the company of friends too. For spiritual progress also we require company to some extent. Why, then, does the *Gita* advise cultivating solitude? Let us try to understand this point. Think of any companions and you will see that the bond is a sign of our dependence. Father, mother, husband, wife, friend, everybody makes us dependent on him or her to some extent. But one who is a *bhakta* of the Lord is full of compassion. He is dependent on God alone. He is the only true friend and, besides, He is our charioteer too. . . . What else can he want who has His company? Mother *Gita*, therefore, advises us to seek solitude. This does not mean that we should shun the company of fellow beings. It only means that we should not desire it. We should not lose heart when we do not have it and, on the other hand, even in the midst of crores of people, should feel mental solitude and nearness to God. I hope you remember the *bhajan*: "Friends of the body are selfish, one and all; they will refuse to accompany one at the end." One who cultivates solitude will never be unhappy anywhere, for he sees only Vishnu in all places. Prahlad, the *bhakta*, saw Vishnu even in a red-hot pillar. With some effort, everybody can cultivate such love of solitude. All of you have got, unsought, an opportunity to do so. Try and cultivate it.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Bane Patro, pp. 9-11

33. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

KANYAKUMARI,
January 22, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

This time I have not received your letter so far. But I write this as per my rule. We are in Kumarika today. As nobody lives here, the utmost peace reigns. The only sound is of the rupees being counted. The sea is just in front, but it is not roaring.

Devdas and Lakshmi must have reached Delhi now. They visited Raja[1]. He has not written to me after the visit.

Dr. Bidhan is all right now, though the bone has not set completely. He was lying in bed and working.

It seems the Bihar earthquake has completely destroyed Motihari. Rajendrababu seems to have plunged into relief work as soon as he was released. There was a heart-rending wire from him. I have sent him a wire[2] of sympathy. Satisbabu has rushed to Bihar. He informs me that 15,000 people have been hurt. Many people were killed, but their number is not known. A large number of even big houses have been rendered uninhabitable.

Muriel Lester is arriving in February. Most probably she will come and see me in Coonoor. I shall be there from 29th January to 5th February. She is coming from Hong Kong.

Prithuraj is accompanying me on the tour for a few days. He has joined from Calicut. He will then go to see Velabehn. In other respects his health has improved very much. He has been helping Chandrashankar. He needs help most.

I found no opposition in Travancore. The crowds were as big as at other places. The Ruler showed complete indifference. C. P.[3] did not come to see me at all. Devdhar is in Trivandrum, where he is making some enquiries about the Co-operative Society. His health has been affected, but he can work and is, therefore, satisfied.

Most probably Kelappan will marry a Christian lady. His connection with the Harijan Sevak Sangh will then end. The

[1] C. Rajagopalachari
[2] *Vide* p. 32.
[3] C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, then Dewan of Travancore

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lady is a good woman. His desire to marry her seems to be six years old. There is nothing immoral in his intention, but I see that his views are not in harmony with the policy of the Sangh.

I got a letter from Ba. There is nothing special in it. All the same, if I can get a copy made I will send it. I hope you got Mani's letter which I had sent to you.

All the women will be released today. I have written to all of them. Kishorelal[1] is still bed-ridden. Jamnalal is going on with his programme energetically. For the present Surendra has been drafted to help in that work.

A German youth named Khuro, has arrived from South Africa. He is in my party at present. He is said to be a correspondent of *The Hindu*. Poor man, he has been robbed of a sum of Rs. 1,000. Thakkar Bapa has fallen in love with him. He cheerfully works as watchman and porter. He is quite robust and never feels fatigued. He is very active and highly educated. He has become a British subject.

S.[2] was taken away by the police. N.[3] must have left by now.

Blessings to both from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 65-7

34. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

January 22, 1934

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

Your letter of December 23 has only now reached me here. Other letters too have reached. Henceforth you have to follow the doctor's instructions and see the result.

The rent of the house is too high but what else can be expected in New Delhi?

Is Krishnan Nair maintaining good health? Is anyone with him?

[1] Kishorelal G. Mashruwala
[2] & [3] The names have been omitted.

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I am keeping well and so long as God wants to take work from me He will keep me well, since I have made it His responsibility.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2407

35. LETTER TO HEMPRABHA DAS GUPTA

January 22, 1934

CHI. HEMPRABHA,

I have your letter. Though difficult it is our dharma to bear the unbearable. I am myself having tangible experience of the difficulty just now. Only by passing through the ordeal can our study of the *Gita* prove its worth.

Let us see what happens and where God leads us.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I am writing this from Kumarika.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1707

36. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

January 23, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

I had intended to write to you earlier but had no time to do so. I could not appreciate your not writing to me. It was unnatural for you. You would do so, when you are thoroughly absorbed in the work for its sake and not mine.

I am trying to send you to Sabarmati as early as I can. But I have to obtain the permission of the responsible authorities.[2] I have not the control there that I have at Wardha. It is a voluntary surrender. I would be guilty of untruth, if I now tried to exercise control.

But please do not think that you are not rendering Harijan service there.

[1] A word here is obscured by the postmark.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Parikshitlal L. Majmudar", p. 41.

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Do write and tell me all about your studies, your work and the tuition you are giving. Are you keeping perfect health now?

Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

37. LETTER TO RAMABEHN JOSHI

KANYAKUMARI,
January 23, 1934

CHI. RAMA,

I did get your letter. I am dictating this to Prithuraj. If you train other girls for service and take their help, you will be able to cope with the work. You have done well in starting the study of Hindi. There are so many things which one can learn and all of them may be worth learning. Out of them all one should select the most important subject and concentrate on it to the exclusion of other things. Unless one does this one will learn nothing. Be careful lest, in trying to learn too many things, you endanger your health which has been improving. I am glad that Vimu[1] feels at home where she is. When did you last hear from Dhiru[2]? I wrote to him only yesterday. I had a letter from Kusum in which she had given some news about Dhiru. He seems to be keeping well now. I had written to Joshi[3] again, but I couldn't know whether he got the letter. I keep very well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5362

[1] Vimala, addressee's daughter
[2] Addressee's son
[3] Chhaganlal Joshi, addressee's husband

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38. LETTER TO PARIKSHITLAL L. MAJMUDAR

January 23, 1934

BHAI PARIKSHITLAL,

You probably know Amalabehn[1], the German lady. She is very eager to serve Harijans personally. She is extremely sincere. She is proficient in languages and knows eleven languages of the West. She can be of use as an English teacher. But she is ready to do any work. No salary is to be paid. Can you absorb her there? She is dying to get to work. Try her for some time. You may retain her if she is useful, otherwise send her back to Wardha. Her food of course will be simple. She has stayed there before. If you are frightened of her, you may refuse. Do not feel the slightest hesitation in saying 'no'.

Blessings from

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4000

39. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

January 23, 1934

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

I got your letter. Can't you get a house in Vadaj even on rent? Is it not possible to get some land near the Harijans' quarters? You can put up a hut there and live in it. I think the Vadaj experiment is one which should not be abandoned. But please don't worry about this. I only mean that you should do your best. In other respects it seems you are spending your time well enough. What do you do for your meals?

Do write to me regularly.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 365. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P. Pandya

[1] Margarete Spiegel

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40. LETTER TO MULCHAND PAREKH

KANYAKUMARI,
January 23, 1934

BHAISHRI MULCHAND,

I rarely come to know about happenings in Gujarat, being, as it were, an exile. I knew about your fever only when you wrote to me about it. I got the postcard just now, and it is fortunate that today is Tuesday, when I am generally not touring, and so can reply to you immediately. If for none else, at least for the sake of Harijans, do recover soon. For the rest, the body must bear the punishment that it may have earned. You will probably have recovered by the time you get this postcard, for I am only at the feet of Mother India. But you are sitting in her lap.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI MULCHAND PAREKH
VARTEJ

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 67

41. INTERVIEW WITH THE MEMBERS OF SELF-RESPECT PARTY[1]

[*January 23, 1934*][2]

Q. What is your programme with regard to the Harijan work?

A. My programme is to provide for them schools, hostels, medical aid, facilities for water—generally to do everything that would put them on a par with others.

Q. What of Christian and Mussalman untouchables? We want a programme affecting them also.

A. I have no such grand programme applicable to all. Not that I do not like it, but it is beyond my power to handle. It comes under the movement of swaraj. When swaraj comes, it

[1] Extracted from Chandrashankar Shukla's "Weekly Letter"
[2] The date is from *Harijan*, 2-2-1934.

will be applicable to all, to all the poor of India. Swaraj means among other things a redress of their wrongs.

Q. In South India, we know they are paid wages in kind and there are no fixed hours of work. Why do you not try to get for them more wages and fixed hours of work, instead of appealing for temple-entry?

A. These things do not arise out of untouchability, but from other causes.

Q. The two questions are interwoven.

A. I know they overlap each other. If I succeed in solving this question, I solve the rest. As a physician I know what to do. A physician finds the root of the disease and treats it. Similarly I treat the seat of the disease.

Q. Of course you are more experienced than we are. But we feel that the Harijans want food for their stomachs and a social status. You merely harp upon temple-entry.

A. Surely, you are wrong. You will find only a passing reference to it in all my speeches during the tour. But I cannot do without it.

Q. But do you not say this is a movement of self-purification ?

A. I do. There is no question about that. I said that at Palluruthy[1] in the plainest terms possible. The Harijans there accused me of pleading for reform as a Hindu. I pleaded guilty. I do not hide my colours. They said that, if they got all economic facilities, everything would follow; I said, it won't. And I can give you many instances in support of what I say. You may revile temples if you like. You may not go to them. But you must have the right to go and worship there. You may or may not use it. Not all the Thiyyas feel as you do. Those very Thiyyas at Palluruthy took me to a temple which was essentially a Hindu temple. They were all young men. And did not Narayana Guru Swami establish temples? I know of thousands of Harijans who, when they hear of a temple being opened, have a new lustre in their eyes. They do not know why, but they feel different men. I have seen them transported with joy on entering a temple. They felt themselves face to face with Deity.

Q. We respect you only as a revolutionary leader of a revolutionary people.

A. Then, say a Hindu revolutionary is appearing on the scene and revolutionizing Hinduism. But if I have done wrong

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Palluruthy", pp. 10-3.

to somebody, who is to do reparation but me? I say to Harijans, you may accept the reparation or reject it.

Q. You gave us the name Harijan. We feel, therefore, as if we are a separate community to be known by a separate name. Are you not wounding our susceptibilities by giving us this name?

A. I may be wounding the susceptibilities of half a dozen, but not of others. No other name has been received all round with so much approbation as this has. You should remember that it is not of my coining. So long as they have to be separately designated, some name is necessary. Then why not one that is inoffensive? I have many rationalist friends. One of them complimented me and said, "You speak like a rationalist!" I said, "What else did you think me to be?" You are rationalists in name; I am a rationalist in spirit. But I tell you this much: Let us agree to differ in the matter of temple-entry, and let us agree to work together where we do not differ.

Harijan, 9-2-1934

42. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TINNEVELLY*[1]

January 24, 1934

Before I refer to the proceedings of this morning, I must take the very first opportunity that has occurred to me of making a reference to a great calamity that has descended upon India, I mean the great earthquake that has desolated fair Bihar. I read yesterday the Viceregal communication. I read also the reports of the Government of Bihar that were published in the papers; and I had a most heart-rending telegram from Babu Rajendra Prasad as soon as he was discharged from his prison. All these communications show what puny mortals we are. We who have faith in God must cherish the belief that behind even this indescribable calamity there is a divine purpose that works for the good of humanity. You may call me superstitious if you like; but a man like me cannot but believe that this earthquake is a divine chastisement sent by God for our sins. Even to avowed scoffers it must be clear that nothing but divine will can explain such a calamity. It is my unmistakable belief that not a blade of grass moves but by the divine will.

[1] The meeting was held in the morning at the Municipal Market. The audience numbered about 20,000. Reports of the speech also appeared in *The Hindu*, 24-1-1934, and *The Hindustan Times*, 25-1-1934.

What are you and I to do in the face of a calamity of this magnitude? I can only say to you that all of us should contribute our mite to lessen the misery to the best of our ability. But I may not be deflected from the purpose to which, as I believe, by the direction of God, I have dedicated myself for the few months at my disposal; nor have I the authority to turn from their destination the funds that I am just now collecting from you. But with all the earnestness that I can command and in the name of the affection which I know you cherish for me, I must ask you, in spite of your having contributed to this purse, to give all you can save for the sake of those who are today without shelter, food and clothing in the land of Sita. You must show to your brethren and sisters of Bihar, by your sharing your food and clothing with them, that the same blood courses in your veins as in the veins of the Biharis. You can send your contributions to Babu Rajendra Prasad, or you can send them to me and I shall see to it that every pie you give reaches the proper quarters.

For reasons given by the Government and for other reasons best known to them, many persons in their employ are prohibited, or they think they are prohibited, from contributing to the Harijan purse. The orthodox people, who think that I am sinning against them and against the Almighty by engaging in this work, do not give their contributions to this cause. Nor do I expect non-Hindus to contribute to this purse. Therefore, on behalf of afflicted Bihar my appeal is addressed to a much larger audience than those to whom the Harijan appeal is addressed. Here, in the face of this great calamity over which we have no control, let us forget that some of us are Congressmen and others are non-Congressmen, that some of us are Hindus and others are non-Hindus, that some are officials and others non-officials, that some are Englishmen and others are not. Let us remember we are all Indians eating the Indian grain and salt and living on the dumb Indian masses. And as such let us all act and work with one will and absolute unity. Let us supplement in a perfectly unobtrusive manner the measures of relief that may be devised by the official world. Remember that time is the most essential element at the present moment. I shall be glad to know that my appeal has not fallen on deaf ears. I want you to remember that not many years ago, when floods had overtaken this fertile land, the whole of India had come to your succour. Now is your turn to run to the rescue of Bihar.

For me there is a vital connection between the Bihar calamity and the untouchability campaign. The Bihar calamity is a

sudden and accidental reminder of what we are and what God is; but untouchability is a calamity handed down to us from century to century. It is a curse brought upon ourselves by our own neglect of a portion of Hindu humanity. Whilst this calamity in Bihar damages the body, the calamity brought about by untouchability corrodes the very soul. Therefore, let this Bihar calamity be a reminder to us that, whilst we have still a few more breaths left, we should purify ourselves of the taint of untouchability and approach our Maker with clean hearts.

Harijan, 2-2-1934

43. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TUTICORIN*[1]

January 24, 1934

I want you to remember that Province in the north-east of India. It is the place where Sita grew up and Janaka ruled. It is the land where Gautam found divine knowledge. It has many other sacred associations and it is known to you, to me and to every child in India as Bihar and Bihar means "fair land". Today that fair land has become desolate through earthquakes. Several thousands are said to have died. Many more thousands have suffered injuries from which they are even now suffering excruciating pain. Many fair cities have become heaps of ruin. Aid has been coming to them from all parts of the world. The King has sent a message of sympathy. This divine calamity has suddenly reminded us that all humanity is one; and as is but right and proper, in the face of this calamity the Government and the people have become one. For the time being distinctions between Congressmen and non-Congressmen have been abolished, and all parties are supplementing the efforts of one another. I want you to be "superstitious" enough with me to believe that the earthquake is a divine chastisement for the great sin we have committed and are still committing against those whom we describe as untouchables, *Panchamas*, and whom I describe as Harijans. Let us derive the lesson from this calamity that this earthly existence is no more permanent than that of the moths we see every night dancing round lights for a few minutes and then being destroyed.

[1] About 25,000 people attended this meeting and various addresses and purses were presented to Gandhiji. At the end of the meeting the addresses were auctioned.

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This earthly existence of ours is more brittle than the glass bangles that ladies wear. You can keep glass bangles for thousands of years if you treasure them in a chest and let them remain untouched. But this earthly existence is so fickle that it may be wiped out in the twinkling of an eye. Therefore, whilst we have yet breathing time, let us get rid of the distinctions of high and low, purify our hearts, and be ready to face our Maker when an earthquake or some natural calamity or death in the ordinary course overtakes us.

The electric light company in this town has generously provided this feast of lights and I tender my congratulations to them. I would like them to spare some of the money and send it to afflicted Bihar. There are, I know, in Tuticorin many merchants and others who can pay much more than they have paid now. I know also that, for many reasons, only a limited number of people would contribute to this Harijan purse. But I invite all of them without distinction of age, caste or creed, including Government servants, to give whatever they can to the sufferers in Bihar.[1]

Harijan, 2-2-1934, and *The Hindu*, 26-1-1934

44. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

January 25, 1934

CHI. MARY,

Your letter. I am glad your class and you are getting on. So far as I am concerned, I do not mind your staying there[2] even permanently if thereby you find full self-expression and inward joy. But it is better, I know, to decide in conjunction with Jamnalalji.

Yes, the combination of *takli*-spinning and English is fine.

Have you followed the desolation of Bihar by nature and of Midnapur by man's greed of wealth and power? The two things more than fill my thoughts today and I am constantly seeking God's guidance.

You seem to be keeping well.

I had a firmly written letter from N., as airy as before but

[1] *The Hindu*, 26-1-1934, carried two reports of the speech, dated January 24 and 25. These have been collated with the *Harijan* version.

[2] Betul. *Vide* also Vol. LVI, p. 433.

full of love. S. has been taken away by the police. They are being sent to America.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Herewith programme.

From a photostat: G.N. 6018. Also C.W. 3347. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

45. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

January 25, 1934

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

I have not heard from you recently. I feel worried because of the terrible earthquake. Where is Jayaprakash? How are you both? Following the earthquake I had expected a detailed letter from you. I take it both of you must be busy with relief work just now. Is Rajeshwar[1] at Kashi? I have asked you in a previous letter to send me his address, etc. I have also inquired from which month I should send him the amounts. I will arrange to send them after I get your reply.

I have also asked you to let me know what you have done regarding other expenses.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3442

46. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, RAJAPALAYAM[2]

January 25, 1934

I thank you for your addresses and purses; but neither your addresses nor your purses will give me any satisfaction whatsoever, unless you have made up your mind that there shall be no untouchability in your hearts. And that means that we have to forget that there are some people who are high and some that are low amongst

[1] Younger brother of Jayaprakash Narayan

[2] Over ten thousand people attended the meeting. Purses and addresses of welcome were presented by Gandhi Reception Committee and various other organizations. A gold medal with Gandhiji's figure inscribed on it was also presented. At the end of the meeting the addresses were auctioned.

us. Untouchability as we are practising it today can have no divine sanction. You know what is happening today and what has happened in Bihar. Many of you may not have at all heard the name of Bihar, and yet it is as much a part of India as this Presidency. The people who are living in Bihar are as much our countrymen as people in this part of India, and there, it is said, nearly 20,000 people died in an earthquake. Many thousand more are suffering from injuries sustained and still more are homeless. Now why should this calamity come upon us? I request you to think with me. Is this great calamity a punishment for our sin? What is the great sin we are committing and have committed? Why should we not take this as a warning to us? The wrong we have done is staring us in the face. We believe, in the name of religion, that thousands of our own countrymen are born 'untouchables'. Is it right? It is an insolence that we must get rid of, at all costs, I would like you, even as you have paid to the Harijan cause, to contribute your mite to the poverty-stricken citizens of Bihar. Do not think that you can give no more because you have given for the Harijan cause. If your neighbours go without food and without cloth, you have got to protect them. I hope therefore that you will all do whatever is possible for them.

The Hindu, 26-1-1934

47. LETTER TO LAKSHMI NARAYAN AGRAWAL

January 26, 1934

BHAI LAKSHMIBABU[1],

Rajendrababu has given me news of your having lost all your nearest and dearest.[2] How can I console you? Where thousands are dead, consolation can hardly mean anything. This is a moment when we must tell ourselves that everyone is a relative. Then no one will feel bereaved. If we can cultivate this attitude of mind, death itself is abolished. For that which lives cannot die. Birth and death are an illusion. Know this to be the truth and, overcoming grief, stick to your duty.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]
Jivan Sahitya, pp. 256-7

[1] Secretary, All-India Spinners' Association

[2] All members of his family were killed when their house in Muzaffarpur District in Bihar collapsed during the earthquake.

48. SPEECH AT RECEPTION BY MERCHANTS, MADURA[1]

January 26, 1934

Gandhiji addressed the gathering as "Brother Banias" and said that though he began his speech with a smile he knew their hearts were heavy with the Bihar disaster. He wanted them to give not in a miserly manner.

I believe that every pice in the rupee given to the poor Harijans' cause is a pice given for self-purification and for reparation. I must omit the other parts of the interesting address. You have spoken about Hindi and you have spoken about the message of the charkha and if merchants will not be the custodians of the national wealth—and the symbol of our nation's prosperity is the charkha— who will be? Again, if your word is sincere, I should expect you to be able to speak and understand the lingua franca as you call it.

And if you really swear by the charkha, then I should expect you to be dressed in hand-spun and hand-woven khadi. And if you did so, you would only give the poorest of the poor some return for the vast trade you have with the poorest of the poor. Therefore I would ask you to translate your address into action.

Now I must begin speaking straightaway about Bihar. I have just now received a letter written by Babu Rajendra Prasad who was discharged from the jail hospital. The hospital where he was laid up, which is as big as the General Hospital at Madras, shook in the earthquake. You can imagine what the tremor must have been like when a big hospital would have to be emptied. And today that hospital is a howling wilderness. Heaven knows where all the sick men of that hospital are located. That is only about one hospital. In Jubbulpore, in Bihar [*sic*], in Muzaffarpore and Motihari these are practically razed to the ground. Twenty-five thousand people at least are supposed to have died. That means, buried alive. Many more thousands are lying in an injured condition. Still many more are homeless and foodless, and still under fear of the recurrence of the earthquake.

[1] The reception, which took place in the morning in the Victoria Edward Hall, was arranged by the Madura Ramnad Chamber of Commerce and the Bombay Hindu Merchants of Madura. Addresses and purses were presented to Gandhiji. A brief report also appeared in *Harijan*, 2-2-1934.

They are all in open spaces, in shivering and bitter cold of which you in Madura can have no notion. You and I can afford to sit in a comfortable hall like this. All your enjoyment and my enjoyment will go on uninterrupted. I believe many of you will find yourselves in a theatre or cinema tonight. Well, I want you to think of this that has happened in Bihar and then ask yourselves whatever big or little you can do for those who are suffering. I want you, whilst I am here, to collect a fat purse not in a miserly manner but to divide your spoils with the people who are afflicted in Bihar. I know that you are all believers in God. Our forefathers have taught us to think that whenever a calamity descends upon a people, that calamity comes because of our personal sins. You know that when the rains do not come in time we perform sacrifices and ask gods to send us rains and forgive us our sins owing to which rains are detained. And it is not only here—I have seen it in England and South Africa. When there is a visitation of locusts or the rivers are in flood, they appoint days of humiliation and days of fasting and pray to God to remove the calamity from their midst. And then I want you to believe with me that for this absolutely unthinkable affliction in Bihar your sins and my sins are responsible. And then when I ask myself what can be that atrocious sin that we must have committed to deserve such a calamity which staggers us and which today probably has staggered the whole world,—within living memory there is no record of an earthquake of this magnitude in India—I tell you the conviction is growing on me that this affliction has come to us because of this atrocious sin of untouchability. I beseech you not to laugh within yourself and think I want to appeal to your instinct of superstition. I don't. I am not given to making any appeal to the superstitious fears of people. I may be called superstitious, but I cannot help telling you what I feel deep down in me. I do not propose to take up your time and my time by elaborating this. You are free to believe it or to reject it. If you believe with me, then you will be quick and think there is no such thing as untouchability as we practise it today in the Hindu Shastras. You will think with me that it is a diabolical sin to think of any human being as an untouchable. It is man's insolence that tells him that he is higher than any other. I tell you, the more I think of it the more I feel that there cannot be a greater sin than for a man to consider that he is higher than any single being. All the good men of the world and all the wise men of the world whom I know anything of, and I know a great deal, have all said that they are the lowest of the

low. But here unfortunately with us our life is bound up with the idea of high and low. I want you, wise merchants that you are, to realize the truth. If you realize the truth and forget that there is anyone who can be called an 'untouchable' and lower than ourselves and if you feel that this is the least *prayaschitta* that you ought to make, then of course you will take the earliest step to send succour to Bihar people. I would like you, the Chamber of Commerce and the Gujarati friends, to remember this thing and take some concrete measures today and report to me.

The Hindu, 27-1-1934

49. *REPLY TO CIVIC ADDRESS, MADURA*[1]

January 26, 1934

MEMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL AND FRIENDS,

In the first instance I would like to tender my apologies to you for not keeping the appointments in connection with the receipt of your address. But Nature allows no interference with her superior will. So in spite of all the best efforts put forth yesterday, it was not possible to reach Madura before quarter past eleven last night. I thank you for the address that you have given me. I am glad to note that you have made reference to hand-spinning, Hindi and such activities which are dear to me. And since you believe in hand-spinning as a cottage industry essential for the seven hundred thousand villages of India, I should expect that the councillors in their homes and in all manner open to them would insist on the use of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar.

I am glad that you recognize the importance of Hindi as a national language. I have no doubt in my mind that as English is the language highly important for the international and commercial purposes, so is Hindi important for the interprovincial purposes. Yet I wish that it was possible for you to have enabled wanderers like me to speak to you in the national language.

I tender you my sincere congratulations on the absence of the Hindu-Muslim problem here. I wish that your example will prove contagious and infectious and that all over India we shall forget the Hindu-Muslim differences.

[1] This was in reply to the address of welcome by the Chairman of the Municipality.

You tell me that so far as Harijans are concerned you give them equal opportunity in the matter of education and other civic amenities and privileges. I am sure, at least I hope, that you do not mean all that you have said in this paragraph. For, if you really believe what you say, it means Harijans who are already labouring under a heavy handicap must eternally labour under that handicap because they are to get no more than equal opportunities. You will succeed in giving them equal opportunities only when you have removed the handicap under which they are labouring. I will tell you what I mean. I have come after having visited three *cheries* under the guidance of my friend, the translator—Mr. A. Vaidyanatha Aiyar—and as I claim I have an eye for sanitation, I had no difficulty in discovering that, if you will pardon my saying so, the Municipality has done very little to its most useful servants. You will admit that it will be ludicrous to suggest that the inmates of the *cheries* have equal opportunities to live as they like with the citizens of Madura who may be living in palaces. One *cheri* I visited is surrounded by water and drains on all sides. In the rainy season, it must be a place unfit for human habitation. Another thing is, it is below the road level and all those places are flooded during rains. The cottages in all the three *cheries* are built anyhow. There is no lay-out of streets or lanes and cottages in many places have no vents worth the name. In all cases without exception they are so low that you cannot enter in and get out without bending double. And in all cases the upkeep of the place is certainly not even to the minimum sanitary standard. It gives me comfort that you have resolved to construct model *cheries* with lighting and water facilities. May I suggest to you that in all such matters time is of the essence? I wish that in giving effect to this resolution of yours you have a rigidly fixed time-limit within which you would demolish the present cottages and get these poor people a chance of living somewhat like you and me. And here let me remind you that you are most fortunate in having a band of sisters who are devoting their whole attention to the betterment of these fellow-citizens of ours. You can harness their energy and their effort free of charge. I thank you once again for the address you have given me.

The Hindu, 27-1-1934

50. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, MADURA[1]

January 26, 1934

Gandhiji addressing the ladies said that he was very glad to see such a huge gathering of ladies. Their presence in such large numbers showed not merely the love they had for him, but that they entirely approved of the cause for which he had purposely come there. They must show their affection by removing untouchability. Untouchability was the greatest of the sins. No human being should ever say that he or she was superior to another person whether they be amongst caste Hindus or as between caste Hindus on the one hand and Harijans on the other. He also asked them to show their love by giving monetary help which was the least they could do. That was to be only an earnest of what they had to do. In conclusion, he appealed to them, as he would be leaving the meeting immediately, to give whatever ornaments or money they were willing to part with for the Harijan cause into the hands of Mirabehn.

The Hindu, 28-1-1934

51. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MADURA[2]

January 26, 1934

I am very much obliged to you for all these addresses, purses and gifts. This is not my first visit to Madura, but I think that the crowd that I see now is mightier than what I saw last time. I hope this is a sure sign of your determination to get rid of untouchability. I do not need now to repeat to you that it is a very great sin that *savarna* Hindus are committing against humanity in believing that untouchability has divine sanction. I have not hesitated to say that most probably the calamity which has come to India through the earthquake in Bihar is a fit punishment awarded to us by God for this great sin of untouchability. But whether it

[1] The meeting held at the West Masi Theatre at 3 p.m. was attended by more than five thousand women. Purses and addresses of welcome were presented by various women's organizations. A few women donated their jewellery also.

[2] The meeting was held at 5.45 p.m. on the grounds near Manal Road and was largely attended. Addresses of welcome and purses, one of them of Rs. 4,944, were presented to Gandhiji on behalf of the public.

is so or not, it is necessary that you should go to the alleviation of the sufferings of the people of Bihar. I might say that when we have visitations of this character they have not only a physical reason, but they carry with them also spiritual consequences; and if it is a superstition, it is a superstition which I share in common with practically all mankind. You may, if you like, reject this belief of mine. But if we would but rise from the inertia which has overtaken us and has paralysed our vision, we would at once see as clearly as daylight that untouchability as it is practised today cannot be defended on any ground whatsoever. And hence it is an evil which is lying in our hearts and has vital connection with every one of us. It does not lend itself to any legal or parliamentary treatment. It depends wholly upon each one of us definitely changing our hearts. This is, as I have always said, an act of self-purification and reparation. The gifts that you have given are merely an earnest of the reparation that you are to make, and it consists in every *savarna* Hindu definitely believing that there is no person who can be regarded as an untouchable by birth. It means that we must get out of us that unseen and insolent belief that we are superior to some others. On this earth there is no person high and no person low. We are all the children of the same one God and therefore each one of us is undoubtedly equal in God's estimation. And I believe that if you can get rid of the belief of high and low, all the different communities and classes could live in unity and amity.

Continuing, Gandhiji referred to a subject which he said was assuming serious proportions in Madura. It was one touching upon the well-being of the Harijans. As he had already demonstrated with facts and figures, several thousands of women belonging to the Harijan class earned a few pice a day by the spinning-wheel. But the practice among some merchants in passing off mill-cloth as hand-spun khaddar was depriving even the few pice that went into the pockets of the Harijans. By this he did not condemn mill-cloth but only wanted that mill-yarn should not be passed as khaddar. And he at the same time asked the purchasers to make sure that the cloth they purchased was genuine khaddar.[1]

The Hindu, 28-1-1934

[1] At the end of the meeting Gandhiji auctioned the gifts and addresses.

CWMG - LVII

52. SPEECH AT HINDI PRACHAR SABHA, MADURA[1]

January 26, 1934

Gandhiji . . . congratulated the certificate-holders and prize-winners and proceeded to speak about the merits of the Hindi language. He pointed out that being akin to all other Indian languages Hindi was the easiest medium for the intercourse of thought among the peoples of India. Further, unlike the English language, it had an atmosphere about it which was thoroughly Indian. In all walks of life in India, Hindi served as a common medium of communication of thoughts and ideas. It was particularly useful for merchants and commercial people. By devoting one hour a day one could get a working knowledge of Hindi in about six months, but more than that one should keep in touch with it so as not to forget what one had learnt. To acquire literary proficiency one will have to devote more time.

The Hindu, 23-1-1934

53. SPEECH AT MEETING OF LABOURERS, MADURA[2]

January 26, 1934

FELLOW LABOURERS,

It has given me very great pleasure to be in your midst. I call you 'fellow labourers', by design. When I was hardly 23 years old, or 24 it might be, I came in touch with Balasundaram[3]. Balasundaram was an indentured labourer. I had the good fortune to handle his case. I then learnt a great deal about the hardships of labour. The bond between the labourers and myself became closer and closer and I threw myself entirely into their hands. If I did not become an indentured labourer myself, they realized that I was one with them myself. That is the reason why I call myself a labourer. Now I want to tell you something of what this self-purification movement is.

[1] After the address of welcome, which was in Hindi, was presented, Gandhiji gave away prizes and certificates to the meritorious students. At the end of the meeting Gandhiji auctioned the address and the other presents.

[2] The meeting, arranged by the Madura Mills Labour Union, was held at 7 p.m. in the compound of the Mills school. Over five thousand labourers attended. *Harijan*, 2-2-1934, also carried a report.

[3] *Vide* Vol. XXXIX, pp. 126-7.

I have just heard that when I was fasting in the Yeravda jail you were the first to hold a meeting to show your sympathy. You did then a great deal of work. But I am not sure that you understand what all that meant. You know that even among the labourers there are vast divisions and one considers the other lower than oneself. Now, so long as you believe that there are some who are lower than yourself or some who are higher than yourself, you have not got the spirit of the movement. Therefore, you must feel in your heart that there is nothing in this difference and abolish it. Among you also I know that there are many caste Hindu labourers and many Harijan labourers. You must forget, if you have understood this movement, that there are any untouchables. And, you must consider every labourer as equal as you and your blood-brother are. If you can rise to that stage, you would immediately understand what happiness there will be for your own good and for the good of the country. Under the circumstances, I would like to tell you, friends, in this self-purification movement you will be expected to discard the intoxicating drink altogether. If there are any amongst you at all who are used to eating carrion and beef, you must leave it. You will give up gambling. Do not incur debts. And, if you have in your midst any Muslim labourers also, you must deal with them and live with them on terms of affection. You ought to take a personal interest in the work that they may be doing.

While you have perfect right to demand good treatment from the employers, adequate wages from them and proper quarters, it is expected of you that you will render proper and honest service for the wages that you get. If you will only consider for a moment, you will find, by reason of your being employed as labourers of a particular concern, you become part proprietors of that concern, in the same way as those who had invested money. Labour, as a matter of fact, is as much money as metallic coin. In the same way as money, labour is also put in a particular concern. Just as without money your labour will be useless, so all the money of the world will be useless if there is no labour. Therefore, you must take a pride in the concern where you are labouring. While on the one hand you will be after your rights as part proprietors, on the other hand, considering that concern as yours, render your honest service for that concern.

Last, I am glad that you have given me a small purse for the Harijan cause and I thank you also for the photo-frames you have given. They will also be sold for the Harijan cause.

The Bombay Chronicle, 3-2-1934

54. TELEGRAM TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

MADURA SOUTH,
January 27, 1934

JAMNALAL BAJAJ
GONDIA

TELEGRAM JUST RECEIVED. IF PATNA REQUIRES YOUR PRESENCE INTERRUPT PROGRAMME NOT OTHERWISE.

BAPU

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 122

55. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

January 27, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

I have your postcard. My letter must have crossed it. You will have seen from it that I was actually moving to have you sent to Sabarmati if only by way of trial.[1]

I hope you are keeping well. Did I tell you that that German friend was with us for some days? He has made himself quite useful.

Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

56. SPEECH AT MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEETING, KARAIKUDI

January 27, 1934

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL,

You were good enough to supply me with a copy of the translation of your address, for which I thank you and also for the address itself. I thank you also for the purse that you have given me. I suppose this includes the offerings of the public and not merely of the Municipal Corporation.

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Parikshitlal L. Majmudar", p. 41.

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Now you have said that the Council has under consideration various ambitious schemes and efforts will be made to carry them out soon after the present depression is got over. I suggest to you that this is hardly enough. Apart from the fact that this is so vague, there is no thought of a definite realization of the object, and that Harijans' uplift cannot wait for better times to come. Better times will follow our proper treatment of the Harijans.

It is not necessary for me to elaborate that which has affected the whole of my fundamental being. If the members of the Council have been at all following what I have been saying at different places or will follow what I shall be saying at the different places I shall be visiting in Chettinad, I think you will find what I am really after and what it is possible for all municipalities to do within their means. What I have suggested is nothing so drastic that it would be beyond the capacity of the municipalities to do. I am fully conscious of the steps you have taken and the enterprise you have shown for the benefits of the citizens here. I thank the gentleman who has contributed Rs. 10,000 for the uplift of the Harijans. I thank you once more for the address.

The Hindu, 29-1-1934

57. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KARAIKUDI[1]

January 27, 1934

It is a matter of great satisfaction to me to renew my acquaintance with you. I thank you for the addresses and the purses that have been presented to me for the Harijan cause. The proprietor of the Anand Bhawan has helped me this afternoon by presenting a donation of Rs. 151 for the Harijan cause and Rs. 151 for the afflicted countrymen in Bihar. I wish you all to follow that example. You must have read today a notice published by Babu Rajendra Prasad and supported by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. The notice invites the whole of India to observe tomorrow as the day for the relief of the Bihar sufferers. It means that the whole of India is invited to contribute its mite towards relieving the material sufferings of our countrymen in Bihar. As you know several big palaces have been desolated by this calamity. I hope therefore that you in Chettinad will

[1] Nearly 15,000 people attended the meeting. Purses and addresses of welcome were presented to Gandhiji. At the end the addresses and presents were auctioned.

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not allow tomorrow to pass by, without expressing your tangible sympathy towards those who are suffering so terribly in fair Bihar. Let us not delude ourselves into the belief that when we have paid a few rupees or given a few bangles towards alleviating this suffering, we shall have discharged our obligations. I would like you tomorrow to enter into the sanctuary of your hearts and examine the causes of this calamity. Geologists and such other scientists will undoubtedly give us physical and material causes of such calamities. But the belief has been entertained all the world over by religiously minded people, especially by the Hindus, that there are spiritual causes for such visitations. I entertain the honest and deep conviction that such visitations are due to the great sin that we have committed towards humanity and to God. For long, long years, we have not been treating our fellowmen properly as our own brethren and should we not take this as a warning sent to us to correct our way of life? This earthquake has razed big palaces to the ground and has done immense harm to thousands of people, but the great harm caused by the insolence of man to brother man has not only destroyed the body of Harijans, but it has terribly destroyed the Harijans' soul itself. Whilst therefore you are, as I wish you will be, thinking over your duty towards the afflicted people of Bihar, I do hope that you will understand that there is an invariable connection in a way between this untouchability designed by man and this calamity. God could never design that one class of men should suppress another class of men. I would therefore like you tomorrow to send your subscriptions to the afflicted men in Bihar with a determination that henceforth you are not going to maintain untouchability and consider a single human-being lower than yourself. No matter what may be said to the contrary, I maintain that in the books of Hindu Shastras there is no warrant whatsoever for untouchability as we practise it today. You in Chettinad have been blessed with riches. You have enough intelligence to understand the conditions to which these Harijans have been reduced today. I wish you, young men, whom I see around me, and young women also to examine the conditions of these men and devote both your intelligence and your material resources to the improvement of their conditions. I have called this movement a movement of self-purification and penance. I invite these women and men to take their full share in this movement.

The Hindu, 29-1-1934

58. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, DEVACOTTAH[1]

January 27, 1934

Replying to the address he said that he was not at all surprised with the purse given to him, because he had expected a large amount from Devacottah. He was glad to find himself amongst them to renew old acquaintances. He then appealed for liberal contributions to the earthquake-stricken Bihar. Many thousands were buried alive and many more were injured. Many more thousands were left there homeless, foodless, and clothless, lying in the open and shivering with cold. They needed relief. He appealed to them to observe tomorrow as All-India Bihar Day when liberal contributions should be made to alleviate the sufferings of the afflicted people in Bihar. He hoped that the youths of Devacottah would prove true to their promise contained in their address that they would go from door to door to raise a large sum on behalf of the Bihar sufferers.

The Hindu, 29-1-1934

59. TELEGRAM TO RAJENDRA PRASAD

MADURA,
[On or before *January 28, 1934*]

I AM DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE. WIRE MAGANLAL PRANJIVAN 14 MOGUL STREET RANGOON FOR SUBSCRIPTION. WIRE POSITION.

The Bombay Chronicle, 29-1-1934

[1] Over 16,000 people attended this meeting. An address along with a purse was presented to Gandhiji. At the end of the meeting the address and the presents, which included gold and silver articles, were auctioned.

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60. LETTER TO PREMI JAIRAMDAS

January 28, 1934

MY DEAR PREMA,

I have your card. Tell Father I shall be touring in Tamil Nad till nearly 23rd February, and then for 10 days in Karnatak. The programme after that is not yet fixed.

Love.

Yours,
BAPU

[PS.]

Hope Dr. Choithram is keeping well.

SHRI PREMABEHN
PREM BHAVAN, MARKET RD.
HYDERABAD
SIND

From the original: C.W. 9248. Courtesy: Jairamdas Doulatram

61. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

January 28, 1934

CHI. PREMA,

I could only now finish reading your letter. I had to read it in three instalments.

I was certain that you would not desire to come to see me. When I heard, however, that you wanted to come, I advised you to exercise self-control but did not forbid you to come. The resolution which you and others made to return to jail as soon as you were released was the only proper course for you. But how can we force those others who have weakened?

I see from your letter that it is doubtful even whether you will get this letter.

I had indeed preserved, with great love, the yarn spun from the slivers sent by you. Labels in Mahadev's beautiful handwriting were also attached to it. But I don't know what happened to it during my fast. It is possible that Mahadev has preserved

it and got it stored away safely somewhere. Mahadev is at present strictly forbidden to write letters and so it is a little difficult to write to him and inquire.

You should see that the yarn which you spun is woven into khadi without delay. Ramji should be asked to weave it.

I see that you have done a very good amount of reading. If you feel inclined, read carefully Tulsidas's *Ramayana*, the Bible and the Koran. If you can, complete the study of Urdu which you have started. You have made excellent use of your time.

Many things have been left out in your letter. I do hope you have written another after that.

What you write concerning Lilavati is correct. It is difficult to say anything about her future.

I advised[1] you to go through the issues of *Harijan* so that you might know what developments had taken place on that issue during the past few months. If, however, you did not get time, it is natural that you could not read them.

This time you may get 'C'[2] class. I would welcome that.

I see that Kisan's body and mind have improved. She is still weak, though. I don't think we can burden her with any work. She does whatever work she can do, but she soon gets tired. She needs plenty of sleep. The company which she gets here seems to have proved congenial to her. Though she is twice as old as Om, the two have become good friends. It is difficult to say which of the two has the chief share in this. Both seem to be extremely sociable. To me she doesn't seem to be 28 at all.

I didn't get, after all, the letter which you wrote from jail. About myself, what should I write? My health has remained quite good and can stand the strain of work all right. I hardly get time to write letters.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10354. Also C.W. 6793. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

[1] *Vide* Vol. LVI, p. 496.
[2] On both the occasions the addressee was given 'B' class.

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62. SPEECH AT LAYING OF FOUNDATION-STONE FOR HARIJAN SCHOOL, DEVACOTTAH

January 28, 1934

I am obliged to you for this address and for your determination to help the poor and give them all possible facilities and freedom. I am glad to learn that you have opened a free library to all without caste distinction. It has also given me very great pleasure to lay today the foundation-stone for the school which is designed for the use of all people without distinction including Harijans. I hope that the school will be a prosperous one in the sense that it will be attended by all classes and you will take care to engage such teachers as will give real education, to the boys and girls who enter here, both of the heart and the head.[1]

The Hindu, 30-1-1934

63. SPEECH AT HARIJAN CHERI, CHITHANUR

January 28, 1934

Gandhiji complimented them on their having a progressive school, and referring to the Harijan-Nattar problem, said:

I had known about the trouble between the Harijans and Nattars. It is undoubtedly unfortunate that among the Hindus themselves there should be any such trouble. It is undoubtedly shameful that there should be interference even with your freedom to dress and to move how you like. I have not the shadow of doubt that you have precisely the same rights to the use of temples and roads and to regulate your habits of dress as the so-called *savarna* Hindus have, and I would like you to shed the fear you have of being molested in the exercise of your liberty. I would like you to be brave and courageous and face the sufferings in the exercise of your freedom. You should also remember and know that at the present moment there is a growing body of reformers who are your true friends and servants, and I have no doubt that they will stand by you in your sufferings. But remember in your sufferings let there be no hate.

[1] At the conclusion of the meeting the presents were auctioned.

Continuing, Gandhiji made a forceful appeal for their abstaining from drink and eating carrion.

The Hindu, 30-1-1934

64. *INTERVIEW WITH THE NATTARS, DEVACOTTAH*

January 28, 1934

Gandhiji spoke at first for fifteen minutes. He said even while in Poona the Nattar-Harijan question had been brought to his notice. He knew what was happening here. Nattars and Harijans had quarrelled and he knew of it. But he wanted to tell them as a Hindu that the Harijans had not asked for anything to which they were not entitled as Hindus and as human beings. The Harijans had every right to wear what dress they pleased or what ornaments. Why should they not? Why should the Nattars have a sense of offence at this? He asked Nattars to understand what was happening in the world today. They could not resist reforms. They should be kind to the Harijans who were their blood-brothers. They were the children of the same great God, 'whose mercy was full to all men alike'; the Nattars and Harijans were members of the same family.

Learned men might hold that untouchability had a sanction in the Hindu Shastras. But he would assure them that he had looked into the question most carefully and would assure them that there were many learned men and many holy men who were Hindus who held that untouchability as practised today had absolutely no sanction in the Shastras. Could untruths be in the Shastras? Untouchability was an untruth. Therefore, they should not debate this question but act in accordance with truth.

One elderly Nattar stood up and stated that they had no quarrel with the Harijans who kept the old order in Hindu society. But now the Harijans were violating established traditions and customs. The Nattars never objected to Harijan women wearing what dress they liked. In regard to the Harijan men it was only on public occasions and in temple festivals that the Nattars insisted on the Harijans observing old customs.

Gandhiji replied that the Nattars should look into the question and decide whether any particular tradition was good or bad and act accordingly. But the Nattar leader continued to insist that established tradition could not be violated.

Gandhiji answered that there were certain laws common to all human society and one of them was that no body of men could force on another body of men particular modes of dress and ornaments, etc. If the Harijans wanted a change in regard to these matters, why should they be prevented? If, on this account, the Nattars molested the Harijans and the matter went

to a court of law the Nattars' case would be rejected at once. Religion, dharma and established law alike forbade such interference.

He then made a final appeal to the Nattars and said that they should not allow matters to drift but make up their minds to do justice to the Harijans and treat them kindly and affectionately as brothers. Such a procedure would benefit both the Nattars and the Harijans alike. If he had any doubt that his advice would benefit the Harijans only and not the Nattars, he would have hesitated to tender this advice. But he was absolutely convinced that his advice would be beneficial and bring lasting good not only to the Harijans but to the Nattars also.

After the Nattar leader garlanded Gandhiji, the function terminated at 5 minutes to 1.45 p.m.

The Hindu, 30-1-1934

65. *INTERVIEW TO "THE HINDU"*[1]

January 28, 1934

I had an hour's conversation with a very large number of Nattars.[2] Their leaders spoke frankly. I put it to the Nattar representatives present that it was wrong for them to plead the usage of custom in favour of depriving fellow-beings of liberty of action as to their mode of dress or use of ornaments. I am hoping that my conversation will produce the desired effect.

The Nattars were very attentive to what I said to them. What gives me hope however is the fact that there are some Nattars who are earnest about reforms. Besides, there is also an increasing awakening among Harijans themselves regarding their elementary rights. There is no mistaking the fact that the phenomenal awakening that has taken place over the untouchability question is slowly affecting the villagers who were hitherto untouched by anything happening outside their own respective villages.

Answering another question, whether there was any attempt on the part of H. H. Puri Shankarachariar to see him at Devacottah, Gandhiji replied:

His representative did see me and I said I would gladly have friendly discussion with him by appointment, but there was no time left in Devacottah. The letter reached me only a few

[1] The *Hindu* representative had asked Gandhiji to give his impressions of the Nattar-Harijan problem.

[2] *Vide* the preceding item and also "Among the Nattars", pp. 134-5.

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minutes before 1 o'clock yesterday, when I was to have a conference with the Nattar representatives but as I have said, I would gladly set apart an hour at Coonoor, if that would suit His Holiness. In fact, I have gone out of my way to hold friendly conversations with those who claimed to be sanatanists.

The Hindu, 29-1-1934

66. TELEGRAM TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

PODANUR,
January 29, 1934

SETH JAMNALALJI
WARDHA

SENT REPLY WARDHA. UNNECESSARY INTERRUPT WORK UNLESS RAJENDRAPRASAD REQUIRES YOUR PRESENCE. SPECIALLY SENDING PATNA RELEASED SABARMATI MEN. RAJENDRAPRASAD WANTS THEM.

BAPU

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 122

67. LETTER TO RAOJIBHAI N. PATEL

January 28/29, 1934

CHI. RAOJIBHAI,

I got your letter. It seems all of you have had invaluable experiences this time. Do come, if you needs must see me. If correspondence will do, then exercise self-control. I am at such a distance that you cannot reach here without spending a large sum. About three weeks more yet will be spent in Tamil Nadu. We shall be able to go to Karnataka only in the last week of February. It, therefore, seems to me best that everybody who can manage without coming here should do so. If, however, you feel that it is absolutely necessary for you to come, then come without any hesitation.

It is not yet fixed where I shall be on which date.

(I dictated this while eating and had to stop; now I am writing the rest of the letter in the train which is taking me to Coonoor.)

You will know the programme when you reach Madras. You cannot come to meet me anywhere unless you first come to

Madras. You must have seen the wire[1] I sent yesterday to Chimanlal. Rajendrababu needs experienced persons. If you can go, do so. It is one's duty at this juncture to suspend the programme of jail-going and rush to Bihar instead.

I am quite well. You will know more if you go through the back issues of *Harijan*.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I have given more details in my letter[2] to Chimanlal. Please read it.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9001

68. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

ON WAY TO COONOOR,
January 29, 1934

Bihar and Midnapur are wringing my heart. I have written to Swami about this. If you have not read it, please do. Rajendrababu wants the Ashram inmates who have been released to help. I have sent a wire to Ahmedabad and also to Swami. If your health were good I would have suggested your going there too. If it seems necessary to go even at obvious risk to one's health, one should go. But I see no such need just now. I have written to Rajendrababu and asked him to let me know if he requires my presence there.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 142

69. TELEGRAM TO RAJENDRA PRASAD[3]

[On or before *January 30, 1934*][4]

YOUR TELEGRAM. DOING NEEDFUL.[5]

The Bombay Chronicle, 31-1-1934

[1] & [2] These are not traceable.

[3] This was in reply to the addressee's suggestion for an appeal to foreign countries for help to the victims of the Bihar earthquake.

[4] The report in the source bears the date January 30.

[5] *Vide* the following item.

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70. APPEAL TO THE WORLD

[On or before *January 30, 1934*][1]

I have received the following wire from Babu Rajendra Prasad:

> Please consider the propriety of appealing to foreign countries, particularly to Indians abroad. The reconstruction of the province requires crores. Several thousands have perished and many times more injured and rendered homeless and resourceless.
>
> The flourishing towns of Monghyr, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Motihari, Samastipur, Sitamarhi and Madhubani are heaps of bricks. Others like Patna, Chhapra and Bhagalpur fared better, but even there, hundreds of houses were demolished and hundreds are standing seriously damaged.
>
> Countryside crops in vast tracts were destroyed or damaged by the flood caused by the eruption of water and sand through fissures in the earth. Extensive areas were rendered a desert by heavy deposits of sand and other extensive areas covered with spouted water.
>
> Wells are choked up and are causing scarcity of drinking water. Many sugarcane factories were disabled and endangering the crop of one lakh acres unless prompt steps are taken to save.

I heartily endorse it and hope that Indians living in different parts of the world will send the utmost they can. I have in mind especially my old friends and fellow-workers in Africa. And merchants and others living in England and on the Continent, Japan and America are also requested to send liberal contributions.

In point of distress nothing perhaps has surpassed the Bihar calamity in India within living memory. Reluctant though I have always been to appeal to non-Indians for pecuniary help, not from any prudery, but out of delicate consideration, I gladly adopt Babu Rajendra Prasad's suggestion and invite numerous non-Indian friends in Europe, America and Africa and other parts of the world to render such help as they can.

Contributions may be sent direct to Babu Rajendra Prasad, Patna; or to my address, Wardha, Central Provinces.

The Hindu, 3-2-1934

[1] *The Bombay Chronicle*, 1-2-1934, published the appeal under the date January 30 and *The Searchlight*, 2-2-1934, under the date January 31.

71. TELEGRAM TO HIRALAL SHARMA[1]

COONOOR,
January 30, 1934

DR. SHARMA
KHURJA

CAN SEE NO DIFFICULTY BUT AWAIT MY LETTER.

GANDHI

Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsha, p. 54

72. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

January 30, 1934

DEAR DAUGHTER RAIHANA,[2]

I have your letter through the sisters Schill and Boari. Of course you are absolved from the promise. What I said was the general experience of mankind. There was no question whatsoever of your honesty being doubted. But I understand what is weighing on you. That weight must be lifted. I know that you will grow in any event.

I wish I could join your prayer meeting. You are doing better than what I have been able to achieve.

It is quite good news you give me about Gopi's diary.

Father tells me about some yogi treating you with good results and a promise of better. Who is he?

Tell Father I have his long letter. I cannot help him in supplementing his recollections of our first meeting. I have but a faint recollection of meetings prior to the meetings in Godhra. I have a fair recollection of our meetings since then. And the brief meeting at Baroda station when you and Hamida were sitting in my lap I shall never forget. It was all as if I had met members of the same family! Love to you all. I take it you have been collecting for Bihar.

BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 9654

[1] The addressee had closed down his clinic and sought Gandhiji's permission to stay at the Ashram at Wardha.

[2] The superscription is in Urdu.

73. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

COONOOR,
January 30, 1934

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I got your letter. I sent a wire[1] to Gondia and have also sent one[2] to Wardha. Do not leave the work you have taken up unless Rajendrababu specially asks you to go. Rajendrababu will not do so without reason. I also have decided to do the same. I have no doubt that you would not readily leave the work you have taken up. You may leave it and go only where your presence is indispensable. Just now I don't think that is the case. In reply to Rajendrababu's request, I have sent some of the inmates of the Ashram who were recently released. I have received today a wire saying that some of them have proceeded there. I have not included Surendra among them as he is working with you. If you don't need him, you can send him. He should take some woollen clothes if he goes. If you require him, however, he need not go just now. I have sent a wire to Swami asking him to go.

Om is doing well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2931

74. LETTER TO JANAKIDEVI BAJAJ

January 30, 1934

CHI. JANAKIBEHN,

Is it right to complain if Jamnalal gets excited owing to weakness of the brain? Should we mind the bad temper of a person who is sick? It should be always ignored. Or did you write the letter for my amusement? Tell Madalasa that she seems to have forgotten me completely. That will not do. Om is fine.

[1] *Vide* p. 58.
[2] *Vide* p. 67.

How is Ramakrishna ? How are you ? Take care of Vali.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2930

75. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

COONOOR,
January 30, 1934

BA,

I have had no letter from you yet. Today we are on a mountain in Madras. Its height is the same as that of Almora. The greenery is probably more beautiful, but we cannot see snow-covered mountains here. The Himalayas are very very far away. We shall be staying here up to the 5th. Amtussalaam has come here. She wanted to return today, but we have prevailed upon her to stay on up to the 5th. Her health may be said to be fairly good. Kusum (Rami's daughter) has attained the divine feet of Rama. I got the letter only yesterday. Bali is grieving very much. Manju was there and could solace her. I have had no news about Harilal recently. Ramdas writes regularly. Devdas-Lakshmi have gone to Delhi. Devdas may be said to have settled down quite well. Brijkrishna is all right now. As a result of the earthquake in Bihar, between twenty and twenty-five thousand people have died. Hundreds of thousands have become homeless. There has been a loss amounting to crores of rupees. Rajendrababu has just been released and has plunged into relief work. Collections are being raised all over the country. I too have been collecting something. I have been receiving wire after wire. He [Rajendrababu] has asked for Ashram inmates (men) to be sent to Bihar, and I have, therefore, sent a wire. I do not know yet who will go. Lilavati is pretty ill. Velanbehn has lost 25 lb. She has gone to Baroda, taking Anandi and Mani with her. Durga[1] has gone to Bulsar with Bablo[2] and Bachu[3]. Premabehn is back [in jail]. She is quite well. I am not sending a discourse today. You should still have one with you. I am well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Bane Patro, pp. 11-2

[1] Wife of Mahadev Desai
[2] Narayan Desai, Mahadev Desai's son
[3] Nirmala Desai, Mahadev Desai's sister

76. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

COONOOR,
January 30, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I have still not received your letter this time. I think I shall get it in a day or two. I am writing this in Coonoor, sitting in sunshine. I first wrote the articles for *Harijan*. Then I had my meal. After that I finalized the programme of the Tamil Nadu tour and had a nap. And now I have sat down to write letters.

These days Bihar takes plenty of my time. You know now the extent of the destruction there. I get wires from Rajendrababu almost every day. I do whatever he wants me to do. There is no need for me to go to Bihar just now. He has asked for those inmates of the Ashram who have been released. I have sent a wire to the Ashram accordingly. As many of them as can go will go. I have not received any reply as to who will be able to go. I talk about Bihar at every meeting. I have even collected some jewellery and cash. At the moment I seem to be getting a good response. It remains to be seen how the aid is utilized.

Amtussalaam has come here. She was ready to return immediately today. But I have detained her till the end of my stay in Coonoor. She will descend with me on the 6th and will go back to Gujarat to her work. Gangabehn and other women are resting.

I shall be going to Belgaum towards the end of the next month or in the beginning of March. But the plan may also have to be abandoned if meanwhile I receive a call from Bihar. If finally I do go to Belgaum, I will write for permission to see Mahadev and Mani.

Kanjibhai is expected here in a day or two. Shantikumar[1] has undergone an operation for hernia. He is better now. Shankerlal came and saw me in connection with khadi work. He is at present laid up with influenza in Bombay. Dr. Rajan and Nageshwararao are with me here. We are staying in the latter's bungalow. Kishorelal is still bed-ridden. I have sent a wire to Swami asking him to proceed to Bihar.

[1] Shantikumar N. Morarjee

Prithuraj has been helping Chandrashankar. Velanbehn has gone to Lakshmidas at Baroda, taking Anandi and Mani with her. She has lost 25 lb. in jail. Bablo and Durga have gone to Bulsar. Amina will go with her children to Pyare Ali. Mani Parikh has gone to Kathlal just now with the children. Afterwards she will visit Narahari. They will then decide what to do. Prema has gone back to jail. Though Lilavati is ill, she also seems to have insisted on going.

Blessings to both from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 68-9

77. *LETTER TO RAJENDRA PRASAD*[1]

[Before *January 31, 1934*][2]

BROTHER RAJENDRA PRASAD,

What am I to write? What comfort can I give? I have been upset. To give up what I am doing looks like *adharma*, but even if I abandon it, what will I be able to do? Since yesterday, I have been narrating the tale of Bihar in every speech. People listen. Some contribute on the spot. I ask everyone to send money to you direct or pay it to me if they think it proper. Be writing or wiring to me. I do not read papers daily. What do you advise me about my tour in Bihar? Would it be proper for me to come there in connection with untouchability? Should I come there in connection with the alleviation of suffering? Will not my not coming there be preferable ? I shall do as you advise.

The Hindu, 1-2-1934

[1] According to the source, the letter was in Hindi. The original, however, is not traceable.

[2] The report in the source is dated January 31.

CWMG - LVII

78. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL[1]

January 31, 1934

. . . sent there at once.

My health is quite good. Weight 110, b.p. 155-100, food as before. Mira is also quite well. Do not expect her to write much or at all just now. She is off writing. The rush through space leaves nobody much time for writing. This is being written between 3 and 4 a.m.

You must keep your body fit.

Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

79. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

January 31, 1934

BHAI JIVANJI,

I got your letter. Please give the accompanying letter to Kakasaheb if he is there.

I understand what you say about Durga. I shall know in a day or two whether I shall be going to Belgaum or not. Even if I go, it will be around February 25 or 26 or even later. Will Durga wait till then? I will certainly try to secure permission if I do go to Belgaum. But it is possible that I may not get it. Such risks have to be taken. If they do give me the permission, probably they will do so even if Durga has seen him in the mean while. But one can't be sure. I stop here as some visitors are coming.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9936. Also C.W. 6911. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

[1] The first two sheets of the letter are missing.

80. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

January 31, 1934

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

Your letter. I liked the comparison of the earthquake and the Harijan problem very much because it is the truth. It is self-evident that the poorest have suffered little; but is it not equally true that those in possession of even a little have turned destitute? I am doing from here what is possible.

The Bengal tour has put me in a dilemma. It is good that you are there. I have written a long letter today to Dr. Bidhan. Please see it and take a decision there. On my part, I feel that the only decision open to me is to go unless you people raise an objection.

I keep getting letters from...[1]. But this you have to consider. At present ... cannot fully satisfy...[2]. Her physique cannot stand the strain. What is the solution if ... cannot exercise self-restraint? The problem is complex. I shall write to .... .

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 7944. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

81. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

February 1, 1934

DEAR AGATHA,

I am writing this between 3 and 4 a.m. Have just finished a note to Henry. Andrews tells me you too have not been overwell. Evidently you in England need more change and rest than we here seem to need. And you must take it if you wall get the maximum work from the body. I hope that this letter will find you fully restored.

I do not even look at the letters Chandrashankar has been writing to you. I hope that he has been keeping you fully posted with news from here.

Of the desolation of Bihar you know as much as I do. Rajendra Prasad is making a Herculean effort to relieve suffering.

[1] & [2] The names have been omitted.

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He has rendered full co-operation to the Government. At this instance I have made an appeal to the non-Indian friends all over the world. You must have seen Reuter's cable. Chandrashankar will be sending you a copy. The male members of the Ashram who have just come out of prison have suspended their civil resistance and gone to Bihar. The calamity is of such magnitude that all the help that the whole world may give will be a drop in the ocean. But I suppose there is a spiritual result seen and unseen of such material help. The stricken people will derive comfort from the thought that the whole world is thinking of them and coming to their assistance. I am presently writing to Andrews and Holmes[1] and Rolland.

Of the gradual but sure dissolution of untouchability you know all from the cuttings that Chandrashankar has been sending you in addition to the copies of *Harijan*.

The measures the Government have adopted to crush the spirit of the people defy description. The gagging of the Press has made it well-nigh impossible to know the news accurately and to publish what little oozes out in spite of the strictest censorship. Copies I am sending you of original documents will give you an inkling of what is happening. I do not want any public propaganda but you may make what use you like among friends and among the official world there. As you are aware, the two attempts I made to gain the ear of the authorities ended in failure. True, I had courteous replies but no admission of error. On the contrary both from Bengal and Bombay I received a blank denial of the charges made including repudiation of the evidence of what Mira had seen with her own eyes. I am trying my best to find a way to honourable peace. But there can be none so long as the Government persist in repression. My fear is that it has been worse in the Frontier Province than in Bengal. But news is more difficult to get from there even than from Bengal. All this, however, does not mean that I have given up all hope. For I can never lose faith in prayer which is the same thing as non-violence whether it be through letter-writing or civil resistance or mute prayer only. I simply mention the difficulties in the way. Friends in England should have as accurate news as I can gather or rather the news that comes to me unsought. My one preoccupation is war against untouchability. I wonder if you realize that I hardly have time to read the voluminous post that follows me during the tour. I read only the portion that Chandrashankar

[1] John Haynes Holmes

thinks I ought to read. Things are worse than what you saw at Knightsbridge. It is only here in Coonoor where I am resting from incessant travelling that I am able to give you this long letter.

Now a word about an Indian Bureau outside India. I am opposed to the idea. I must not argue. The money given by Vithalbhai Patel cannot be used for that purpose. It can be used only for constructive work in India, e.g., untouchability, khadi, national service. On this point I am perhaps the only "whole-hogger" but there it is. I am convinced that when India as a whole is awakened nothing can stop her march to freedom. She is being awakened. This lull does not affect the march. It is a precursor to the full awakening. Foreign propaganda must be taken up by foreigners. That friends all over are taking up to the best of their ability.

You will share this with friends.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1477

82. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

COONOOR,
February 1, 1934

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have your letters. Chandrashankar has been sending a regular weekly letter to Agatha. I can hardly cope with the correspondence. Chandrashankar overtakes it and *Harijan* work by dropping out of the tour three days in the week. I am moving more swiftly than before and keeping good health!!!

You will see the long letter[1] I have written to Agatha. I need say nothing therefore in this about public affairs.

You have balanced all the bad news you have given me by telling me that Esther's difficulties are all solved and that Menon has at last decided to come to India. I am sure it is a sound decision, if it is a firm one. I am glad you gave that message to Nellie Ball. She is a brave woman with an unquenchable faith in God. Please repeat my love to her. I must not attempt to send her or the Alexanders or the Hoylands separate letters. Do

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

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tell them all that they are constantly in my thoughts. As to your brother and your sister in New Zealand, what can I say? With your nature I know you will be happy if you can be personally by their side. But your preoccupations are far too many to make that possible. I hope you are getting enough from the sale of your books to give them what financial aid you can.

I told you about Sir Prabhashankar's donation to Santiniketan.

Dr. Ambedkar returned to India some time ago. He has not written to me. I shall resist no solution that pleases Harijans and the so-called caste Hindus, provided of course that separate electorates are not revived. What I call the most valuable work done during these three months would have been impossible if politically they had been completely isolated.

Love to all whom you may see.

MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 984

83. LETTER TO ATMA S. KAMALANI[1]

COONOOR,
February 1, 1934

MY DEAR KAMALANI,

I am very much behindhand in my correspondence. I reach your letter of 29th December only today.

I appreciate the committee's suggestion. It shows their anxiety to show better results. Please assure them that I know they are doing all they can. My own conviction is that a paid Indian mission cannot do better and cannot render them effective help. It will be wrong to deduce necessity for a permanent Indian organization from some good work that a man like Bhulabhai Desai may do. Such men may go to England more frequently than they do. But a permanent organization can do no good and may do harm. People have to work out their salvation here and no amount of misrepresentation or suppression of news will be able to restrain them when mass realization of strength has come to people. What will be effective there is equal mass realization there of the consciousness of wrong being done to India in every way. That realization can only come through the persistent

[1] Hon. Jt. Secretary, "Friends of India", London

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efforts of societies like yours, even as here it is our effort that must count. The money that Vithalbhai sent to me was to be used for constructive work here. I propose to publish the correspondence as soon as I can put together the papers. I could not have accepted the purse for any other purpose. I know that in holding the views I have expressed here, I belong to the minority. But the conviction that came to me in 1920 has grown stronger. Even in the heyday of the struggle I never felt the want of an Indian organization in foreign lands. Had there been any, perhaps neither the band of true Englishmen and Englishwomen who are working there now nor the band of true Americans working in America would have come into being.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1530

84. LETTER TO RAMI AND MANU GANDHI

February 1, 1934

CHI. RAMI AND MANU,[1]

I got your letter. Kusum's[2] withering away is bound to grieve you all. Even I, though my heart is as hard as stone, felt grieved for a moment. Both you sisters will have calmed down when you get this letter. After all, everybody will die sooner or later. Why, then, should one grieve over death? Keep writing to me. I will expect a letter from Rami. Ba will be very much pained at the news. Probably you know that she receives letters only from me, once a week, and also writes to me only. No other letter, therefore, will be delivered to her. If you wish anything to be conveyed to her, you may write to me.

What is the position regarding Manu's studies?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1528. Courtesy: Manubehn S. Mashruwala

[1] Daughters of Harilal Gandhi
[2] Rami's daughter; the name literally means a "flower".

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85. LETTER TO PADMA

[*February 1, 1934*][1]

CHI. PADMA,

I got your letter. I do not recollect having received your New Year greetings. On the contrary, I have been harbouring a complaint against you for not writing to me. I have noted the work you are doing there. I hope you will do it with a calm mind. You say nothing about your weight. You don't write even to Sarojini[2]. Write regularly from now on. About Bihar . . .[3]

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6147. Also C.W. 3502. Courtesy: Prabhudas Gandhi

86. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

[*February 1, 1934*][4]

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I got your wire. Rajendrababu has asked only for men workers. I therefore sent a wire to Ahmedabad instructing that such workers should be sent. There is not much likelihood of his asking for women workers. You may, therefore, finish as much work there as you wish to and leave for your place. Even those who have gone to Bihar will probably return in two or three months.

I had received your letter also. Let me have some news about Durga, Mahavir, etc. None of them writes to me. But I hear that . . .[5] does not behave properly. Take care and see that he is not spoiled by us. Chandrashankar thinks that Bachu[6], being gentle of nature, gives way in everything.

[1] From the postmark
[2] Addressee's mother
[3] The rest of the letter cannot be deciphered.
[4] Supplied in the source
[5] The name is omitted in the source.
[6] Addressee's brother's son

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Who among the women did the most reading and study? Who maintained the best health? What happened regarding Maitri's betrothal? How is Ramibai?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–6: G. S. Gangabehnne, p. 82. Also C.W. 8815. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

87. LETTER TO BALIBEHN M. ADALAJA

February 1, 1934

CHI. BALI[1],

I can from this distance understand your suffering. Rami will get over the shock but I know you will not. I have fully understood the love in you, and I honour you for that. You have merged your life in the lives of Chanchi's[2] children. You have made yourself a real mother to them. In hurting you, I have hurt myself. But if I did hurt you, I did it for the good of the children. What consolation can I offer you in your present sorrow? I would have had a right to do so only if I had nursed Kusum in her illness. And how can I talk philosophy to you? I, therefore, leave you to God's care. He will give you peace of mind. I am sure your love will not go unrewarded. May God lead you to your good and illuminate your love with knowledge. Get rid of the element of ignorant attachment which mingles with your love.

Please write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1529. Courtesy: Manubehn S. Mashruwala

[1] Harilal Gandhi's wife's sister
[2] Chanchal, Harilal's wife

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88. LETTER TO AMINA G. QURESHI

February 1, 1934

CHI. AMINA,

I have your letter. We may meet early only if you come over to see me; otherwise we can meet only when I go over there, which does not seem likely before six months.

Since Qureshi has said so, you may wait for him. I certainly do not like the idea of taking the children to Bombay. They are studying all right. The treatment for eczema is continuing. Having once taken the burden off Pyare Ali I do not like thrusting it on him again. But I do not know if I am mistaken in taking this view. You should therefore act as you think proper after considering my opinion.

You have the right to pour out your heart to me; it is also your duty. Hence, be bold and write to me whatever you want to say to me in person. Recover your health. Don't you think it would be necessary for you to regulate your diet for the purpose?

Write to me.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10623. Courtesy: Amina G. Qureshi

89. INTERVIEW TO ADI-DRAVIDA JAN SABHA, COONOOR[1]

February 1, 1934

The first question discussed was that of Harijan unemployment, which is very acute in these parts. The deputation suggested the opening of a leather factory to give employment to Harijans. Mahatmaji replied that such a leather factory in Coonoor could give employment at best only to a few Harijans, and even that would go into the hands of the professional cobblers. The Central Board was engaged in drawing up a comprehensive scheme of economic survey and relief. The suggestions of the deputation should go to the Central Board. He asked the deputationists for statistical information regarding Harijan unemployment in the various occupations.

[1] The deputation consisted of 12 persons and was headed by R. T. Kesavalu and R. T. Manickam.

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The second point discussed was the necessity for a special paper for Harijans wherein all the grievances of the Harijans could be legitimately ventilated. The deputation was anxious that the Central Board should assist in financing such a venture. Mahatmaji did not think money should, at this stage, be spent on such a venture. Money was needed for more urgent items of relief. And then he pointed out that there were widely circulated Tamil and English papers which would not cut out representations from the Harijans. The deputation should make the best use of such papers.

The next question discussed was how far Gandhiji felt the *savarna* Hindus were changing their mind in regard to untouchability. Mr. Manickam asked: "So far as the tour has progressed, do you find adequate change of heart among the *savarnas*?" Gandhiji's reply was characteristic.

I have no doubt whatever in my mind that the change of heart is taking place. I do not want to issue a certificate of merit to the *savarna* workers, but the change was phenomenal and even beyond expectations. The Hindus are now forming themselves into two groups—one that of the reformers who consider themselves to be Harijans and not merely patrons of the Harijans, and the other those who refuse to have anything to do with the Harijan movement. I have no doubt whatever that the former will grow and soon absorb the latter.

Mr. Manickam then asked: "But Mahatmaji, we read in the papers that even after your persuasion the Nattars are adamant and swear by old tradition." Mahatmaji smiled at this and said:

Ah, I do not know what the newspapers have published, but the old Nattar representative who spoke to me seemed as though he had been coached, but what matters is that over a hundred Nattars listened to my advice with goodwill and let me tell you there are important Nattars who agree with me and are helping our workers.

Gandhiji assured the deputationists that they need have no fear, and that the desired change would come soon.

The deputationists observed: "From the very beginning our Sabha has stood out for Joint Electorate with reservation of seats. We are assuring our community that our future is safe in the hands of the reformers. Unless we can carry this conviction to our community, joint effort would be impossible. Hence our anxiety to get your assurance of the coming change." Gandhiji replied:

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and what should convince you is the work going on before your eyes. Even here in Coonoor in my rest eager crowds surround me and I ask them for money for the Harijan fund. They give me their annas and

sometimes their rupee. This movement is a religious movement, and everywhere people are recognizing it now. That is why even here the crowds daily increase in giving me more money.

The next question discussed was regarding the number of seats assigned to the Harijans in the Madras Legislative Council as per the Yeravda Pact. He assured the deputationists that their thirty votes would always help them in turning the corner in regard to their problems as they arose in the Council.

If you realize as I do the value of thirty votes in the Council, you will have no fears. In South Africa, the Indian community with very much less voting strength could turn the scales in their favour at critical junctures. Here your position is absolutely strong unless everyone else in the Council is opposed to you which is impossible. So my word to you is : Have no fear for the future.

The last question was regarding the sweeper Harijans in general. "Because Harijans are sweepers and scavengers, *savarnas* refuse to treat them as social equals." Gandhiji replied:

Not at all. Here it is a question of utter stupidity. We must remove this ignorance. In my Ashram, I myself and all the inmates are sweepers and scavengers. This is no new question to me. The sweeping and scavenging work is first-class social service. With knowledge coming, this superstition will die.

The deputationists fervently prayed that Gandhiji should come again to these parts soon.

Oh, if you want me to come again, I shall. Only promise me life till my 99th year. I shall be in Coonoor in my 99th year.

The Hindu, 3-2-1934

90. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

[Before *February 2, 1934*][1]

CHI. AMALA,

Do be patient. If I at all can I will come. I hope you have replaced your glasses. Do not worry about money when it is a matter of supplying needs.

Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

[1] In the source the letter has been placed between letters of January 31 and February 2.

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91. BIHAR AND UNTOUCHABILITY

A friendly wire says, "Will you not lay aside untouchability and go to Bihar?" An angry wire says, "Must Mahatma fiddle while Bihar is burning?" Both the wires pay me an undeserved compliment and exaggerate my capacity for service, as they assume that I can do more than my comrades. I have no such hallucination about my capacity. Rajendra Prasad is one of the best among my co-workers. He can command my services whenever he likes. The Harijan cause is as much his as it is mine, even as the cause of Bihar is as much mine as it is his. But God has summoned him to the Bihar relief as He has chosen the Harijan cause for me. When the call comes from Bihar, I hope I shall not be found wanting. Champaran discovered me when I was a mere wanderer. Babu Braj Kishore Prasad and his band of workers gave me their complete allegiance when India was wondering what place I had in her public life. I am tied to Bihar by sacred ties which are indissoluble. Therefore I need no spur to send me to Bihar. Perhaps I am serving her best by remaining at my post for the time being. All the world is directing her attention to the catastrophe. It would be presumption on my part to rush to Bihar when all are ready to assist her. Those also help who know how and when to wait.

But another wire says I must use the Harijan collections for Bihar relief. I think it would be a clear breach of trust on my part if I listened to the advice. We may not afford to be unnerved in the face of great calamities. Not all the riches of the world would restore Bihar to her original condition. Time must elapse before reconstruction takes place and things become normal. What is necessary is that those who have anything to give are induced to give the most, not the least, they can.

But I make bold to suggest that, in reconstructing life in Bihar, if the wisest use is to be made of the help that is being sent, the organizers would have resolutely to set their faces against reproducing evil customs and habits. They may not encourage untouchability or caste divisions unperceivably based on untouchability. Nature has been impartial in her destruction. Shall we retain our partiality—caste against caste, Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi, Jew, against one another—in reconstruction, or shall

we learn from her the lesson that there is no such thing as untouchability as we practise it today?

Tremendous responsibility rests both upon the Government and the unofficial agency as to how reconstruction is to be undertaken. And as both are working in co-operation for this purpose, it ought not to be difficult to rebuild Bihar on human and sanitary lines.

I share the belief with the whole world—civilized and uncivilized—that calamities such as the Bihar one come to mankind as chastisement for their sins. When that conviction comes from the heart, people pray, repent and purify themselves. I regard untouchability as such a grave sin as to warrant divine chastisement. I am not affected by posers such as 'why punishment for an age-old sin' or 'why punishment to Bihar and not to the South' or 'why an earthquake and not some other form of punishment'. My answer is : I am not God. Therefore I have but a limited knowledge of His purpose. Such calamities are not a mere caprice of the Deity or Nature. They obey fixed laws as surely as the planets move in obedience to laws governing their movement. Only we do not know the laws governing these events and, therefore, call them calamities or disturbances. Whatever, therefore, may be said about them must be regarded as guess work. But guessing has its definite place in man's life. It is an ennobling thing for me to guess that the Bihar disturbance is due to the sin of untouchability. It makes me humble, it spurs me to greater effort towards its removal, it encourages me to purify myself, it brings me nearer to my Maker. That my guess may be wrong does not affect the results named by me. For what is guess to the critic or the sceptic is a living belief with me, and I base my future actions on that belief. Such guesses become superstitions when they lead to no purification and may even lead to feuds. But such misuse of divine events cannot deter men of faith from interpreting them as a call to them for repentance for their sins. I do not interpret this chastisement as an exclusive punishment for the sin of untouchability. It is open to others to read in it divine wrath against many other sins.

Let anti-untouchability reformers regard the earthquake as a Nemesis for the sin of untouchability. They cannot go wrong, if they have the faith that I have. They will help Bihar more and not less for that faith. And they will try to create an atmosphere against reproduction of untouchability in any scheme of reconstruction.

Harijan, 2-2-1934

92. *SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED*[1]

I have a collection of questions in front of me. These I have answered during the Kerala tour. Some of the questions being of general interest, I propose to give them below with their answers.

Q. The local support one gets for Harijan work is very poor. People give readily when you come. Will you make an appeal for help to my work?

A. It is no use blaming the people. If they do not give, the fault must lie with you. You have not inspired sufficient confidence in you or your work. You have to be patient and concentrate on producing the best quality of work, and you will find the support coming without fail. I know of no healthy activity failing for want of pecuniary support. But people are like God. They try the patience of workers and answer prayers only when they have proved their sincerity and worth.

Q. Does the pay of Harijan workers at Harijan centres run by the Harijan Sevak Sangh come under welfare work or overhead charges?

A. It depends upon the nature of the work done by the worker. If he is doing constructive work, such as teaching in a Harijan school, it is welfare work. If he is keeping accounts or the like at an office, his pay would be part of overhead charges.

Q. There is a suggestion made by you that a society which disregards its servants suffers. Do you imply that Harijans are servants?

A. I do. I have stated a fact. Harijans today are as a body servants of the society, and as such they are treated in a disgraceful manner. He who runs may see how the society suffers in a thousand ways for its criminal neglect of its most useful servants. This neglect accounts for a tremendous economic, social, sanitary and moral waste. My statement of fact does not imply that Harijans should be compelled to remain servants for ever.

Q. There is lack of sympathy on the part of khadi workers for the Harijan cause as shown by the absence of Harijan recruits in khadi service.

[1] A Gujarati version of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 28-1-1934.

A. So far as I am aware, the charge is not true. There are many Harijans in the khadi service. Certainly there is no bar anywhere against the employment of Harijans in that service.

Q. A practice is growing up of Harijans adopting caste surnames, e.g., Nambudri, Nambiar, etc. What do you say to this?

A. I know the practice. It is not new. I dislike it. Harijans do not want to steal into the so-called *savarna* society. The latter has openly to admit them as blood-brothers and sisters. The present movement is one of self-purification, penance and reparation by *savarna* Hindus.

Q. You desire ladies to sacrifice their jewels. Why do you not ask the caste man to sacrifice his pride by giving up his thread?

A. There is no parallel between the two cases. The thread is a symbol of consecration for those who believe in it. I do not wear it, because it has no meaning for me and I know that millions go without it. In so far as it is used as a mark of superiority, it is worse than jewellery and the mere discarding of the thread would be valueless if pride, of which it is a symbol, is also not discarded. There is nothing to prevent Harijans from adopting it if they choose. But I should strongly discountenance the practice, as it would be an imitation without the original meaning behind it.

Q. I represent a brotherhood which is out to break caste distinctions and to preach harmony between religions. Sree Narayana Guru advocated one God, one religion, one caste. What is your message for me?

A. I wish you all success. I do believe in harmony between all religions. I have myself worked at it in my humble way. Caste distinctions, in so far as they imply superiority of one over another, have to be abolished altogether. That is merely a phase or a grade of untouchability. But in so far as caste in the sense of varna fulfils Nature's law of conservation of human energy and true economics, it is good to recognize and obey the law. You may deny the existence of any such law. I can then only refer you to the few proofs I have given in the columns of *Harijan* in support of it. I had the honour of meeting Sree Narayana Guru when he was still in the flesh and had a discussion with him on the point. Belief in one God is the corner-stone of all religions. But I do not foresee a time when there would be only one religion on earth in practice. In theory, since there is one God, there can be only one religion. But in practice, no two

persons I have known have had the same and identical conception of God. Therefore, there will, perhaps, always be different religions answering to different temperaments and climatic conditions. But I can clearly see the time coming when people belonging to different faiths will have the same regard for other faiths that they have for their own. I think that we have to find unity in diversity. I need say no more about caste beyond this that, in so far as abolition of distinctions of high and low are concerned, there is but one caste. We are all children of one and the same God and, therefore, absolutely equal.

Harijan, 2-2-1934

93. NOTES

The Cheapest Platform

In discussing the economics of public tours, in which vast crowds have to be considered, workers have suggested that platforms alone cost Rs. 50 at the least computation. This need not be so. Provision for vast crowds presupposes that the cause is popular and that, therefore, there will be voluntary help forthcoming. In such favourable atmosphere it should not be difficult to borrow bricks. Labour should be voluntary. Mud should be used in the place of mortar. A solid platform can thus be made for a rupee or thereabouts. No skilled labour is necessary for erecting such a platform. The only expense to be incurred will be that of carting bricks to and fro. But even such a platform can be dispensed with. If a ring is kept in the middle of the audience, large enough for a motor to turn round comfortably, and a broad passage left for it to pass through to the ring, the motor can be used as a solid platform. This was successfully tried at Sivaganga and Manamadura. If a higher platform is needed, the top of a motor-lorry makes a platform high enough for the largest audience. This, too, I have tried successfully in previous tours. The fence of the ring should be fairly strong. Strong wooden posts and stout cords can be borrowed for the purpose, and the ring can be erected inside of two hours if sufficient voluntary labour is available. Volunteers worth the name should be able to prepare these things without fuss and without any strain.

"Gita" Reciters

The readers of *Harijan* know what *Gita* means to me. I have always regarded the learning by heart of such books as the *Gita*

a very desirable thing. But I was never able to learn all the chapters of the *Gita* by heart myself though I made several attempts at it. I know I am very stupid at memorizing. So whenever I meet anyone who knows the *Gita* by heart, he or she commands my respect. I have already met two such during the Tamil Nad tour—a gentleman at Madura and a lady at Devacottah. The gentleman at Madura is a merchant unknown to fame; and the lady is Parvatibai, a daughter of the late Justice Sadasiva Iyer, who during his lifetime instituted an annual prize for the person who could best recite the *Gita* from memory. I would like, however, the reciters to realize that the mere recitation is not an end in itself. It should be an aid to the contemplation and assimilation of the meaning and the message of the *Gita*. By patience even a parrot can be taught to recite it by heart. But he would be no wiser for the recitation. The reciter of the *Gita* should be what its author expects him to be—a yogi in its broad sense. It demands from its votaries balance in every thought, word and deed and a perfect correspondence between the three. He whose speech and action do not accord with his thoughts is a humbug or a hypocrite. It is necessary to sound this warning, for, of the people who flock to my prayer meetings, many run away, I am afraid, with the thought that they acquire merit by mere attendance at these prayers. And since the majority of them are undoubtedly sympathizers with the battle against untouchability, it is necessary to warn them that they are expected to act in accordance with their belief and show by their action that there is no untouchability in them and that there is no person lower than themselves.

For Sanatanists

As attempts are being made during the tour to draw me to a public debate with Shankaracharyas and other learned men and as there is much misrepresentation about my replies to proposals for such interviews, I should like to repeat through these columns what I have said in my letters and verbal messages. I have no desire to engage in a public debate on the origin of untouchability. I do not believe in such debates, nor do I lay any claim to Sanskrit scholarship. But I am ready, nay eager, to hold friendly conversations with any sanatanist for the sake solely of arriving at a mutual understanding, discovering points of contact, and, generally, elucidating truth. For instance, a challenge is often sent to me with reference to my oft-repeated statement that there is no warrant in the Shastras for untouchability as it is prac-

tised today and that in the matter of the use of public temples there is no prohibition in the Shastras against those who are today regarded as untouchables. I have explained in these pages more than once what I mean by Shastras and what interpretation I put upon the verses that are commonly cited in support of untouchability in general and temple-entry prohibition in particular. I do not expect all my critics to read the *Harijan*. I would, therefore, gladly explain my meaning to sanatanist friends and in my turn try to understand their objections. Surely it is possible to have much common action, even though there may be differences on some matters. The reader may also know that such friendly discussions have taken place often enough during the tour. But some persons have made it their mission to discredit me anyhow. So they make suggestions for open debates which they know I have refused to adopt, or seek appointments which it is physically impossible for me to make unless I would cancel a whole day's programme and disappoint thousands of men and women. They are not to be placated by anything I may say or do. Time will do what no action of mine can.

Harijan, 2-2-1934

94. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

February 2, 1934

DEAR SATISBABU,

I have your letters and wire. You will have seen my long letter to Dr. Bidhan. I would then like your revised opinion. Your acceptance of my argument has produced a revulsion in me. But I must not reargue the point. If we will imbibe the *Gita* spirit, we must have detachment even in the midst of a raging fire. Who knows what God intends by things that baffle us.

You will be well rid of *Harijan*[1], if there is not a natural demand for it. You may issue leaflets now and then. In closing down you should say firmly why you are closing.

You will study my letters to Hemprabha. The letter has become a serious thing without my meaning to write so seriously. It shows how full I am just now of these things.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1625

[1] Bengali *Harijan*, which the addressee had been editing

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95. LETTER TO VIDYA A. HINGORANI

COONOOR,
February 2, 1934

CHI. VIDYA,

I got your letters. I did not mean that you should not go to Karachi. I had left it to you to decide whether or not to go there. Therefore I wrote : "If you want to go, you should go after Anand's release." There is no doubt about it at all. But it would be quite proper to go even before it if Mother-in-law and Father-in-law send for you. These things you can understand better. I feel very happy to hear about Anand. What is the term of Choithram's imprisonment? You had better look after Mahadev yourself as far as possible. Does Mahadev get oranges or *mosambis*? You must give him juice of *mosambis* and grapes.

Dudhibehn's address: Dudhibehn Desai,
Dakshinamurti, Bhavnagar (Kathiawar).

I have received a letter from Father. I am writing to him.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

96. LETTER TO K. B. KEWALRAMANI

February 2, 1934

Copy

MY DEAR KEWALRAM,

I was delighted to receive your letter. Vidya is a very good girl of whom you have every reason to be proud. But now I divide the honour with you of being father to her. And often an adoptive father has been found to do better by reason of his having special interest in adopting. But I have a superior reason for possibly doing better than you. Vidya was born to you helplessly. She has deliberately adopted me as father and so she renders willing obedience. If we engage in healthy competition, she will gain.

As you have broken the ice, you will not hesitate to write whenever you feel the urge.

Yours,

SHRI K. B. KEWALRAMANI
S.D.O., WANIVALLA
P.O. MAILSI (PUNJAB)

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

97. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

February 2, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

I have your unbalanced letter. You are morbid. Why should you continually think of yourself and brood over the wrongs done to you by other people? Why can you not think of the wrongs other people are suffering from? Brooding over our own wrongs makes us unbalanced. Identification with other people's wrongs makes us stronger. But now that I have received permission to send you to Sabarmati, I hope your grief will be over. I have sent a wire just now to send you to Sabarmati. It is likely therefore that this will be sent to you there. You will share all your thoughts freely with me and let me know how you feel in the new surroundings. You may choose your work. Do not overstrain yourself and you should take the food that suits you.

Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

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98. LETTER TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

February 2, 1934

DEAR GURUDEV,

I received your letter only just now. There is a campaign of vilification of me going on. My remarks on the Bihar calamity were a good handle to beat me with. I have spoken about it at many meetings. Enclosed is my considered opinion.[1] I see from your statement[2] that we have come upon perhaps a fundamental difference. But I cannot help myself. I do believe that super-physical consequences flow from physical events. How they do so, I do not know.

If after reading my article, you still see the necessity of publishing your statement, it can be at once published either here or there just as you desire. I hope you are keeping well.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

The last lines are disgracefully written but I was tired out and half asleep. Please forgive. If I am to catch the post today, I may not wait to make a fair copy.

From a photostat: G.N. 2289 and 4642

99. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

February 2, 1934

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I read the letter about Kamalnayan and also his note. He wants to finish the course here and to pass the Madhyama examination in Hindi. I would suggest this modification. He should finish the entire Hindi course and take the final examination. He should improve his English, learn Sanskrit also and then go, not to England, but to America. It will certainly be possible to make good arrangements for his study there. After spending some

[1] *Vide* "Bihar and Untouchability", pp. 86-7.
[2] For the text of the statement, *vide* Appendix I.

time in the States, he may travel all over the world. The experience he will gain thus will be useful to him. He would learn better after his intellect matures. I am glad that he has no blind love for degrees. In short, I do not wish to curb his desire to see the West. But I think it advisable that he should be better equipped than he is just now.

What work have you entrusted to Surendra?

I have decided to send Amalabehn to Sabarmati. We shall see what to do if the place does not suit her.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2932

100. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

February 2, 1934

BHAI JIVANJI,

I got your letter.

Thanks for the information about the books. I get no free time at all. I came to Coonoor but even here it is the same story. Every day there is some programme. I am trying to make up a little for the hours of lost sleep during the last several days and to catch up with the correspondence. Much of the time is spent in this way. I am eager to go through the preface and the matter [sent] from Yeravda Mandir. I will see if I can. If I find the work too much, I shall say no. But I will try not to do that.

I have written to Balubhai today regarding the Library.

The tour programme for Karnataka has been altered. We shall now be going to Belgaum. But that will be at the end of this month. I intend to send a wire[1] tomorrow requesting permission. If I get it, I will wire to you. Up to the 21st, I shall be in Madras. Then I will go to Coorg, then to Mangalore, then to Karwar and after that will come the turn of Belgaum. Will Durga wait till then?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9937. Also C.W. 6912. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

[1] *Vide* p. 101.

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101. LETTER TO DRIVER

February 2, 1934

BHAI DRIVER,

I got your letter all right. I like your sincerity. Many young men have gone through what you have. You need not feel unhappy about it at all.

My feeling after reading your letter is that your duty as yet is neither to come to me nor to go to Father Elwin, but to remain where you are and learn to live in poverty. You should save as much as you can and use the money for helping people. Try to teach students whatever moral values you can. So long as you do not feel *vairagya*[1], you should continue in your present way of life. Renunciation of your present way of life before you have come to feel strong aversion to it will not be proper, nor will it endure. When intense *vairagya* has developed in you, nobody will be able to stop you. Do write to me whenever you wish to. I hope you find no difficulty in deciphering or understanding my Gujarati.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8045

102. LETTER TO RAMABEHN JOSHI

February 2, 1934

CHI. RAMA,

I have sent a wire today regarding you, saying that you may leave the Ashram[2] if you wish. Personally I do feel that, since both of you keep good health and feel quite happy there, it might be better for you not to leave the place. That Chhaganlal will shortly be released needn't bother you. He can come and see you there. Relations will of course never cease to be relations, but we have loosened that bond.[3] All the same, my present atti-

[1] Renunciation

[2] Kanya Ashram, Wardha

[3] Chhaganlal Joshi had expressed a desire to stay with his sister for some time after his release.

tude is that everyone may act as he wishes and try to progress as much as he can. You may, therefore, do as you wish.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2932

103. LETTER TO KAPILRAI AND SHASHILEKHA MEHTA

February 2, 1934

CHI. KAPIL AND SHASHILEKHA,

I had not received your letter when I got your wire, which was only the day before yesterday. I got the letter today. At first I could not understand the wire. If you did tell me about Shashilekha, I must have forgotten it. On my inquiring this afternoon, Prithuraj said he did not know the Kapilrai who had sent the wire. You two have my blessings of course. May you live long and serve the country well. May you help each other in leading a life of self-control.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. KAPILRAI MEHTA
SWADESHI MUSEUM
VALANDA'S HAVELI
AHMEDABAD

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3970. Also C.W. 1600. Courtesy: Shashilekha Mehta

104. LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL[1]

February 2, 1934

CHI. AMBUJAM,

I have both your letters. I could not reply sooner due to lack of time but you are always in my mind.

It is a very good thing that you are reading the *Ramayana*, and that you are doing Harijan service is also to the good.

Did you collect any funds for the Bihar calamity? Did Father give anything?

[1] Daughter of S. Srinivasa Iyengar

Continue writing to me; I do attempt to write a legible hand.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 9595. Courtesy: S. Ambujammal

105. LETTER TO HEMPRABHA DAS GUPTA

February 2, 1934

CHI. HEMPRABHA,

I get your letters regularly. The earthquake has given me a jolt. But I have learnt that it is madness on our part to regard ourselves as different from others. If we regard all as one, no one dies or lives. "As in the body so in the universe." The body ever dies, yet lives. Similarly the Cosmos as expressed in the creation ever dies yet remains alive. As we are but a mere drop in that scheme, our death is no death. Transformation of the body will go on, so what shall we mourn for? Shall we then become hard-hearted? No, but if all of us living beings are one in spite of the seeming difference, we should die for one another, in other words make sacrifices to our utmost. This same idea has been expressed wonderfully in the first *mantra* of the *Ishopanishad*. If you are not familiar with it tell me and I shall send it to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1708

106. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KOTAGIRI[1]

February 2, 1934

FRIENDS,

It is a matter of great joy to me to be able to see you this afternoon. I was looking forward to coming to this beautiful hill. I know that some of my co-workers have been zealously working in the midst of hillmen. I know, too, that you have not that vicious kind of untouchability amongst you that we have on the

[1] This was attended by about 6,000 people, mostly Badagas, a hill tribe. They presented to Gandhiji a purse and an address of welcome. A part of the speech was also published in *Harijan*, 9-2-1934.

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plains. Nevertheless, no one, in India, can be absolutely free from that virus. Even you have distinctions of high and low. And, so long as we have got that habit of considering ourselves higher than somebody else, we have not got rid of untouchability, and so long as we have got that distinction in our midst, remember we have not got rid of untouchability. Therefore, I would like all to consider and to know and realize that we are all children of the same God, and that therefore among us, His children, there can be nothing like some being high and some being low, and that all should have the same rights as everyone else.

And then, I want to draw your attention to one thing, of which I have just heard, that hillmen are very much given to the habit of drinking intoxicating liquors. Those who are given to that habit should realize that it is drink which makes man thoroughly mad. Intoxicating liquors are in no way necessary for retaining ourselves. Not only so, a man who drinks, very often, more often than not, forgets the distinction between his own wife and his own mother. Drunken men and drunken women also have been known all the world over to do things of which they would be ashamed if they were sober. Only yesterday, I heard as I was driving that two drunken men were quarrelling amongst themselves, with the result that one died on the spot, and the other is now lying in the hospital. As this is a movement of self-purification, I would like every one of those who are given to this vicious habit to come to a firm resolution never more to touch fiery liquors. It will be a matter of very great joy to me if my fellow-workers are able to report to me that many of you have given up drink altogether.

Now, whilst I thank you for these coppers and silver pieces that you have given me for the Harijan cause, I have to ask you to give some more coppers and some more silver for another cause which is as sacred as the Harijan cause. In the north of India, there is one of our fairest provinces. The name of that province is Bihar, the birth-place of Sita. It was there that only a few days ago, a terrible earthquake took place. Several thousands of men died. Many more thousands of men and women are lying in hospitals. The whole world is directing its attention to the afflicted people of Bihar. Thousands upon thousands of men and women are homeless, shelterless and clothless. Many palace-like buildings are now simply heaps of broken bricks. It is for these that I would like you to give the most, and not the least, that you can. If you have not got sufficient money on your persons, make collections after I am gone; you can make them to-

morrow and send them either to Patna to Babu Rajendra Prasad, who is in charge of the relief work, or you can bring them to me whilst I am still in Coonoor. In many places, remember, men and women have denied themselves their food, their clothes, and shared them with those who are suffering that terrible affliction.

For me, personally, this earthquake has a much deeper lesson than that it has brought physical ruin to thousands of homes. It is my firm conviction that such calamities descend upon mankind from time to time as a fit punishment for its sins. I love to think that it is a punishment awarded to us for the great sin of untouchability. If you cherish that belief with me, you will take care to remove the least taint of untouchability from your midst. May God help you and me to realize this dream that India should be free once more from all kinds of impurities.

The Hindu, 4-2-1934

107. TELEGRAM TO HOME SECRETARY, GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY

COONOOR,
[*February 3, 1934*]

SECRETARY
HOME DEPARTMENT
BOMBAY

I EXPECT BE BELGAUM ON SIXTH MARCH. COULD I SEE MANIBEHN PATEL AND MAHADEV DESAI PRISONERS CENTRAL PRISON HINDALGA. GOVERNMENT KNOW MY INTIMATE CONNECTION WITH BOTH.[1]

GANDHI

Bombay Secret Abstracts. Home Department, Special Branch, File No. 800(40)(16)C, p. 11

[1] The addressee's reply read: "With reference to your telegram dated the 3rd February 1934, I am directed to inform you that Government regret that they cannot allow you to interview prisoners Mahadev Desai and Manibehn Patel at present confined in the Belgaum Central Prison." *Vide* also p. 96.

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108. LETTER TO KAMALNAYAN BAJAJ

February [*3*][1], *1934*

CHI. KAMALNAYAN,

Father's letter in English was delivered to me yesterday and I have already replied to it.[2] I got your letter today.

I have advised that you should pass the Uttama examination in Hindi and acquire a good command of English. If you thus let your intellect mature first and learn good habits of study and then go to the West, you will derive the most benefit from your visit. When the time for going comes, I would advise you first to go to the U.S.A. After that you may go to England and then to the other countries of Europe. And last Japan and China.

I am glad that you are not eager to take a degree. You should stay in America for one year, observe things carefully, and improve your English through study. After that you may visit other countries and stay in them according as you feel inclined. In all you should spend two years abroad. This will give you plenty of experience and you will be able to plan your future. We can make any changes in this plan that you deem desirable from experience. The chief thing is that you should give up for the present the idea of going to the West. I think you will require four years for completing the course in Hindi and acquiring the requisite proficiency in English. I see the necessity for the study of Sanskrit for the sake of Hindi itself. I don't believe four years to be too long a period for you to wait. Convey my blessings to Ramakrishna. I hope you often think of him.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 278

[1] & [2] *Vide* "Letter to Jamnalal Bajaj", pp. 95-6.

109. LETTER TO DUDHIBEHN V. DESAI

COONOOR,
February 3, 1934

CHI. DUDHIBEHN,

I don't remember not having replied to any letter of yours. But I wouldn't be surprised if in all this wandering about some letter had remained unanswered. I don't find your letter in my files. Generally no letters are destroyed before I have replied to them.

Ask Motibehn to write to me.

I have asked Valji to come here. I will see about his health when he comes. I am hopeful that he will get all right.

Irrespective of whether I write or not you must continue to write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7463. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

110. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

February 3, 1934

CHI. VALJI,

Having sent a wire to you, I didn't write. After reading your letter I see that your coming may even be delayed. But I assume that it will not be and, therefore, do not send the issues of *Harijan.* My programme is enclosed. The earlier you come, the sooner can your illness be tackled. You will find the work ready for you. I had arranged to send you to Bihar, but now I will not do that. With your present health it will be difficult for you to work there.

The rest when we meet.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7462. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

111. LETTER TO MITHUBEHN PETIT

February 3, 1934

CHI. MITHUBEHN,

I could take up your letter only today. Just now I stay so far out of the way that the post takes some time to reach me. Moreover, I cannot attend to letters immediately they are received. My replies, therefore, are very much delayed. I can't judge about the question which you have asked. I am frightened by the very description that you have given. How will you be able to do justice to your present work in Bombay and to this additional responsibility? All the same, if you can see your way and are confident, how can I discourage you? I would, therefore, say only this. Do what you think right and may God prosper you in your undertaking. Chunilal had put to me the very same question that you have. I told him that I could not guide him, that he should do what he thought right and that I would not blame him whatever decision he took. I say the same thing to you. You should not expect from me a categorical opinion in such matters. Are you all right now?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2702

112. LETTER TO MANSHANKAR J. TRIVEDI

February 3, 1934

CHI. MANU,

I got your letter. Since you remain as straightforward as you used to be I have no fear on your account. Your assurance that you will not marry without my blessings will protect you. I have written to Father not to hurt your feelings in any way. In your letters to him, see that you never forsake civility. If he appears to you to use harsh language just now, there is nothing behind it but love for you and concern for your future born of that love.

There is an error in your belief concerning one matter. I do not have with me a copy of the letter to the Princess. I don't think there will be any in the office either. You say in your letter that it is your belief that, provided the children remain Hindu by culture, I wouldn't mind in what faith they were brought up. I am not likely to have written anything to that effect, since for a Hindu, culture and religion are one and the same thing. Is there any Hindu culture apart from the Upanishads, the *Gita*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*? I must have said in my letter that, if Elizabeth could adopt Hindu culture in her life, I wouldn't mind her remaining a Roman Catholic in religion. This is very different from saying that the children may be brought up as Roman Catholics. I want you to understand this difference. I have no quarrel with you. I do not distrust you or Elizabeth in the least. But I want to correct a misunderstanding under which you seem to be labouring. To me all religions are alike. But since religions are many, there is diversity even in their oneness. All living beings are one in essence, but as embodied creatures they are infinite in number and diverse. To realize the unity of all life in spite of our having different bodies is the supreme end of human endeavour. If the bodies were not different, there would have been no need to realize the unity of life. The fact that you are a Hindu and other people are Muslims or Christians does have some meaning. That meaning must be respected in the case of your children. I am convinced that if you two wish to live happily and in peace after marriage, your children ought to be brought up as Hindus, and Elizabeth, or rather Vimala—I had forgotten her new name—should adopt Hindu culture. If she cannot forget Europe, you must live in Europe. If she wishes to serve India, she must become an Indian at heart. Without doing that, she may certainly be able to serve the country although with a superior attitude, but you believe her to be a true servant at heart. As she has changed her name, she must change her heart too. But she cannot do that by force. She will succeed in being an Indian at heart only if she is born with such a predisposition. You also must have in your mind a clear picture of the future. If you wish to dedicate yourself to the service of Mother India, you will have to imbibe in your life what I have explained to you in my letters. If, therefore, you have any doubts on that, you should ask me to explain again and again till you are satisfied. Don't hesitate to write to me. I don't know whether I shall be able to write to you after July. You should, therefore, put to me during the

months which remain whatever questions you wish to and have your doubts cleared and get from me whatever help you want.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1010

113. SPEECH AT OTTUPATRAI[1]

February 3, 1934

FRIENDS,

I am very much pleased to have come here and to have met you. You know that this movement that is now going on is a movement for self-purification. Those who call themselves *savarna* Hindus have to purify themselves by fraternizing with Harijans and ceasing to consider them as untouchables, or lower than themselves. Harijans have to do certain things, not by way of exchange but because they also have to purify themselves; they should conform to the laws of clean life and cleanliness, both internally and externally, giving up carrion, beef, liquor and drugs. I understand that here you offer as sacrifice to your God buffaloes or other animals in order to appease Kali. You must not, for one moment, imagine that God can ever be pleased by sacrifice of animals. There are *savarna* Hindus, so called, who also resort to this barbarous practice. But, all the world over, it is now-recognized that there can be no religion in sacrificing animals. I should like you, therefore, to think that there can be no virtue in offering animals as sacrifices to appease Kali, or any other goddess or god. After all, there is but one God, whether you worship Him as Kali or whether you worship Him as Vishnu or Shiva or Brahma, no matter by what name, but, there is only one God, and that God is the God of Truth and Love, not of vengeance. Therefore, I hope that, henceforth, there will be no two parties amongst you, but that you will all unite in order to stop this animal sacrifice in the name of God.

The Hindu, 7-2-1934

[1] This was one of the Harijan *cheries* Gandhiji visited during the day. About 200 inhabitants accorded him a warm welcome.

114. SPEECH AT THANDAKARANCHERI[1]

February 3, 1934

FRIENDS,

It gives me much pleasure to be in your midst. You should know that I am a scavenger myself by choice, and you must take me literally when I tell you that I have cleaned hundreds of commodes in my life. Everyone in the Ashram which I was conducting—and I have over one hundred men and women there—had to do this work every day. I call scavenging one of the most honourable among the occupations to which mankind is called. I do not consider it an unclean occupation by any means. That in performing the cleaning operation you have to handle dirt is true. But, that every mother has to do, every doctor does. But, nobody says that a mother's occupation when she cleans her children, or a doctor's occupation when he cleans his patients, is an unclean occupation. And therefore I consider that those who call themselves superior class of Hindus commit a grave sin when they consider scavengers as untouchables. I am travelling up and down in order to convince these so-called superior Hindus that it is a sin to consider any human being as untouchable. But, I am travelling also to tell fellow-scavengers that whilst we may handle dirt, we must ourselves be clean inwardly and outwardly. After we have done the work of cleaning, we must clean ourselves and wear clean clothes. I know that many scavengers eat carrion or beef. Those who are doing this should abstain from that, and then I know that many of them are given to the evil habit of drink. Drink is a bad, filthy, unclean, degrading habit.

The Hindu, 7-2-1934

[1] This was another *cheri* which Gandhiji visited. Here the inhabitants were mostly municipal scavengers and about 300 of them had gathered to hear Gandhiji.

115. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, COONOOR[1]

February 3, 1934

FRIENDS,

It is a matter of keen pleasure to me that I have been able to live in your beautiful climate all these few days, and this meeting this afternoon adds to that pleasure. The address, presented on behalf of Harijans, tells me that I am rendering a great service by awakening the conscience of the so-called *savarna* Hindus. I do not believe that I am rendering any service to anybody but myself. I called this a movement of self-purification and penance, which it undoubtedly is, and what I am trying to do, from day to day, is nothing but going through a process of self-purification myself. I could not live at peace with myself if I did not declare the truth as I see it in connection with untouchability. I have no doubt whatsoever that, if the so-called *savarna* Hindus do not cleanse themselves of the sin of untouchability Hinduism and Hindus must perish. We proudly call ourselves children of God, and yet, in the name of God and religion, deny to our own brethren, the children of God, those rights and privileges which we enjoy. I have not a shadow of doubt in my mind that such belief constitutes a great sin. This sin of untouchability does not confine itself merely to those who are called Harijans or Adi-Dravidas or untouchables, but it has taken in its snaky coil all the communities of India. And so, in a way Christians, Mussalmans, Parsis, Jews and Hindus have all become untouchables to one another. My great hope therefore is that when we have cleansed ourselves of untouchability all these offshoots of untouchability will be demolished.

Gandhiji then made a fervent appeal on behalf of Bihar earthquake victims.

The Hindu, 7-2-1934

[1] At this meeting Gandhiji was presented with a purse and three addresses of welcome which included one from the Adi-Dravida Jana Sabha and a Tamil verse specially composed in his honour. A brief report of the meeting was also published in *Harijan*, 16-2-1934.

116. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI[1]

February 4, 1934

Why have you not given me the full details of the earthquake? Did you get the letter I sent through Rajendrababu? You should now give me all the news. You will learn more from the letter to Jayaprakash.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3440

117. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, OOTACAMUND[2]

February 4, 1934

FRIENDS,

It is a matter of great pleasure to me to be able to visit this beautiful place. I thank you for the addresses you have presented and the purses that you have given on behalf of Harijans. You have in your general address apologized for the leanness of your purse, although this place is inhabited by very rich people. You need not have rendered any apology whatsoever, because this is essentially a movement in which the co-operation, not of the few rich but of the millions of poor people, is asked for and invited. As I have claimed, this is a movement of self-purification. It is not an article of commerce which can be bought and sold on the market. Whilst therefore I welcome the coppers of even thousands of rich men, I welcome still more the coppers of millions. Even these offerings would be valueless unless they were a token of the change of heart on the part of the giver. The evil of untouchability cannot be driven out from our midst even if some persons were to offer one crore of rupees or more. It can only be brought about by individual efforts on the part of mil-

[1] This note was a postscript to the letter from Uma Bajaj to the addressee.

[2] More than 10,000 people attended the meeting, which was held in the Municipal Maidan. At the end of the meeting Gandhiji auctioned the presents received from the public. A brief report of the speech was also published in *Harijan*, 16-2-1934.

lions of self-styled *savarna* Hindus. It is they who have to exorcize the devil of untouchability from their hearts. It is they who have to do reparation to Harijans, untouchables, whom they have systematically suppressed for centuries in the name of religion. What is required is not a superficial makeshift but a fixed determination to rid ourselves of untouchability in every shape and form. This great change can only be brought about by an effective appeal to the hearts of the millions of *savarna* Hindus. Conviction has to be brought home to them that hitherto, in considering a portion of Hindu society as untouchables, we have committed a great sin against God and humanity inasmuch as this taint of untouchability has travelled far beyond the limits that were prescribed by Hindus. So far as untouchables are concerned, we have to put our house in order so that we may forget all distinction of high and low among mankind. It is a matter therefore of great joy and thankfulness that, wherever I go, crowds of people come and give their coppers in order to signify the determination that untouchability shall no more rule their hearts.

The Harijan address rightly lays stress upon the desirability that the Harijan purses collected in different parts of Tamil Nad and elsewhere should be utilized for Harijan uplift and that alone. A statement has already been made from more than one platform that not only will the bulk of money collected in districts or provinces be utilized in those provinces or districts, but that the bulk of that money will be utilized only for constructive purposes. And naturally, workers will be expected all over to keep themselves in touch with the opinion and the sentiments of Harijans as to the best manner of using the money for Harijan service.

The Jain address lays stress upon the fact that, alike in my speech and in my action, I represent the best that is to be found in Jainism. I accept the compliment in all humility. I believe in the truth of all religions of the world. And since my youth upward, it has been a humble but persistent effort on my part to understand the truth of all the religions of the world, and adopt and assimilate in my own thought, word and deed all that I have found to be best in those religions. The faith that I profess not only permits me to do so, but it renders it obligatory for me to take the best from whatsoever source I may find it. It is in that spirit that this movement or campaign against untouchability is conceived. For this "touch-me-notism" has not been confined to Harijans, but it has affected caste against caste and religion against religion. I for one shall not be satisfied until, as the result of this movement, we have arrived at heart-unity amongst all the

different races and communities inhabiting this land, and it is for that reason that I have invited the co-operation of all the people living in India and even outside.

Now, a word about the land of Sita. You know how nearly 25,000 died in the twinkling of an eye through that terrible earthquake. Tens of thousands of people are living homeless and clothless. Rich people suddenly find themselves reduced to pauperism. Palaces have been desolated, and thousands of homes are nothing but a mass of debris. I would like you therefore to tender your tangible sympathy to those afflicted people in Bihar. Whilst I shall be selling these addresses, I shall request the volunteers to spread themselves out in your midst, and receive from you what you think you can spare for your afflicted brethren in Bihar. I hope that you will give not the least you can, but the best you wish to.

The Hindu, 7-2-1934

118. SPEECH AT OM PRAKASH MUTT, OOTACAMUND[1]

February 4, 1934

I am very much obliged to you for giving me this opportunity of visiting this Mutt and the extraordinary neatness and cleanliness have certainly impressed me very greatly. I wish this Mutt every prosperity in the spiritual sense of the term, and I hope that it will be a source of inspiration to those who live in the Mutt. Having visited it, I shall naturally be interested in its future career, and it will give me very great pleasure to find that it is making a steady progress and is, as it will be, an asylum for those who want to seek spiritual comfort and guidance.

The Hindu, 7-2-1934

119. INTERVIEW WITH ADI-HINDU DEPUTATION[2]

February 4, 1934

In replying to the deputation Gandhiji said that the document presented to him was an ably-drawn-up document. But there was nothing new in it.

[1] Gandhiji was taken round the Mutt which was maintained for Harijans and a report of the working of the Mutt and the inspection note of the President of Hindu Religious Board, Madras, were read out to him.

[2] The deputation represented Harijans of Tamil-speaking areas. They submitted a printed memorandum detailing the various hardships to which they were subjected. *Vide* also "Our Shame", 9-3-1934.

He had seen the disabilities mentioned in it and where he had not seen them, he knew of them. He agreed with the deputation that most systematic effort alone could remove the disabilities. He was himself a Harijan. He had said so twenty-five years ago. He had said repeatedly that if he were to be born again he would like to be born a Harijan.

Referring to the name "Harijan" he said that while some objected to it there were other Harijans who were delighted with it. He himself would not insist upon it but would call them by any name they liked. He realized that without their assistance this reform movement could not go on quickly. That was why he asked for it and liked to meet and discuss with friends like them wherever possible.

Turning to the question of elections, Gandhiji said that he would share the fears of the deputation only if the Harijans were at the mercy of the caste Hindus or in case the Harijan candidates had sold themselves to the caste Hindus, but surely such a contingency could be prevented under the new scheme. Under the panel system the first choice belonged to the Harijans exclusively. Whoever was chosen by the Harijans would alone have the chance ultimately in the election. There need be no fear that the caste-Hindu nominee would have the better chance because the Harijans would have to do the original nomination. He added that his whole effort was to see that the vast majority of the caste Hindus put their weight in favour of Harijans. When that happened, as he was convinced it would, the position of the Harijans would be unassailable. He invited the deputation to share this conviction with him.

You hold me as a hostage for the due fulfilment of the Yeravda Pact. As a hostage I am travelling from one end of India to the other, leaving the comparative peace of Yeravda.[1]

The Hindu, 7-2-1934, and *Harijan*, 16-2-1934

[1] This paragraph is extracted from Chandrashankar Shukla's "Weekly Letter" published in *Harijan*.

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120. TELEGRAM TO K. SRINIVASAN

February 5, 1934

JUST LEARNT OF MR. RANGASWAMY'S[1] DEATH. DEEPEST SYMPATHY WITH HIS FAMILY AND STAFF OF "THE HINDU".

The Bombay Chronicle, 6-2-1934

121. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

COONOOR,
February 5, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I am writing this letter in the morning after cleaning my teeth. I have already written to you regarding . . .'s[2] address. You must have received it through Om. Kanjibhai was to come here, but he has had to remain behind because of the earthquake in Bihar. But he definitely wants to come, and so does Bhulabhai.

The attempt which I made to see Shri Aurobindo was for the sake of the Gujaratis [in Pondicherry]. His refusal was courteous. He said that he saw nobody. The Revered Mother did not reply at all. My visit to that town has been dropped now. In a way I am glad that it has been. But I intend to send Chandrashankar and Bapa[3] there. Let them see and observe as much as they can. We lose nothing by addressing 'Mother' as 'Mother'. The etiquette of addressing a person by the name which has been bestowed on him was observed even at the Round Table Conference. You will probably say that it would be ruinous to follow the example of the Round Table Conference. But my point is that even there people were obliged to observe this etiquette.

Your guess as to Raojibhai's reason for going to . . .[4] is correct. . . .[5] also has gone there now and Ramdas tells me that our

[1] Rangaswamy Iyengar, editor of *The Hindu*, had died in the early morning of February 5.

[2], [4] & [5] The names are omitted in the source.

[3] Thakkar Bapa

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Harilal, too, has been there. He who has many sons and daughters should have a mother as well, shouldn't he!

I think I have already written to you about the Zamorin. He lives in utmost simplicity. There is no ostentation at all. His palace too is a palace only in name, and there is hardly any furniture. He showed me the utmost courtesy. I was introduced to his son. He offered me coconut water and gave me fruit when I left. He was very pleased that I confined the conversation to formal courtesies. He is old and said that his memory was becoming weak. He is a good man. I am glad I called on him.

Coonoor is a beautiful place. If one can get accommodation here, the daily necessities are cheap. It is very cold in winter though not extremely so. Our workers have been doing good work among the hill people. I had received an invitation from them, and so I suggested that, if they wished to give me eight days' rest, they should let me have it in Coonoor so that I could work among the hill people and also dispose of the papers which had accumulated. I am staying in Nagesvara Rao's bungalow here. I am lodged above the garage. It is a small but good room. The garage can be used as a room. My room above it is a clean one. I am glad I came here. The hill people come to see me every day. In Ooty, on the nearby hill of Kotagiri, and here, we had large meetings such as had never taken place in these parts. Deputations of Harijans came and met me. There is a fine *mutt* exclusively for Harijans, which I visited. The hill people are much addicted to drinking. Our workers have been doing good work among them. Raja will see me tomorrow.

Bihar has been receiving good help; people from all over the country have been sending money and clothes. From the Ashram, Panditji[1], Parnerkar[2], Raojibhai[3], Bal[4] and others have gone there. Swami[5] and Dhotre also have gone. Mathuradas has been planning to go and may go any day. Others also are ready, but I have kept them back. I will follow Rajendrababu's instructions. Whether or not I should go, that also I have left to him. I have told him that he may call me there whenever he wants me. My own inclination is to go there after covering Karnataka and Orissa. That will mean I shall reach there about 20th March. I have been collecting money at every place I visit. This time

[1] Narayan Moreshwar Khare
[2] Y. M. Parnerkar who managed the Ashram dairy
[3] Raojibhai Nathabhai Patel
[4] Bal Kalelkar
[5] Swami Anandananda

I come into contact only with people who give me coppers. I do meet, of course, a few who belong to the middle class. They give what they can. But there is no limit to the generosity of the poor. Every day hill women come and give me a few coins tied up in a corner of their saris. Ramachandran of the Ashram is with me at present. I am sure you know him. He is a scholar and a fine man. Jivaraj's health has been very much affected. But he is a brave man and continues to look after the hospital. At intervals he pays visits to Matheran and takes rest for a few days.

You must have heard about Perin[1] and Jamnabehn. Prema and Lilavati (Asar) went back [to jail] as soon as they were released. Lilavati is an obstinate girl. Perhaps she will die in jail. Amtussalaam is here. She has taken ill. Her loyalty is wonderful. I am sending Amala just now to Sabarmati for Harijan work. We will watch how she behaves there.

Bidaj also has been handed over to the Harijan Sevak Sangh. It is intended to take the dairy back to the Harijan Ashram. That will enable us to give training to some Harijans and ensure that the dairy is run well.

A copy of Ba's letter is enclosed. Please convey to Mani whatever you can from this. I have asked for permission to see her and Mahadev. I have sent a wire. A reply is expected in a day or two. I will go there on the 6th March. I also have heard about . . .[2]. Tell Mani that Mridu has sent a long message for her : 'She still suffers from her disease. She remembers Mani every day. She expects to be free in March. If Mani wants any other books, she may call for them. She has had letters from Durga, Mani Parikh, Velanbehn and others. After resting for some time, she hopes to return to jail.' Abbas Saheb's 80th birthday seems to have been celebrated with enthusiasm. Kaka worked hard for that. The old man was very much pleased. Kalyanji[3] is writing a short biography of him. All our men of letters visited him in this connection and refreshed the memory of half-forgotten old days.

I am glad that you are experimenting with *neti*[4]. A wick made with hand from a piece of fine cloth may be found more useful. It can suck up harmful matter. You can make such a wick from your worn-out dhoti. It is necessary to do *pranayama* exercises

[1] Dadabhai Naoroji's grand-daughter
[2] The name is omitted in the source.
[3] Kalyanji V. Mehta, a well-known Congress worker
[4] A Hathayoga practice for cleaning the nasal passage

along with it. *Neti* and *pranayama* will certainly help to keep the nostrils open. I am glad that your constipation has disappeared. I am sure the change which you have made in your food will benefit you.

Kelappan did not intentionally hide the fact of his relations with that lady. He didn't think there was anything improper in it. He also was influenced by "Self-respect"[1] and "Jatpattod"[2]. Nor is there anything against the lady. Kelappan is not a bad man. He is only simple-minded and also obstinate. I wish to put Rajaji in charge of the work in Malabar. I have not made up my mind finally, though. I may also appoint Ramachandran instead.

Your plan for Aunt seems a good one. Let her remain where she is. Hasn't she been indiscreet enough? But your fear is baseless. The refreshment[3] served by Sir Chimanlal is not likely to contain much. If most people don't relish what he serves, what can the poor man do?

The visit to Bengal is still undecided. I can't say what will finally happen.

I had a wire from Muriel [Lester]. I have asked her to come and see me near Coimbatore, and also suggested that she should tour with me for some time. Amritlal Sheth[4] has not written to me recently. He served an ultimatum on me too. I don't mind, let the truth come out even from the bowels of the earth. Isn't even man's body a piece of earth?

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

[PS.]

The frost has ruined crops all over the country this year. In some parts it has been frost and in some other parts it has been unseasonable rains. These things seem to have a direct connection with the earthquake.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 70-5

[1] Name of a social reform body
[2] Jatpant Todak Mandal, another social reform body
[3] In the form of his writings
[4] Former editor of *Janmabhumi*

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122. MESSAGE TO ASSOCIATED PRESS

February 5, 1934

I am filled with sadness over Mr. Rangaswamy's death. I had the privilege to enjoy close relations with him. He was the right-hand man of Pandit Motilalji. His counsels were valued in Congress circles. He was one of the soberest among journalists. He was upholding the tradition left by Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar, the tradition which has given the influence which *The Hindu* had. I had intimate conversations with him when I was in Madras recently. His death is a loss to *The Hindu*, the Congress and the country.

The Bombay Chronicle, 6-2-1934

123. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

February 5, 1934

CHI. MARY,

I hope you got my letter[1] at your Betul[2] address.

The Hyderabad visit has been put off by nearly 20 days. I do not go there before 10th I think. Even that is not quite certain. And then I am not supposed to stay there for more than 4 hours.

We are all doing well. No time to say more.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6019. Also C.W. 3348. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

[1] *Vide* p. 47.

[2] The source has "Bethel".

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124. LETTER TO MADHAVDAS AND KRISHNA KAPADIA

February 5, 1934

CHI. MADHAVDAS AND KRISHNA,

How is it that there is no letter from either of you? Ba frequently remembers you in her letters. Nobody can write to her directly. She can write and receive only one letter every week. And if she has had a visitor during a week, she can't receive a letter during that week. Hence all news should be conveyed through me. So write a detailed letter to me. If you address it to Wardha, it is bound to reach me. How is Krishna? How is business? I receive Manilal's letters regularly. Both are well. About me, you must be reading everything in *Harijanbandhu*.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI MADHAVDAS GOKULDAS
SHAMJI SHIVJI BUILDING
MANORDAS STREET
FORT, BOMBAY

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

125. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

COONOOR,
February 5, 1934

BA,

I have your letter. What you say about Bihar is correct. Large numbers were killed and now in this cold thousands have become homeless. Much help is being sent from all parts of the country. From among the Ashram inmates, Panditji, Parnerkar, Raojibhai, Soman, Bal, Swami and Dhotre have gone there. Dhotre is the gentleman from Wardha. If more workers are required, I will send some others. I have had letters from all the women. All except Velanbehn are well. Velanbehn has gone to Baroda, taking Anandi and Mani with her. If necessary, she will

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go and consult a doctor in Bombay. She has lost weight considerably. It will take her some months to be restored. Durga has gone to Bulsar. From there she will go to Belgaum. I also will be there on March 6. Lilavati was having fever, but she has returned to jail along with Premabehn. Devdas has not gone to Patna. There is no need, even, for him to do so. Tara is fairly seriously ill. She is in Ahmedabad at present. Mani Parikh is at her maternal uncle's. Afterwards she will go to Kathlal. I shall meet Rajaji tomorrow. Amtussalaam is here. She has taken ill, but is better today. It seems she will go to Kashi and stay with Krishnakumari. Muriel Lester, in whose Ashram I stayed in England, will meet me tomorrow—Gangabehn has gone to Wardha to see Surendra. He is working there with Jamnalalji. Mahalakshmi is in Bombay with her children. I had letters from Manilal and Sushila. Both say that you should not worry about him. Sita is happy. Kallenbach was on a visit to Phœnix for two days. There has been frost in Gujarat and other parts of the country and most of the crops have been completely destroyed. The frost was severe and lasted many days. We must submit to God's will. Vallabhbhai is fairly well. There was a letter from Mridula. She also is well. I have inquired about Madhavdas.[1] I will most certainly let you know. I have not forgotten about it. There was a long letter from Ramdas. He and Nimu and the children are in good health. Keshu and Krishna are still in Wardha and are quite well. There have been no letters from Radha recently. Brijkrishna is fairly well. He is slowly regaining strength. There is a well-known paper named *The Hindu* published from Madras. There was a wire today saying that its Editor had died. I have sent a wire of condolence.[2] Prabhavati is well. She is still in Patna. I hope you and the other women are in good health. I will start from here tomorrow morning and go to see Raja. And now the discourse.

There is a saying among us: "One road, two purposes." What road is that following which will always serve "two purposes"? "Two purposes" should not, either, be understood to mean only two. Here "two" means more than one. One may, therefore, also say : "One road and a hundred purposes." In Bihar thousands of people were buried alive in the matter of a minute. This cannot but make us think that one should not waste a single

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.
[2] *Vide* "Telegram to K. Srinivasan", p. 113.

moment. "Make the best of today, for who has seen tomorrow?" —sang Mira. We don't know what will happen even after a minute or a second. One may pass away even in the act of yawning. What, then, is that golden road following which would serve all purposes? There is only one, viz., helping others. That means service of the neighbour. Another name for it is *paramartha*. The word means 'supreme purpose'. A third name for it is *Haribhakti*[1]. We sing in the *prabhatiyan*[2] of Narasinh Mehta that such *bhakti* is not practised by telling beads or putting marks on the forehead or bathing in the Ganga. *Bhaktas* tell us that it means pledging one's head. We should, therefore, always wish the world's good all the hours of the day whether in jail or outside, and do whatever service may fall to our lot in order to advance it. I hope this will be enough for today's discourse.

Blessings to all from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Bane Patro, pp. 12-3

126. LETTER TO MATHURI N. KHARE

February 5, 1934

CHI. MATHURI,

I was very happy to see your handwriting after a long time. You have improved your handwriting, too, a good deal. I am also very happy that you find everything there congenial. I hope you do sing *bhajans*. Write to me from time to time. I am glad that you write to Rambhau.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 270. Courtesy: Lakshmibehn N. Khare

[1] Devotion to God
[2] Devotional hymns for early morning

CWMG - LVII

127. LETTER TO MANIBEHN N. PARIKH

February 5, 1934

CHI. MANI,

I got your letter. You women may be said to have made excellent use of your time in jail. Amtussalaam told me everything. I have no doubt at all that the children have benefited too. It would be advisable to show your eyes to Dr. Haribhai. He is a specialist in eye diseases.

I have no time to write more.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. MANIBEHN PARIKH
BHAISHRI RAMANBHAI LALLUBHAI SHAH
KATAKIA POLE, KALUPUR
AHMEDABAD, B.B.&C.I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5976. Also C.W. 3293. Courtesy: Vanamala M. Desai

128. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

February 5, 1934

CHI. VIDYA[1],

I got your letter. I hear that you now wish to marry. If that is true, you should tell me without any hesitation or false sense of shame. If you do wish to marry, let me know when. Should your elders find a partner from the Patidar community or may they select any suitable and virtuous young man? Tell me your views frankly. Don't consider what I would like. In such matters the young man or woman must have sufficient freedom. The elders can only guide them.

I am glad that you help Vali. You must have heard that Kusum has died. I hope you wrote to Manu. She has felt it very much.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9584. Courtesy: Ravindra R. Patel

[1] Daughter of Raojibhai Manibhai Patel

129. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CHOKKAMPALAYAM[1]

February 6, 1934

I thank you for the address and the purse presented for the cause of the Harijans. I have understood that in this centre and round about it you have done much work for the spread of khaddar, removal of untouchability and the abolition of drink. I congratulate you on your achievement of these measures as all these evils run into one another. If we have driven out untouchability altogether we will be in a brotherhood. The message of untouchability is nothing less than real brotherhood union. It is not a brotherhood of merely Hindus but a brotherhood of all—Muslims, Christians and others. That is the full message of anti-untouchability. Now I have a heavy programme. Therefore I cannot remain here any longer. I hope you have made collections for the sufferers in Bihar. If you have not done so you should forthwith make collections and remit the same to Mr. Rajendra Prasad or to me. Within two or three minutes you must help me in auctioning these things.

The Hindu, 7-2-1934

130. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TIRUPUR[2]

February 6, 1934

FRIENDS,

I am very much obliged to you all for the addresses and the different purses. I have already gone through a fairly long programme and I have once more to tax my mind in this assembly and I know that you have been waiting patiently for some time. I shall therefore be very brief. I have gone through the English translation of the addresses you have presented to me. I tender

[1] The meeting, held at 8.30 a.m., was attended by about 4,000 men and women. Purses and addresses of welcome were presented on behalf of the village and Avanashi Taluk Board. At the end of the meeting the addresses and the jewellery were auctioned.

[2] At the meeting, purses and addresses of welcome were presented on behalf of the Tirupur Municipal Council and the khadi workers. At the end of the meeting Gandhiji auctioned the addresses. A part of the speech was also published in *Harijan*, 16-2-1934.

my congratulations to the Municipal Council for all that has been done by it for the Harijan cause. But neither the Councillors nor the people can rest satisfied until untouchability in every shape and form is removed. I know that it is not within the province of the Municipal Council to throw open the temples. But it is up to the so-called *savarna* Hindus to formulate public opinion to such an extent that every temple in Tirupur is opened to the Harijans. I am quite convinced in my own mind that until all the public temples are open to the Harijans precisely on the same terms as to the other caste Hindus, we shall not have got rid of untouchability. The so-called untouchables must have absolutely the same rights and facilities that are enjoyed by the so-called *savarna* Hindus. I have gone through the address presented by the khadi merchants. I know what khadi means for the Harijans. Throughout the length and breadth of India, tens of thousands of men and women who belong to the Harijan class and who have no other employment are getting a few pies now. It is therefore a matter for shame that spurious khadi should have sprung up in our midst and since we have no legal protection for khadi the only thing that we can do is to take care to strengthen the public opinion. The same complaint was brought to me in Madura and the only thing for the time being that I was able to suggest was that the public should be warned against taking any khadi that was not certified by the All-India Spinners' Association. I also heard a rumour that I have changed my opinion about the absolute necessity of khadi. I can give my assurance that my opinion has not undergone any changes whatsoever. On the contrary, the opinion that I expressed in the year 1919[1] has become strengthened by experience. And I am convinced that khadi is the only solution for the deep and deepening distress of the untouchables. Khadi is cheap at any price, for every pie that you spend in buying khadi goes directly into the pocket of the poor people. But I must not tire you with the arguments that I have advanced so often from the various platforms. I am only hoping that in this great movement of self-purification we shall not only get rid of untouchability but many other impurities from which our society is suffering. And I hope that those Harijans who are present at this meeting will fully bear in mind that they have also to contribute their share in this movement.

Lastly, I cannot help expressing myself about the land of Sita in the north-east of India. Many cities have been swallowed up by the hungry Mother Earth. Palaces are now mere heaps

[1] *Vide* Vol. XV, pp. 200-1.

of bricks. Nearly 25,000 people are said to have perished. And almost in the twinkling of an eye thousands of people were rendered homeless. And in the sharp, severe wintry weather of the north of India these people are living without any shelter and without food. I request you to share in every way their suffering. And I would like to hear in the course of the day that you have gathered together the funds to be sent to Mr. Rajendra Prasad.

The Hindu, 7-2-1934

131. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, COIMBATORE[1]

February 6, 1934

I am glad to visit your city a second time. You have prepared for me a very heavy programme tonight. You have presented so many addresses and given me so many purses that it will take some time before I can dispose of them all. I must therefore ask you kindly to be patient with me for some time. And those who have got tired should retire without making any noise. I would like those who have already become restless kindly to be still so that I may follow the proceedings. You have presented so many addresses that you do not expect me to give a detailed reply to all of them. You will please accept my consolidated thanks for all those addresses and the purses presented. You know from your addresses the purpose of my mission. We must, if we are to live, get rid of this virus of untouchability. I have not the least doubt that if *savarna* Hindus will not purify their hearts of this taint of untouchability, Hinduism and Hindus must perish. That there is a ferment in Hindu society is evidenced by the meetings of this character wherever I had come. All these crowds have been there before whenever I have toured throughout India. So far as I am aware, invariably this time crowds have been larger still. Every attempt that was humanly possible has been made to make clear the purpose of my mission to the crowds. Their presence coupled with their copper and silver pieces are to my mind an unmistakable sign that they are ready for the great reform that I have placed before them. And if untouchability is not removed root and branch I have no doubt that it would not be the fault of the masses but that it would be entirely due to the

[1] The meeting, held in the Gandhi-Irwin Stadium, was attended by about thirty to forty thousand people. Besides the municipal address, several other addresses were presented to Gandhiji which at the end of the meeting were auctioned. The speech was translated into Tamil.

fault of the workers and the leaders who are today leading the movement. I would, therefore, like all the co-workers and the leaders to realize the significance of this movement. I would like them clearly to see that this is a movement of self-purification, self-sacrifice and reparation to those whom the so-called *savarna* Hindus have suppressed for centuries. I was therefore considerably disturbed this afternoon when on my coming to Coimbatore I saw a few Harijan friends who complained to me of the ill-treatment meted out to them in a village not three or four miles from here. They tell me that on the part of *savarna* Hindus there is a deadset against them. They tell me that even their labour is boycotted. I have assured them that so far as it is possible for me during the brief hours that I am here I shall try to understand the situation. But it seems to me that with so much life in Coimbatore, with this demonstration of so much sympathy for the Harijan cause, it ought to be a very simple matter for some of the leaders here to go to this little village and understand the situation and patch up the quarrel between *savarna* Hindus so called and the Harijans. Whether here the complaint made by these Harijan friends is justified or exaggerated or it is absolutely true is not just now relevant to what I was saying. I bring this complaint to your notice not only that you may bestir yourselves and get redressed but also to illustrate forcibly what I am advocating. If we were not being eaten up by this canker of superiority and inferiority there never would be any occasion for such quarrels and disturbances. I therefore pray to God and I want you to join me in the prayer that He may give us discretion, wisdom and strength to understand the implications of this campaign against untouchability and to exorcize this evil from our midst.

Now before I proceed to the sale of the articles that you have given me, I would like to say one word in connection with our suffering countrymen and countrywomen in Bihar. And in recalling to your mind the desolation that has overtaken that fair land, I cannot possibly forget the name of Rangaswamy Iyengar who is no more. The columns of *The Hindu* have shown what wide sympathy he had for the suffering Bihar and how his appeal was supported by the many subscribers to *The Hindu*. I have no doubt that his place whether as a journalist or as a servant of the nation is not easy to fill. He had, as I know, an amazing industry and wisdom which stood well for the Congress at critical times. I would like you to associate yourselves with me in tendering our sympathy and respect for the bereaved family and in doing so I would ask you to respond to the appeal that he made on behalf

of the sufferers of Bihar. I have been latterly at the end of these meetings collecting subscriptions from all and sundry for Bihar. In front of this vast crowd I have not the courage to suggest that the volunteers should spread themselves in the midst of the audience and make collections for Bihar. But if you will consent to it and if the volunteers themselves have got the courage I would suggest to them that they spread themselves in the midst of the audience and collect for Bihar before disposing of the articles.

The Hindu, 8-2-1934

132. TELEGRAM TO AMTUSSALAAM

POLLACHI JN.,
February 7, [1934][1]

AMTUSSALAAM
CARE ASAR MERCHANT
TIRUPUR
HOPE ARE WELL CHEERFUL. LOVE.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 291

133. LETTER TO KUSUMBEHN DESAI

February 7, 1934

CHI. KUSUM,

Vallabhbhai writes to tell me that some relation[2] of yours—was it a brother?—died recently in Zanzibar. Who could the person be? Give me details and whatever other information you think may interest me. If you have not met the women who have been released, try to meet them. I hope you read *Harijanbandhu*. You can know all about me from it.

Blessings from
BAPU

SMT. KUSUMBEHN DESAI
DR. CHANDULAL'S CLINIC
BROACH, B.B.&C.I.RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1850

[1] Gandhiji was in Pollachi on February 7 of 1934.
[2] The addressee's younger brother Harishchandra had died of black fever in South Africa.

134. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, POLLACHI[1]

February 7, 1934

I wish you would all keep perfect silence. You have given me sufficient material to speak for one full hour, but the Reception Committee has given me only 20 minutes. Twenty minutes have already elapsed. The train has come late and I know you were all waiting for a very long time. If you help me, I would finish sooner. You all know for what purpose I have come. You have presented me with addresses and you have shown therein the need and importance of removing untouchability. Those whom you consider untouchables are your brothers and sisters. Untouchability exists between caste and caste and between Hindus and Mohammedans, Christians and Jews. These defects should be removed from our land. We should forget the feeling of high and low and consider that we are all sons of one God. I need not impress upon you the importance of contributing for the Bihar earthquake relief fund and there is no necessity for speaking on one and the same subject very often. The charkha before me is a very attractive one and the workmanship deserves much praise. I do not consider that we can spin much yarn on it, but in value it is made up of silver. It weighs nearly 40 *tolas* and I wish to auction the same for a decent sum.

The Hindu, 9-2-1934

135. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, PALNI[2]

February 7, 1934

I thank you for the addresses and the numerous presents that you have presented. Now you know what I want to say. You are near God and you must forget the distinctions of high and

[1] At the meeting addresses of welcome were presented to Gandhiji by the Municipal Council, the Taluk Board and the Harijan Seva Sangham.

[2] The meeting, held near the hill temple, was largely attended. Besides various addresses and a purse, individual offerings were made which included a silver charkha, cups and coins all of which were auctioned at the close of the meeting.

low. We are all children of the same God. No one should be considered as untouchable. You have given me many things and the very fact of your piling up many gifts on me shows that you are absolutely in sympathy with this movement of self-purification. We are under the shadow of the sacred hill of Palni. And we know to our shame that the temple on the sacred hill is not open to the Harijans precisely on the same terms that it is open to every other Hindu. Why should it be so? Did this God in this sacred temple tell you that there are people who must not enter His temple and that they are untouchables. In my opinion God cannot reside in a temple which prohibits the entry of the meanest of His creatures. How could He be so unkind when you know and I know He is all mercy and kindness?

The Hindu, 9-2-1934

136. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, DINDIGUL[1]

February 7, 1934

FRIENDS,

I am sorry that you have been put to a great deal of trouble. We tried our utmost to reach here in time, but the car could not bring us here earlier than we have come. It was a heavy day and to add to our and your weariness and trouble we missed the way.

I thank you for all the addresses that have been presented and the purses and I thank those who have presented the purse for the sufferers in Bihar. I hope that before you send me away from Dindigul tomorrow morning, you will collect some more money for Bihar. If you know the nature of the calamity that has descended on that land of Sita, any relief sent for Bihar would not be enough. I am sure you are aware of the purpose of the commission that has brought me here, and I hope that all of you are acting according to the professions made in these addresses. To my mind, it is a wicked thing—one of the most wicked of things to make distinctions between man and man and regard some as untouchables by birth and deny them chances of improvement. Had God designed any persons to be untouchables, surely He would have attached some visible sign whereby we could have distinguished them from ourselves; we do not see any such sign

[1] The meeting, held at the Rock Fort Maidan, was attended by more than 20,000 people. Various addresses of welcome and presents were given to Gandhiji. At the end of the meeting all those things were auctioned.

whatsoever. Why should some of our own brethren be treated as worse than some animals so that they have to undergo life-long misery on account of their birth? The sooner, therefore, we get rid of this taint of untouchability the better it is for us and let us ask God to give us sufficient strength to cleanse ourselves of that sin. I must not detain you any longer than is absolutely necessary. I must therefore try to dispose of these numerous things that have been given to me and I begin with this silver statue.

The Hindu, 9-2-1934

137. LETTER TO NARMADABEHN RANA

February 8, 1934

CHI. NARMADA,

I got your letter. I was happy to read it. I did hear about you, though I did not know all the details about your reading.

Since Amtussalaam was with me, all the women here had learnt about it.

Your handwriting has certainly improved a little, but I want it to be as neat as pearls. Make it so during your next term of imprisonment.

I was glad to read Kastur's handwriting at the end of your letter.

I am very glad indeed that she will keep you company this time. I don't have time to write separately to her.

Do you read *Harijanbandhu* regularly?

Blessings from
BAPU

KUMARI NARMADA ABHESING RANA
JIJINU VALUKAD
Via BHAVNAGAR
KATHIAWAD

From Gujarati: C.W. 2778. Courtesy: Ramnarayan N. Pathak

138. TO SUBSCRIBERS

The *Harijan* finishes one year of its existence with this issue. The subscribers and readers know the limits within which it is working. It devotes itself solely to the Harijan cause. Even so it eschews all matters which may be calculated to bring it in conflict with the Government. It eschews politics altogether. These limitations were essential, if it was to be a paper controlled by a prisoner. For reasons which I need not repeat here, though I am not a prisoner in law, I am conducting the paper as if I was one in fact. It can, therefore, naturally draw only those men and women who are interested in the campaign against untouchability and who would help the cause even if it is only to the extent of subscribing to the paper and thus helping the only paper that is solely devoted to the cause of anti-untouchability and is the mouthpiece of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. The subscribers know that it will not be continued at a loss. I believe that the paper, in order to justify its existence, must be a felt want, and it must, therefore, have the minimum number of subscribers to pay its way. The readers know also that, as it avoids all advertisements, it has no other source of income. Therefore, subscribers whose subscriptions are due are requested to send their subscriptions promptly to the Manager, *Harijan*, Triplicane, Madras. The despatch of the paper will be automatically discontinued for those inland subscribers who fail to send their subscriptions after the receipt of two issues after this. Those who had constituted themselves as voluntary agents will kindly perform that office for the next year, if they are satisfied that the paper has justified its existence.

The rates of subscription are: Inland Rs. 4, Foreign Rs. 5/8.

Harijan, 9-2-1934

CWMG-IVII

139. IS IT CRIMINAL?

Nowhere have the reception committees been so extravagant as in Travancore in the matter of reception expenses. In some places, it seems the expenses have been almost half of the purses collected. I had a memo of expenses already from two places. The former included motor hire, printing and feeding charges. As usual I have asked for detailed and audited account of expenses. I have the fear that even the cost of printing addresses has been set against the purses. If so, it amounts in my opinion to criminal misappropriation of purse funds. The purses belong to Harijans. The cost of collection may be a proper charge against them where the committees are composed of poor people. In every case the purses should be handed intact. The expenses that may be passed will be refunded to the committees concerned. This was the practice followed in Andhra. In C.P., so far as I am aware, entertainment expenses were in every case borne by private persons. The following rules should be borne in mind by the committees in future.

1. The fewest number of volunteers should be employed.
2. Motor hire for local purposes should be minimized.
3. Motor hire for the party should be separately shown, so as to enable one to collect from those who are travelling at their own expense.
4. Printing charges should be incurred only when absolutely necessary.
5. No decoration charges can be allowed to be debited against the purse.
6. On no account can address expenses be paid out of the purse fund. I have repeatedly said that addresses need not be presented at all. I know that they have, when they are spontaneous, a propaganda value of the right sort. But if addresses continue to be presented thoughtlessly, the sacrifice of propaganda value may have to be made. The burden, therefore, rests upon reception committees of permitting only those addresses that are spontaneous and have a value in terms of the Harijan cause.
7. Accounts for feeding the party should be separately rendered when they are meant to be a charge against the purse. I must say in fairness to the committees that outside Travancore

I have not known committees having to defray the feeding expenses. And seeing that my party is very big, consisting of 15 persons, even providing one meal is no light task in a poor country like India. Travancore is still a comparatively new field and, being the home of orthodoxy, I and my party naturally became untouchables among orthodox people, who were before good enough to have me in their homes. Add to this the fact that the Government circulars, warning their servants against their countenancing me or the movement, and possibly similar instructions from the Travancore authorities, frightened even moneyed laymen from having any dealings with me. The wonder to me is that, in spite of the vague or justified fear of the high-placed, the common people flocked to the meetings even in Travancore, as never before. I am not, therefore, surprised that the poor members of reception committees in some places in Travancore had to find feeding expenses from the purse. But, in every such case I must scrutinize the bill of fare as I would if it was rendered by a hotel-keeper. The committees know by this time that the simplest food only is expected. No sweets, no elaborate dishes, no spices are required. The largest item, I fear, is goat's milk and fruit. These ought not to be provided at every place. As usually the three meals are taken at three different places, milk and fruit may be provided once for all at the morning meal. Fruit should be only local season's fruit and oranges. Fruit is unfortunately a medical necessity for several members of the party. Reception committees are not to be expected to provide these through private individuals, nor may they be allowed to spend what they like from the purses. Thakkar Bapa, who is in charge of the party, should be left to decide what the bill of fare should be. Local committees would be expected to see that honest dealers provide the necessaries at market prices.

The thing to remember is that all of us working for the cause are trustees for the moneys collected and, therefore, have to spend like misers, taking greater care of the trust funds than we would of our own. If, as against this, it is said that without spectacular displays and demonstrations no money is to be got, my answer without hesitation would be that we must do without it. Either the moneys given are an earnest of reparation or they are not. If they are such an earnest, they will come spontaneously after conviction is brought home to the would-be donor. My experience of begging for public causes covers a period of now over 40 years. I cannot recall a single occasion when I have had to resort to spectacular displays. It was done by hard work, con-

centrated, patient and gentle arguments and unshaken faith in the cause. And of all the causes for which I had the privilege of collecting, the Harijan cause undoubtedly is the noblest, because it affects the most suppressed part of humanity on the face of this globe. It will prosper if it had true men and women behind it. The needed money will come without much effort. Honest and selfless work is the truest prayer. And no such prayer has ever gone unanswered.

Harijan, 9-2-1934

140. KHADI AND HARIJANS

Those who, apart from the whole programme of anti-untouchability, are interested in the economic betterment of Harijans should know that khadi gives employment to thousands of Harijan men, women and children who otherwise had no employment. It entirely supports some families and supplements the slender resources of many more and keeps the wolf from the door. Its capacity to be the only universal source of employment to the starving millions is not now seriously questioned. It is this poor man's stay which is being undermined by unscrupulous methods. I learnt in Madura that some dealers in cloth were palming off khadi cloth woven from mill-spun yarn as hand-spun and hand-woven. I was shown specimens which were exact copies of special khadi varieties. Lovers of khadi and Harijan servants who believe in the potency of khadi to serve Harijans are requested not to buy khadi which does not bear the hallmark of the All-India Spinners' Association. I heard also that mill-cloth, too, both foreign and indigenous, is largely sold in the market as khadi. And to fill my cup of woe, I am being represented as having changed my views on khadi and having put indigenous mill-cloth on a par with khadi. This is a misrepresentation of my view of khadi. My faith in khadi is, if possible, stronger than ever from the moral, economic and national (in its widest sense) standpoint; there is no comparison between khadi and mill-cloth, even indigenous. Exploitation of the poor through mill-cloth or mill-yarn is an impossibility in the case of khadi. Exploitation of the poor through mill-cloth and mill-yarn is inevitable in some shape or form, be it ever so mild. The use of genuine khadi constitutes some (be it ever so small) automatic return to the poor for their continuous exploitation by the comparatively rich and can in the aggregate become a mighty return, though never adequate,

to the masses living in the villages. None of these functions can ever be performed by mill-cloth even if every mill was nationalized. In the mill industry, even if it was conducted purely as a trust for the nation and ably managed, there could never be automatic distribution and there must be displacement of a vast amount of labour. In khadi, with the spinning-wheel in every cottage, there can be no displacement of labour and there is always automatic distribution of the product of labour. Hence for me there can be no comparison between khadi and mill-cloth, there can be no juxtaposition. For, the two are not of the same kind. Khadi may never reach the finish of the mill-cloth, nor its variety nor yet its cheapness in terms of the market. The measurement for each is different. Khadi represents human values; mill-cloth represents mere metallic value. A yard of khadi is cheap for me at 4 annas per yard. Mill-cloth of the same count and texture is too dear for me at 2 annas per yard. My plea, therefore, is for discrimination and avoidance of confusion of thought. Let each stand on its own platform. Let mill managers not grudge khadi the place it occupies. It ill becomes them to produce cloth that looks like khadi and thus cheat the buyers into the belief that it is khadi.

Harijan, 9-2-1934

141. AMONG THE NATTARS

Two events in Chettinad deserve special notice. One was a visit to a Harijan village, Chittannoor, near Devacottah. It has a caste Hindu as a teacher living in it with his family. Both are devoted workers attached to Harijans. They are conducting a little school and are giving the Harijans medical and such other aid as is within their power to give. The school is being conducted on behalf of the local Sangh. I had a long chat with the Harijans. Their spokesman read to me a statement of the hardships inflicted on them by Nattars. The readers of *Harijan* are familiar with them. On my way back, I saw a deputation of Nattars who waylaid me with garlands and coconut. I told the leader about the Harijan complaints. He gave clever and evasive answers. This was a foretaste of what was in store for me at Devacottah, where I was to meet a party of Nattars by appointment. They were over one hundred. I gave them an hour and had an exhaustive, interesting and illuminating conversation. "Custom" was the only justification for the inhuman treatment that is being

meted out to the Harijans, though in a less cruel form than before. "Nowadays we don't interfere with their manner of dressing, except for certain festival days", replied the old leader of the party quite courteously but equally firmly.

"But what right you have to dictate their dress for any day at all?"

"It is the custom handed down by our forefathers", the old man replied.

"Supposing someone regulated your dress?" I interposed.

"Why not? We have to submit to many things that the higher castes prescribe for us, and the Harijans have to submit to us."

"You need not submit to anybody's dictation. There is no higher and no lower", I replied.

"How can that be ? The Harijans cannot be allowed to cross the limits prescribed by custom", the old man persisted.

"But, surely, you won't adhere to a custom which is manifestly bad", I gently remonstrated.

Prompt came the reply, "Who is to judge what is bad for me? All custom must be good, because it comes from our forefathers."

I had no argument against this. I accepted my defeat. But I warned the old man and my other hearers that many customs had gone and what they refused to do now voluntarily and gracefully they would be obliged reluctantly to do later by pressure of circumstances. In spite of the persistence of the old leader, the conversation was carried on with good humour and ended with a collection for the sufferers of Bihar.

There is much and glorious work for the young worker to do. The old man knew that he had no case. But he evidently thought that he must defend the indefensible.

Harijan, 9-2-1934

142. LETTER TO RUKMINIDEVI BAZAJ

February 9, 1934

CHI. RUKMINI,

I got your postcard. I am writing this letter before the morning prayer. I rise daily at three.

The line "Who can harm him whom Rama protects?" is constantly in my mind. But sometimes I also feel that after all

nobody is immortal. Doesn't everybody die sooner or later? The only question is when. Why, then, grieve over or rejoice at it? In the final reckoning, are not night and day the same?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9158

143. LETTER TO S. R. NARAYANA IYER

February 9, 1934

Please tell all Badaga brothers and sisters that it was a daily pleasure to me whilst I was at Coonoor to see the white-clad men and women. How I wish they would give up the drink habit, and in order to retain for ever the whiteness of their garments they would take to khadi and hand-spinning. The latter will keep them occupied, still their minds and wean the drinkers from drink. It will also add something to their tender resources or enable them to have khadi woven from yarn spun by them.

The Hindu, 13-2-1934

144. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

KUMBAM,
February 8/9, 1934

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I am in Dindigul. We resume travelling in a little while at seven. It is 6.40 just now. I will try to write as much as I can. We get our morning, midday and evening meals at different places. God has kept me in health so far. He will pull back the thread of life when He wills. "The Lord has bound me with a slender thread, I turn as He pulls."

I got Ratubhai Desai's letter yesterday. He has given a full description. You have really used your time well for reading and studying. I regard it as God's kindness that prisoners are not permitted to read at night. If you think it necessary to see me after your release, do come over. I shall probably be in Utkal about the time you will be released.

CWMG - LVII

Muriel Lester is touring with me these days. I suppose you remember that I had stayed with her. She has been to China and Japan. Most probably she will remain with me till the 21st. (At this point we had to leave and resume the tour.)

We are now in a place called Kumbam situated in a valley between the Eastern and the Western Ghats. We held a meeting here at the end of day-long wandering and, after dinner, I received some visitors and am now writing this. It is past 7.30 p.m. Thakkar Bapa and others are having their dinner. After they have finished we shall have prayers. These days the prayers consist only of the Sanskrit verses and the Ramdhun. The recitation of the verses is led by me and the *dhun* is led by Mirabehn. She can sing a few *bhajans*, but I myself prevailed upon her not to take all that trouble. In the morning we recite verses from the *Gita*, completing all the chapters in a week so that we have enough verses to recite. The *bhajans*, therefore, have been omitted. Prithuraj has joined me from Calicut. He gives good help to Chandrashankar. And now another friend, selected by Swami, will be joining us. Perhaps Valji also may join us. He has made the request because of his poor health. The other members of the party remain the same.

My body is in excellent condition and gives very good service. Recently I have even stopped drinking warm water with honey in the morning. I am living on milk, fruit and one boiled and unsalted vegetable. I don't feel the need for anything else.

You must have heard that some of the towns in Bihar have been razed to the ground by the earthquake. Because of that, I have sent some of the inmates of the Ashram, who had been released, to Bihar to help Rajendrababu. For the present, Panditji, Parnerkar, Bal, Soman, Maganbhai and Raojibhai gone there. Swami and Dhotre have gone from Bombay. Most probably Lakshmidas also will go. He has stayed back because Velanbehn is ill. She is suffering from some vaginal disorder. Did I write to you that Dudhabhai's Lakshmi is pregnant? Radha is so so. She is still at Deolali. Keshu may be said to have settled down finally. Ramdas is comfortable where he is, but is restless all the time as is his nature. Prabhudas is likely to settle in a village near his father-in-law's place. He and his Amba are very happy indeed. Devdas has joined *The Hindustan Times* on a pay of Rs. 250. Lakshmi is expecting a child. She is with him in Delhi. The delivery will take place there.

Pyarelal's time to be released is drawing near. Mahadev is being tested well. And so is Manibehn.

(I was again interrupted at this point.) I am now completing the rest of the letter at three in the morning after cleaning my teeth.

Rama has expressed a desire to leave the Ashram and go to live with her relations. I have told her that I do not approve of her intention, but I have permitted her to do as she pleases. I did not approve because Wardha suited both mother and daughter and they kept good health there. It is not necessary that she should stay with you when you are released. But you can go and see them and also take that opportunity to observe how things are at Wardha. You don't have to make a journey to see your family. That they may require you to do so is another matter. My present attitude is that everybody should choose his own way and progress along that way, and that nobody should copy me or anyone else. Ba is all right. It is a rather different tale this time. Be it so. If all the castles we build in our fancy were to materialize, the earth would soon be destroyed.

Amina must have gone by now to live with Pyare Ali. Her children seem to be quite at home in Anasuyabehn's home. But I have heard that Qureshi has other views on the subject. Even if that is so, there will be no harm whatever. Gangabehn has gone on a pilgrimage to Wardha. Everybody writes and tells me that all of them will settle down in a short time.

Sardar is enjoying himself. Chandrashankar and Mira are quite well. Chandrashankar continues to acquit himself well in Mahadev's place.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5515

145. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

February 9, 1934

BHAISHRI MUNSHI,

I got your letter and the copy of *Narasaiyo—Bhakta Harino*. I will await your and Lilavati's letters, which may be sent with Mathuradas or anybody else who may be coming this side. I hope all of you are well. Jagadish[1] must have completely recovered from his illness now.

[1] K. M. Munshi's son by his first wife

Malkani is preparing a note for you concerning those Bills. I read *Narasaiyo* whenever I can snatch a few minutes and I enjoy it immensely. I like the book. If I had time, I would go through all your books, as Vallabhbhai does.

Even if nobody is coming this side, do let me have your letters by registered post.

Work for Bihar relief is going on all over the country. I am not surprised that it has been taken up there too. I would certainly be surprised if it were not.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7531. Courtesy: K. M. Munshi

146. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, THEVARAM

February 9, 1934

Gandhiji, addressing the gathering, said that it was not without difficulty that Thevaram was included in the programme of his visit. At one time, it seemed as if he would not go over there, but the workers who invited him to Madura would not take 'no' for an answer.

I am glad indeed that I have come here to see your beautiful place which is at the foot of the hills and it did my heart good to see so many enthusiastic volunteers from Combai to Thevaram which seemed to be like an unbroken line of volunteers on either side. I wish that all that man power and all that energy was utilized for at least retaining if not adding to the beauty of this valley. Let it not be said that what nature had so lavishly beautified man had dirtied. I could see that, all along the broken road, volunteers had worked somewhat to make it passable for the cars. But I would like the volunteers to copy the Harijans who worked for two months in order to make a proper passable road at Vannivalasi.[1] These Harijans were a mere handful. You are at least hundred times as many as they are and therefore I would suggest to you that you make a proper road between Combai and Thevaram. It is not necessary for us always to look to Taluk Boards and District Boards to make roads for us. And don't for one moment deceive yourselves into the belief that Taluk Boards and District Boards make roads for you for nothing. Every road so made is made out of your own money. How much better

[1] *Vide* "Leaves from a Diary", 25-2-1934.

then would it be if you made your own roads directly not out of your money but out of your labour which is much better than money.

And then as I passed through the little town streets, I could not help regretting that it was not kept in perfectly sanitary and hygienic condition. I could see at once as I was driving through this valley that the valley, though very picturesque, must be malarial. But I have no doubt that by judicious labour well spent you can make this valley free from malaria. If the volunteers whom I have seen this morning were to devote a little of their time every day to making this valley malaria-free, they could do so without much difficulty, certainly without much expense. I saw that you had covered up the dirt in your drains with dry earth. Deeply as I appreciate the consideration that you have shown to me, I would appreciate it much more if you made your drains dry for all time. And I can tell you as an expert in village sanitation, having done some practical work myself, that all these things can be done if there is voluntary labour, without practically any expense whatsoever. But it cannot be done, will not be done, so long as the curse of untouchability remains in our midst and eats into the very vitals of the community.[1]

The Hindu, 12-2-1934

147. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

February 10, 1934

CHI. MARY,

Your letter. It is perhaps as well you are having more of khadi and that you are to have Narmada with you.

Love and kisses to Chandra.

My going to Hyderabad on 8th or 9th March seems to be a certainty. It will be only for a few hours.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6020. Also C.W. 3349. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

[1] After this meeting Gandhiji drove to the Zamorin's Palace where a women's meeting was held. Besides an address of welcome, several women presented to him their jewellery. Gandhiji urged them to banish untouchability.

148. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, SRIRANGAM[1]

February 10, 1934

I am not new to this holy city.[2] I well remember the occasion when I had a very friendly and sincere discussion with some *shastris* about the temple. I remember that we had at that time a general discussion about untouchability, and although the *shastris* had held to their own throughout the discussion, there was a courtesy and friendliness observed which were very pleasant to me. So, today as I was coming here, I found occasion to congratulate both the reception committee and those who have organized black flag demonstration. The reception committee, I congratulate because of their wisdom in saving every pie for the Harijan cause instead of wasting on decorations, and the black flag demonstrators for the reason that there was nothing but the black flag decorations; no vociferous shout or anything that would appear discourteous. Indeed, it was a remarkable surprise to me that those urchins who were holding the black flags were all smiling and even joined in shouts of joy.

Before I deal with the subject of untouchability somewhat more fully than I do at most places, I should like to refer to the personal loss that I feel in not having by my side Mr. Rangaswamy. I can never forget the warm affection that he retained up to the end of his days for me.

I have already, when the occasion arose for the very first time, referred to Mr. Rangaswamy Iyengar of *The Hindu* and therefore omitted "Iyengar" on this occasion.[3] For me both the losses are great, but here in Srirangam I naturally recall the name of Mr. Rangaswamy Iyengar who belonged to this place. As I told you, when I was here last time, I had that discussion with some *shastris* in connection with untouchability.

I have no doubt in my mind that the views I expressed at that time were absolutely correct. Since then I have had many discussions with many learned *shastris*; I had occasion also to

[1] The meeting, held in the High School playground, was largely attended. *Harijan*, 23-2-1934, also gave a summary of the speech.

[2] Gandhiji had visited Srirangam on September 20, 1921; *vide* Vol. XXI.

[3] Someone in the audience had asked if he was referring to A. Rangaswamy Iyengar or K. V. Rangaswamy Iyengar.

study, as far as a layman like me can do, Shastras which have any bearing upon untouchability and I came to the definite conclusion that there was no warrant whatsoever in the Shastras for untouchability, as we practise it today. There is no warrant whatsoever for prohibiting the entry of any single Hindu, be he called untouchable or otherwise, to public temples. I do not propose to go into the discussion of the whole subject, but I want to give this absolute assurance on my behalf to those who are opposed to temple-entry by Harijans that there shall never be any force or compulsion used in this agitation for temple-entry. You have been kind enough in your address to refer to me as a true and sincere sanatanist. I think, in all humility and truthfulness, I can accept that description. I have claimed to be a sanatanist myself for the simple reason that from my youth up I have endeavoured to the best of my ability and knowledge to live up to the Shastras, as I have understood them, and, as such, I feel that it is the duty of every true sanatanist to do repentance in connection with untouchability, to purify himself and get rid of this taint. It is his bounden duty to admit Harijans to the same rights and privileges that he himself possesses, but he may not be satisfied till he has endeavoured his utmost to secure temple-entry for Harijans on the same terms that he enjoys. What is more, at Bombay, in the month of September, when the fast was going on, representative Hindus met there in an assembly and came to a solemn resolution[1] in the name of Hindus[2] in general to the effect that Harijans had the same right of temple-entry as the *savarna* Hindus, and if in order to attain to that state, if there was any legal obstacle, means would be adopted to remove that legal obstacle also. Therefore, for a man like me, it becomes a double duty to prosecute the claim of Harijans to temple-entry on the same terms as caste Hindus, but that ought not to frighten a single person for the simple reason that it merely amounts to a determination to educate Hindu public opinion along proper lines. Whilst I deplore that this great temple of Srirangam is not open to Harijans precisely in the same manner that it is open to caste Hindus, I have absolutely no desire that that temple should be opened to Harijans until the caste Hindu opinion in general is ripe for such opening.

It is not a question of Harijans asserting their right of temple-entry or claiming it. They may or may not want to enter that

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

[2] The source has "Harijans", evidently a slip.

temple, even when it is declared open to them. But it is the bounden duty of every caste Hindu to secure that opening, but it cannot be opened because a humble individual like me thinks that it should be opened. It can only be opened when there is a consensus of opinion on the part of caste Hindus. The difficulty therefore comes in only when a single Hindu says, 'so long as I am opposed to it, Srirangam temple should not be opened.' If such an impossible doctrine were to be accepted, we can never think of any progress in Hindu religion. We should never be able to deal with so many social abuses on these terms, and I do not know the history of a single Hindu temple, or for that matter any mosque or church, which has remained prohibited to a class of people because of the opposition of one single solitary worshipper.

Having made my position, therefore, with reference to temple-entry so absolutely clear, I would like all those who are opposed to this movement to consider whether they will not recognize the time spirit and recognize that all the disabilities that are imposed upon Harijans can never be enforced.

I want to give my evidence before you that throughout this tour I had the privilege of seeing tens of thousands of caste Hindus in these three provinces that I had visited, namely, C.P., Andhradesha, Tamil Nad, and if you can say, the fourth, Malabar. I have not a shadow of doubt that unsophisticated caste-Hindu mind is today ready to recognize the right of Harijans to enter temples and to enjoy all the other privileges that caste-Hindus enjoy. Therefore, I suggest to those who are opposed to the movement that they should not confuse the issue. If they do not like the temple-entry question, let them leave that alone, but let them give their perfect co-operation on several things that are being done today in the country. I am supposed to meet a deputation of sanatanists this afternoon. I invite the hottest sanatanist to that discussion. It is intended to be a purely friendly discussion and I have no doubt that there are many points of agreement between them and those who are called reformers. There, I should like to leave this question.

The Hindu, 12-2-1934

149. *INTERVIEW TO HARIJANS, SRIRANGAM*

February 10, 1934

If it is a fact that 98 per cent of the staff of the Sangh are Brahmins,[1] it is the most creditable performance, showing that all Brahmins are not bad and that those who work in the Sangh are repentant and are in earnest about this reform. My own conviction is that real Brahmins have nothing to do with untouchability.

Q. Can you not make it a rule that half the members should be Harijans?

A. In the Sangh, it is not possible to have 50 per cent Harijans as members, for the simple reason that Harijans are not debtors but creditors. This is a debtors' association. The fear that underlies your question is wholly unjustified, because the members of the local Sangh have no authority to spend money without the sanction of the Central Board. You will find the bulk of the money collected spent among Harijans. The idea is to spend as little as possible on administration. And you should know that members are volunteers getting nothing.

Q. Do your workers deserve our confidence?

A. Yes, those who work in the Sangh do deserve your confidence. If you examine their administration of funds, you will find it quite satisfactory. Because you have seen some Brahmins acting badly, selfishly, you think that all Brahmins are bad. It may be that Brahmins as a class are bad though I have no proof whatsoever to confirm that charge. But I have proof to show that Brahmins connected with this movement are in an overwhelming number of cases honest men and have joined this Sangh, because they are repentant and because they feel that untouchability is a hideous wrong.

Harijan, 23-2-1934

[1] Gandhiji had been asked why it was that 98 per cent of the staff of Harijan Seva Sangh were Brahmins.

150. SPEECH AT THE NATIONAL COLLEGE, TRICHINOPOLY

February 10, 1934

I thank you for the address and the purse that you have presented me. For the number of students that I see before me, I do not consider your purse to be big enough. The students in several other parts of India during this very tour have subscribed far more liberally than you have, but I am not here to criticize the slenderness of your purse. Whether whatever you have given is little or much depends upon the condition of your hearts. If, whatever you have given comes out of the fulness of your hearts, surely it must be enough. In any case, I trust that it is but an earnest determination to get rid of untouchability; for students, as I have said so often, it is not enough that they merely satisfy themselves by presenting purses to me. They have to give their leisure hours to serving Harijans and there are many ways of rendering their service most effectively. I may also tell you that in any part of India students are rendering service. I suggest to you that you appoint certain corporations amongst yourselves who will devote themselves to this service during a particular week or a day as the case may be. You can visit Harijan quarters, take charge of Harijan children, and treat them as if they were your own blood-brothers and sisters, and you can give them education that they are so much in need of. You can take them to see different places of interest, you can give them elementary lessons in hygiene, you can sweep their quarters, and secure their co-operation in doing so. These are however only some illustrations of the many ways in which you can render service. I have no doubt that earnest students will find out several ways of rendering service. I hope that you will set about rendering this service without further delay. May God give you strength for it.

The Hindu, 12-2-1934

151. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TRICHINOPOLY[1]

[*February 10, 1934*][2]

This is not my very first visit to Trichinopoly. I have many pleasant recollections of previous meetings; but the numbers present tonight beat all previous records. And it is a matter of joy to me that this movement of self-purification can attract crowds so large as this. I do, however, hope that you, who have attended this meeting in such large numbers, have not done so in order to look at a *tamasha*. Mine is a definite invitation to all caste Hindus to purify themselves of the taint of untouchability. I invite you to give your money also for the same purpose, and you give me liberally of your coppers, of your silver coins and even of your jewellery. It is difficult to believe that all this you do, although you are not in the movement. And if, as a matter of fact, such large numbers of people all over India support the movement, I think it is indicative of a very great reformation in Hinduism.

But among the addresses that I have received here I find one from my Mussalman friends. After saying many complimentary things about me, the address thus concludes:

> A soul (who is) more devoted to public cause and who always considers the good of others better than his own, cannot be found than in you. You are the only leader now and there is no one else. Hence we pray that you give us on this occasion the consolation of our realizing our cherished hopes of your taking up the work of uplifting, not only the cause of all the Hindus and Christians, but also of us, Mohammedans, in a word, the public cause, i.e., of our people getting their rights of citizenship and of their being saved from their economic bondage.

I may, in answer, give this absolute assurance not only to these Mussalman friends, but through them to all whom it may concern, that in the evening of my life I am not likely to take up a sectional cause to the injury of the public cause. And if

[1] The meeting, held in the Puthur Maidan, was according to *The Hindu*, 12-2-1934, attended by 30,000 people. At the end of the meeting a collection was made for the Bihar Earthquake Relief Fund.

[2] From Gandhiji's itinerary published in the *Harijan*, 23-2-1934

at the present moment I appear to be advocating a sectional cause, you may depend upon it that behind that sectional cause lies deep down the desire that the whole of the public may benefit by it. For I do not believe that life is divided into separate air-tight compartments. On the contrary it is an undivided and indivisible whole; and, therefore, what is or may be good for one must be good for all. Whatever activity fails to stand that unmistakable test is an activity that must be abjured by all who have the public weal at heart.

Having throughout my life believed in this doctrine of universal good, never have I taken up any activity—be it sectional or national—which would be detrimental to the good of humanity as a whole. And in pursuing that universal goal, I discovered years ago that untouchability, as it is practised today among Hindus, is a hindrance not only to the march of Hindus towards their own good, but also a hindrance to the general good of all. He who runs may discover for himself how this untouchability has taken in its snaky coil not merely caste Hindus but all other communities representing different faiths in India, that is to say, Mussalmans, Christians and others. In dealing with the monster of untouchability my own innermost desire is not that the brotherhood of Hindus only may be achieved, but it essentially is that the brotherhood of man—be he Hindu, Mussalman, Christian, Parsi or Jew—may be realized. For I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. I believe that they are all God-given, and I believe that they were necessary for the people to whom these religions were revealed. And I believe that, if only we could all of us read the scriptures of the different faiths from the standpoint of the followers of those faiths we should find that they were at bottom all one and were all helpful to one another.

Hence it is that I have not hesitated to ask all non-Hindus to help me with their prayer in this mission, and it is because I have a living faith in my mission and because that faith is based on an extensive experience that I have not hesitated to say with the greatest deliberation that, if we, Hindus, do not destroy this monster of untouchability, it will devour both Hindus and Hinduism. And when I ask you to purify your hearts of untouchability, I ask of you nothing less than this—that you should believe in the fundamental unity and equality of man. I invite you all to forget that there are any distinctions of high and low among the children of one and the same God.

And therefore it is that I have not hesitated to plead on bended knees before those caste Hindus who call themselves

sanatanists that they should join hands with me in this movement of self-purification. If they would only patiently study it and its implications, they would discover that there are more points of contact than of difference between them and the reformers. They cannot possibly, if they will study the movement, justify themselves in subjecting to indignities all those who are considered untouchables. Not far from Trichinopoly there is a place called Mel-Arasur. There the Harijans have claimed to use public tanks in common with the others. Law permits the use of these tanks by Harijans. Nevertheless caste Hindus have taken the law into their own hands: and I understand that in a variety of ways they have persecuted these brethren of ours. This is but one illustration out of many that I could give you of the ill-treatment of Harijans. No religious sophistry can possibly justify conduct such as this.

Harijan, 16-2-1934

152. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

February 11, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

I have your three letters at the same time. I am glad you are happy. You may certainly learn Gujarati. You must not play with your body. Keep it in good order by taking proper food and do not neglect your health on any account. Do not imagine all sorts of evil. It is wrong to fear me.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI AMALABEHN
HARIJAN ASHRAM
SABARMATI
B.B.&.C.I.RLY.

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

CWMG - LVII

153. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KARUR[1]

[*February 11, 1934*][2]

I must not take many minutes. You cannot be comfortably sitting in the sun as you must have been for a few hours, and I have yet to cover a distance of 76 miles, nor is it necessary for me to say much, for your purses and addresses show that you are alive to the object of the mission. I appreciate the message that some sanatanists have sent through the members of the Reception Committee. Some of them, I understand from your address, have been good enough to give their own mite towards Harijan uplift, but they have sent me their advice that I ought to drop the claim that I am putting forth for temple-entry on behalf of Harijans. Claiming as I do to be a sanatanist as they themselves are, I cannot give up the claim on behalf of Harijans to enter our temples precisely on the same terms as sanatanist Hindus do, but I can give them this absolute assurance that so far as I am concerned, and so far as Harijan Sevak Sangh is concerned, there never shall be a single Harijan entering a single Hindu temple unless there is a clear or rather clearest possible consensus of opinion of temple-goers to that particular temple that Harijans should enter. My prosecution of the claim therefore ought not to affect a single opponent of temple-entry, for temple-entry will surely depend upon their being converted to my view. So long as they remain opposed to temple-entry, it is quite clear, from what I have told you, that there can be no temple-entry by Harijans, but I do want to give this warning that, so far as I can judge, public opinion is daily veering round to the fact that *savarna* Hindus will fail in their elementary duty to Harijans if they prevent them from making use of public temples precisely on the same terms as caste Hindus do. Remember please, that the reformer and the sanatanist base their interpretation of the duty of caste Hindus upon identical Shastras. Their interpretations differ undoubtedly. Society can only gain by both parties courteously, gently and honourably putting their own interpretations before the public.

The Hindu, 12-2-1934

[1] This was a huge meeting. Addresses of welcome were presented on behalf of the Karur Municipality and the public.

[2] From Gandhiji's itinerary published in the *Harijan*, 23-2-1934

154. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, ERODE[1]

February 11, 1934

Gandhiji thanked them for the addresses and purses and said that they would not expect him to speak for long at that time of the evening, knowing that he left Trichinopoly that day very early in the morning and that he had to go another 42 miles by motor to the place of his night halt. He was glad that he was allowed to take all addresses as read, as he was in receipt of copies of them in advance. He was glad to know of the Harijan work done by the local Municipal Council and he asked them not to be satisfied with the work already done but to continue their work till untouchability was rooted out from their hearts. In the eyes of God there was no difference between man and man and it was a sin to hold any difference. The Hindu religion was in danger and removal of untouchability would certainly avert it. He knew that sanatanists did not agree with him. But if they had rightly understood the Harijan movement, its principles and work, they would have no grievance against him. He was trying to meet sanatanists wherever possible in his tour, and to convince them to have a change of heart.

The Hindu, 13-2-1934

155. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TIRUCHENGODU[2]

February 11, 1934

FRIENDS,

I thank you for these addresses and your purses. You do not expect me at this late hour of the night to make a long speech. I must also confess that I am fairly tired; nor perhaps is it necessary that I must say much to you. You know the burden of my message and it is in a few sentences. It is high time that we changed our hearts and got rid of untouchability altogether. And

[1] About ten thousand people attended the meeting. Besides the civic address, various other institutions presented addresses of welcome along with purses. At the end of the meeting the addresses were auctioned and a collection was made for the victims of the Bihar earthquake.

[2] About 5,000 people attended the meeting. At the end of the meeting the addresses were auctioned and a collection was made for the victims of the Bihar earthquake.

that means, we must abolish all distinctions of high and low. We are children of one and the same God and God could not possibly do anything worse with his own creation. It is your own experience as parents that you do not observe distinctions among your own children. It is therefore that I have been always saying that it is a great sin to have untouchability among us. It is not a divine institution. It is man-made and if Hinduism and Hindus are to live, it must now be unmade. Let caste Hindus pray to God that this curse of untouchability be removed from their hearts. Let us say with one voice that Harijans are entitled to the same privileges and rights as caste Hindus are.

I hope you have not forgotten the sufferers in Bihar. Although it is so very late, I would gladly give some minutes for collections for Bihar. And while the volunteers collect money, I propose to sell these addresses.

The Hindu, 13-2-1934

156. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

[On or after *February 11, 1934*][1]

DEAR DAUGHTER,

You are stupid. Who told you I was displeased? Do you not see I have put myself in front of you? I came up to you twice and you were asleep. I do not come to you often, for I am busy. But I direct everything from here. But you are stupid, obstinate and sensitive. No silence today or tomorrow. You must learn to obey cheerfully. Your peace lies in obedience not in wilful silence or anything else. That is the meaning of discipline and faith.

Did you understand?

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 292; also *Bapuke Patra–8: Bibi Amtussalaam Ke Nam*, p. 44

[1] According to the addressee, this letter was written by Gandhiji on his reaching Rajaji's Ashram where she was lying ill; Gandhiji had reached the Ashram on the evening of February 11.

CWMG - LVII

157. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

February 12, 1934

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I had a talk with Miss Lester about Midnapore and asked her to see the Governor. She wrote a letter to him to which he replied by wire. She is now going. You should read the letter I have given to her. I have asked her to see you and learn all the facts. Give her all the information. If it is necessary, arrange for her to meet Dr. Bidhan and Satisbabu. She will leave on Friday to be back here with me. She has been given some money for the expenses and her ticket has been paid for. Shall I charge it to you? Of course, Jamnalalji is always there. I do not quite know what would be the correct thing to do.

I have written this in great haste. Your letters have been received. I shall answer them by and by. I do not get the time.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 7945. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

158. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, PUDUPALAYAM

February 12, 1934

FRIENDS,

You know that here I am not supposed to have come to visit the village really but to visit the Ashram.[1] It is highly unlikely that I would have come to Pudupalayam but for the Ashram. That does not mean that I do not want the change of heart here also that I am asking for from all caste Hindus. But it means this, that I have come to see what service the Ashram has been rendering to you. The Ashram being in your midst, my visit to you should be considered as superfluous. If I discovered that in spite of the Ashram being in your midst for so many years, you have not yet got rid of the taint of untouchability, I should

[1] The Ashram was started by C. Rajagopalachari in 1926 for constructive work among the villagers. Removal of untouchability was one of its aims.

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very nearly despair. As a matter of fact, places like Pudupalayam ought to serve as a proper test in order to know how far the caste-Hindu mind has been touched on the matter of untouchability. For you have in your midst a body of the servants of the people who in their own life have no taint of untouchability about them at all. They are all pledged to regard Harijans as their own blood-brothers and sisters. I would certainly like to think that you are also treating the Harijans in the same manner. But I know that it is not your position today. Though you have made considerable headway in that direction you have still your doubts about the necessity of removing untouchability altogether. You still like the distinction of high and low. You still feel, some of you at any rate, that if Harijans came into their own they will not give you the same service that they are giving today. I think that it is wrong; it is sinful to keep persons under suppression simply because, if their suppression was removed, they might not render us the service that they have been rendering hitherto.

We have no right whatsoever to force service from fellow human beings. I can therefore only hope and pray that you will get rid of whatever untouchability there is still left in you. Believe with me that untouchability has no divine sanction, but that it is a positive sin. I did not expect the purse you have given me. Your purse I consider to be a handsome purse. I have no doubt that you have heard of the province of Bihar and you must have heard about the earthquake that has desolated many of its fair and rich cities.

I understand that the purse you have presented is just now collected and it is absolutely a spontaneous offering. Therefore I dare not suggest that you should make collections for Bihar at this very moment; but I would like you to think of your suffering countrymen in Bihar and put together whatever money you can and send that money to Rajendrababu. You should know that nearly 25,000 people have died and many more thousands are today homeless and without clothing and living on doles supplied to them.

The Hindu, 14-2-1934

159. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

PUDUPALAYAM,
February 13, 1934

BA,

We are in Rajaji's Ashram today. Nearly 250 persons must have dined here. The same number slept in the place last night. Mathuradas was among them. *Harijan* Sastri and his wife also have come along. Valjibhai is in the party. His health cannot be described as good. I got your letter. You remember Asharbhai of Tirupur, don't you ? He and his wife Padmavati had got ill after they were released from jail. They are somewhat better now. There was a long letter from Bal today. He and Raojibhai are working together and looking after the store. Soman and Parnerkar are in Patna. Maganbhai looks after the journals. Bhansali is living in a cave near Than. He has got his lips stitched up, but an opening has been left through which a tube can be inserted. He drinks through it flour mixed in water. He eats nothing else. He wears a loin-cloth made of bark. I had a letter from Chhaganlal Joshi. He is all right. These days he gets milk, etc., in his food and so keeps good health. He reads a lot. There was a letter from Pyarelal in which he has described his progress in the study of the *Gita*. His health is fairly good. Gangabehn has left Wardha and returned to Borivli. From there she will go to the Ashram. There was a letter from Devdas. He is quite well. Amtussalaam is lying in bed in front of me. She has been having fever, but is better today. She will go to Sabarmati when she is all right. Krishnakumari is in Kashi and lying ill at her paternal uncle's. Velanbehn is being looked after in her illness. I have written to Madhavdas. There has been no reply. I will let you know when I get one. I am sending copies of your letter to Ramdas, Devdas, etc.

Blessings to all sisters from
BAPU

[PS.]

I omit the discourse today. I hope you will not mind if I do that sometimes? I have no time at all and, therefore, cannot write it well. I will send you the slivers.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Bane Patro, pp. 13-4

160. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

PUDUPALAYAM,
February 13, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

It is in Raja's Ashram, and it is Tuesday morning. About 50 people have joined it, but he is able to manage them all. The climate is so fine that there can be no difficulty on its account.

Muriel Lester and her friend joined us at Coimbatore. They left yesterday to see the Governor of Bengal. The suggestion was made by me. The subject of discussion will be exclusively Midnapur. I don't think anything will come out of the effort, but it was our duty to do this much. The two ladies will return on Sunday.

Amtussalaam is laid up in bed. She is lying just in front of me. Her heart is gold, but her body is brass.

You must have read the Poet's attack[1]. I am replying to it in *Harijan*.[2] He of course made amends afterwards. He gets excited and writes, and then corrects himself. This is what he does every time.

Bhansali has got his lips stitched up. He mixes flour and water and drinks the liquid with a straw. He says he got a tailor to stitch up his lips. And he adds that he enjoys complete peace of mind. He intends to wear a loin-cloth or a shirt. He is somewhere near Than in Kathiawar.

There was a very good letter from Chhaganlal [Joshi]. He has read a good deal. His mental condition also is good. His health is good. It seems he has also been getting milk, etc., in sufficient quantity. The date of his release is drawing near.

I have permitted Amala to go to Sabarmati. Just now she feels quite happy.

Valji has come here. His health is so so. Swami's friend, Himmatlal Khira, has come. His health has not been fully restored. I, therefore, don't think that he can stay here. Mathuradas has come for a few days. There is nothing special behind the visit.

I have received Rajendrababu's call. I shall have, therefore, to break off the tour somewhere and go. I have sent a wire

[1] *Vide* Appendix I.
[2] *Vide* "Superstition *v.* Faith", pp. 164-6.

and am awaiting a reply by wire. I have informed him that I cannot go before the 24th at the earliest.

Ba's letter is enclosed.

Devdas is happy in Delhi. Prithuraj is carrying on well. His work is satisfactory.

Lakshmidas must have gone to Patna now. I am not thinking just now of sending any more workers.

I have just received a letter from Bal. The Ashram batch is working hard. It seems to be giving a good account of itself. Bal and Raojibhai are in joint control of the store. Parnerkar and Soman[1] are in Patna. Maganbhai[2] is in the publicity department.

A copy of Ba's letter is enclosed.

Please be satisfied with this much today.

Blessings to both from
BAPU

[PS.]

There is a letter from Kusum from Broach. She has been to Africa in connection with her brother. She had a long letter from Pyarelal. But its contents are meant for me. He has written in it about the *Gita* and about his studies. I was forgetting an important thing. I have just received the Government's reply[3] to the effect that I cannot see Mani and Mahadev.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 76-8

161. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, NAMAKKAL[4]

February 14, 1934

FRIENDS,

You have brought me to one of the most picturesque sights in all India and an ideal place for holding a meeting such as this. You have presented me with a number of addresses and purses and made different other gifts. The movement which is now going on is one of religious self-purification. Through this we must

[1] Ramachandra J. Soman

[2] Maganbhai Prabhudas Desai, joint editor of *Harijanbandhu*

[3] *Vide* footnote on p. 101.

[4] The meeting was held at 7.50 a.m. and was attended by over fifteen thousand people. Addresses of welcome were presented to Gandhiji on behalf of the Taluk Board, the local Harijans and others.

endeavour to attain a status of absolute equality for Harijans, whom caste Hindus have suppressed for centuries. I regard your monetary offering as a token of whole-hearted support for this movement. I see from the Taluk Board address that you have been endeavouring, in whatever way you can, to help the Harijan cause. I hope, however, that you will not cease your efforts until Harijans attain perfect equality with the caste Hindus to which I have just now adverted. I have here an address from the Harijans. They say that they have built a temple by the public subscription of philanthropic men. But, evidently, it is unfinished and they need financial help to complete it. I hope that leaders here will go into the matter and do whatever is necessary. The Harijans would like me to visit the *cheries* and the temple site. I wish I could go and see them. But it is hardly possible now, seeing that I have a heavy programme in front of me for the day. Now I must proceed to the disposing of these addresses and these articles you have given me.

I see you have not yet made any collections for the stricken people of Bihar. I would, therefore, like volunteers to spread themselves among the crowd and collect what they can. I take it that you know 25,000 people have been swallowed up by mother earth in a second. And while we here are enjoying ourselves, more or less, thousands of our countrymen in Bihar are shivering from cold and are shelterless. I would, therefore, like you to subscribe liberally for the Bihar Relief Fund.

The Hindu, 16-2-1934

162. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, SALEM[1]

February 14, 1934

I have had to carry out a strenuous programme today and you have given me a heavy agenda with little time to speak after it. I have to catch the train to Tanjore at 7.20 p.m. and so I wish to finish this work soon. Nor is it necessary for me to speak to you now, about the message of my tour. In one sentence I will say that all castes must have equal rights. When we feel that we are all God's creatures, there can be no untouch-

[1] Over fifty thousand people attended the meeting. Twelve addresses of welcome and as many purses, including those from the Municipality, citizens, District Board and various other organizations, were presented to Gandhiji, as also many valuable gifts of silver and gold.

ability in our midst. We are all Harijans, I think that caste Hindus are not acceptable to God because we have not done our duty to the Harijans. If we are to get God's blessings, we must elevate the Harijans. They must be given the same privileges as are enjoyed by caste Hindus. This great crowd prevents me from speaking further. I would remind you of Bihar and the sufferings of the people of that province from the earthquake. I shall speak about it if you will allow me that pleasure. If you have not helped your brothers in Bihar, I will like you to help them as much as you can. You do not allow me to speak now.[1] I shall now auction these things and then finish this work.

The Hindu, 16-2-1934

163. LETTER TO HIRALAL SHARMA

February 15, 1934

BHAI SHARMA,

I have your telegram. I am writing this in a moving train.

There does not seem to be any hitch now in your leaving for Wardha.

Amtussalaam has well and truly fallen sick. I shall meet her on Monday. Could you possibly come to Madras before going to Wardha if she has not recovered by then? Send me a wire if you can come. I do not wish to inconvenience you for nothing. She has an amazing faith in you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsha*, between pp. 54-5

[1] The audience had become noisy.

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164. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

February 15, 1934

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

You must be better now. I have sent a letter to Dr. Sharma. I hope to find you fully recovered when we meet in Madras.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 293

165. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

NEGAPATAM,
February [*15*][1], *1934*

BHAI JIVANJI,

I got your letter. You must have read in Chandrashankar's letter that I did not get the permission.[2] I shall be in Belgaum most probably on March 5/6. I would be happy if Durga and you could see me there. You may see Mahadev earlier. I certainly have something to write in reply to Mahadev's letter, but since we shall be meeting in a few days, I don't write anything just now. Tell him I am well. He ought not to take it to heart that I shall not be able to see him. Inquire and find out how Girdhari is doing. I am keeping excellent health. Raja is with me. It is not certain how long he will stay. I am likely to have to go to Bihar earlier than expected. I shall know more on the 20th. Ask Mahadev not to worry about anything.

Give the accompanying papers to Kakasaheb.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9938. Also C.W. 6913. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

[1] Gandhiji was at Negapatam on 15th February.

[2] To see Manibehn Patel and Mahadev Desai in the Belgaum Prison; *vide* p. 101.

CWMG - DIGITAL VERSION

166. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TANJORE[1]

February 15, 1934

I do not know whether you enjoy it or not, but I must confess to you that the scene presented before me is a magnificent scene; not because of the crowd that surrounds me but because of the sun just rising over our head. For delivering my message I cannot conceive a more auspicious occasion than early morning. How I wish that my message should enter straight into your heart and you felt as repentant as I do, that we and our forefathers suppressed a large part of Hindu humanity and that, in the name of religion. I have been told not once but repeatedly that our sanatanist friends would associate with all other reforms with reference to untouchability, if only I would surrender the claim of temple-entry on behalf of the Harijans. They little know that that advice is tantamount to asking me to surrender the force which sustains me.

I looked at the Tanjore temple and then within probably a few seconds or a few minutes of passing by the temple, I saw the sun rising above the horizon. I asked myself whether he rose only for caste Hindus or whether he rose for Harijans as well. I discovered at once that he was absolutely impartial and had probably to rise more for the Harijans than for the caste Hindus, who had plenty of wealth and who had shut themselves in their palaces, shutting out light even beyond the rise of the sun. Poor Harijans, they do not sleep after sunrise; on the contrary, being a labourer the Harijan has to get up even before sunrise. And therefore whilst many of us may be still sleeping on our cots and on our mattresses, the Harijans get a proper sun-bath. If that temple designed by God opens out to the whole world, shall a man-built temple open less for Harijans? Not one of these temples can be opened without the free consent of those who are in the habit of going to these temples or who believe in these temples. Why should therefore the sanatanists or any other person worry about my conviction about temple-entry, when the matter was purely a voluntary thing? But what grieves me is this, that under the excuse of this temple-entry question, in many other things where

[1] A summary of this speech was published in *Harijan*, 23-2-1934, in the usual "Weekly Letter".

the sanatanists say there is a perfect agreement they are not moving their little finger. Let them treat Harijans on terms of absolute equality in all other matters. They will then have done something to retrieve the great blunder. There I must leave my message. I can only hope and pray that all of you will recognize the simple truth and you will have sufficient strength to act according to it.

The Hindu, 16-2-1934

167. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KUMBAKONAM[1]

February 15, 1934[2]

I deeply appreciate the honour you have done me by inviting me and presenting this address to me. I appreciate it more because you have expressed your opinion in a frank and courageous manner. I must say that one expression that you have used is enough warrant for me to continue my mission. You have said I should concentrate on cultivation of intensive public opinion. I am doing absolutely nothing more than cultivating public opinion in favour of justice being done to Harijans. I know the difference on the question of temple-entry. That is my only point of difference with sanatanist opinion. Nothing is going to be done, so far as I can prevent it, or so far as the Central Board of the Harijan Sevak Sangh can prevent it, to force temple-entry. Temple-entry is a question purely for the caste Hindus to solve. If caste Hindus say as a body that Harijans shall not enter the temples, I shall say it will be unfortunate, it will be marching against the spirit of the times; but, so long as that opinion persists, no Harijan will enter any temple. My duty is merely to confine myself to the cultivation of public opinion in the direction. I come to the parting of the ways when I am told that I should not whisper a word about the subject. I cannot do that. For I feel, as a lover of my faith, to say that caste Hindus will not be doing their elementary duty so long as they prohibit temple-entry to Harijans. I hold it to be impossible for a man who has studied Hindu Shastras with an unbiased mind to feel otherwise. When an overwhelming majority favours the entry of Harijans into a particular temple, it should be opened.

[1] The meeting was held in the Municipal Council Hall. This version of the speech has been collated with that of *The Hindu*, 16-2-1934.

[2] *Harijan* gives the date as February 16, which is evidently a slip as Gandhiji was in Kumbakonam only on the 15th.

Wherever I have gone and opened temples to Harijans, I have done so in the presence of thousands of caste Hindus and with their consent: the thousands of caste Hindus who were most concerned about the temple said, "We want the temples to be opened."

But if you say that no temples should be opened so long as there is one caste Hindu who says, 'No, the temple should not be opened,' then, I would say that that is coercion with a vengeance. I would call it exercise of force when one man says, 'My ideas ought to prevail against the idea of 9,999.' The majority should no doubt consist of Hindus who believe in temple—not scoffers.[1] Therefore without the overwhelming opinion of caste Hindus, temple-entry is an impossibility. But where there is such a majority, I should never give up my attempt to veer round others to my way of thinking. I deliberately feel that it is an insult to prohibit Harijans who conform to all the laws that are laid down for the entry of caste Hindus to temples. In justice you should not adopt that method. I say there is no sanction in Hinduism as I have been able to study it all these years for the prohibition of Harijans into temples. Nevertheless, I deeply appreciate the candid expression of your opinion. I do not think that it is proper for anybody to accept one's opinion because he has got some merit or enthusiasm for the cause. Therefore I appreciate your opinion all the more.

Harijan, 23-2-1934, and *The Hindu*, 16-2-1934

168. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KUMBAKONAM[2]

February 15, 1934

I thank you very much for the addresses you have presented to me. I have been asked in an address before me purporting to be from the Reception Committee to open a day school for the Harijans at Koranatukaruppu but I am sorry I will not be able to do so. There is no time left for me to visit that school. . . . Co-workers should not put the strain upon me of doing the work which they themselves should undertake. They may take me to *cheries* and show me the work they have done. It is their duty

[1] The following lines have been taken from *The Hindu*, 16-2-1934.

[2] According to *The Hindu* two addresses of welcome along with purses on behalf of the Reception Committee and the local Harijan Seva Sangam were presented to Gandhiji. This speech has been collated with the report published in *The Hindu*, 16-2-1934.

to keep the *cheries* clean and to open and conduct schools. In a hurricane and intensive tour my energy and time should be reserved to the chief object of my mission. And therefore I was deeply grieved when I received an anonymous telegram that I should not receive reception at the hands of those to whom the function was entrusted.

A staunch Congressman as I am, for me, in connection with this Harijan service, there is no Congressman or non-Congressman; and if there is a non-Congressman who is a lover of Harijans and a lover of his religion and has capacity to work, it is the duty of Congressmen to work under him and take directions from him. If Congressmen were to limit Harijan service to themselves, it is easy enough to see that Hinduism will not be able to purge itself of the taint of untouchability, because thousands who don't consider themselves Congressmen will remain outside the orbit of that service. Let it, therefore, be remembered by all those who have this cause at heart that, in a movement deeply religious, in a movement of self-purification, there is no room whatsoever for divisions. This movement has no political motive behind it, and the very best manner of our being able to show that there is no political motive behind it is to conserve our energy, bring on the same platform the energy of all those who consider it necessary to purge Hinduism of this sin of untouchability.[1]

Harijan, 23-2-1934, and *The Hindu*, 16-2-1934

169. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, NEGAPATAM[2]

February 15, 1934

You have overloaded me with these frames containing addresses. I have been pleading for no addresses, no frames. I laugh but what counts behind that laughter is that absolute sincere conviction that those addresses and frames are wholly unnecessary in connection with a movement like this which is absolutely and purely for self-purification. But since you will insist upon presenting so many addresses, I will endeavour to turn them to Harijan account by selling them. And those who will present such addresses should take care that they help in taking to

[1] The preceding paragraph has been taken from *Harijan*, 23-2-1934.

[2] Gandhiji arrived at Negapatam at 7.30 p.m. Addresses of welcome and purses were presented by the Municipality, the Charkha Sangh, Harijan Seva Sangam and Negapatam Taluk Board. At the end there was a collection for the Bihar Earthquake Relief Fund.

Harijan service and I wish that those who contribute either their money or their labour or their lot to this noble cause will share with me the belief that they are not only purifying themselves but raising the status of the whole of India with their purification, for seemingly though my message is addressed to caste Hindus—the so-called *savarna* Hindus—it is a message, I venture to think, addressed to all mankind. If I can but succeed in persuading the caste Hindus to wipe out this curse of untouchability, I believe that Hindus would have taken a long step towards the realization of brotherhood for which the whole world knowingly or unknowingly is aspiring. I would have you believe me when I say that there is absolutely no warrant for untouchability, as we practise it, in the Shastras and I want to suggest to all who would study the Shastras the golden rule of interpretation. If you take an isolated text from the Shastras it is possible to prove in them anything that you may wish to prove. Therefore in order to save ourselves from falling into death-traps it is necessary to understand the drift of the Shastras and I make bold to say that the drift of the Shastras can only point to brotherhood and not to distinction between man and man.

The Hindu, 17-2-1934

170. SUPERSTITION v. *FAITH*

The Bard of Santiniketan is Gurudev for me as he is for the inmates of that great institution. I and mine had found our shelter there when we returned from our long self-imposed exile in South Africa. But Gurudev and I early discovered certain differences of outlook between us. Our mutual affection has, however, never suffered by reason of our differences, and it cannot suffer by Gurudev's latest utterance on my linking the Bihar calamity with the sin of untouchability. He had a perfect right to utter his protest when he believed that I was in error. My profound regard for him would make me listen to him more readily than to any other critic. But in spite of my having read the statement three times, I adhere to what I have written in these columns.

When at Tinnevelly I first linked the event with untouchability,[1] I spoke with the greatest deliberation and out of the fulness of my heart. I spoke as I believed. I have long believed

[1] *Vide* p. 44.

that physical phenomena produce results both physical and spiritual. The converse I hold to be equally true.

To me the earthquake was no caprice of God nor a result of a meeting of mere blind forces. We do not know all the laws of God nor their working. Knowledge of the tallest scientist or the greatest spiritualist is like a particle of dust. If God is not a personal being for me like my earthly father, He is infinitely more. He rules me in the tiniest detail of my life. I believe literally that not a leaf moves but by His will. Every breath I take depends upon His sufferance.

He and His Law are one. The Law is God. Anything attributed to Him is not a mere attribute. He is the Attribute. He is Truth, Love, Law, and a million things that human ingenuity can name. I do believe with Gurudev in "the inexorableness of the universal law in the working of which God Himself never interferes". For God is the Law. But I submit that we do not know the Law or the laws fully, and what appear to us as catastrophes are so only because we do not know the universal laws sufficiently.

Visitations like droughts, floods, earthquakes and the like, though they seem to have only physical origins, are, for me, somehow connected with man's morals. Therefore, I instinctively felt that the earthquake was a visitation for the sin of untouchability. Of course, sanatanists have a perfect right to say that it was due to my crime of preaching against untouchability. My belief is a call to repentance and self-purification. I admit my utter ignorance of the working of the laws of Nature. But, even as I cannot help believing in God though I am unable to prove His existence to the sceptics, in like manner I cannot prove the connection of the sin of untouchability with the Bihar visitation even though the connection is instinctively felt by me. If my belief turns out to be ill-founded, it will still have done good to me and those who believe with me. For we shall have been spurred to more vigorous efforts towards self-purification, assuming, of course, that untouchability is a deadly sin. I know fully well the danger of such speculation. But I would be untruthful and cowardly if, for fear of ridicule, when those that are nearest and dearest to me are suffering, I did not proclaim my belief from the house-top. The physical effect of the earthquake will be soon forgotten and even partially repaired. But it would be terrible if it is an expression of the Divine wrath for the sin of untouchability and we did not learn the moral lesson from the event and repent of that sin. I have not the faith which Gurudev has that

"our own sins and errors, however enormous, have not got enough force to drag down the structure of creation to ruins". On the contrary, I have the faith that our own sins have more force to ruin that structure than any mere physical phenomenon. There is an indissoluble marriage between matter and spirit. Our ignorance of the results of the union makes it a profound mystery and inspires awe in us, but it cannot undo them. But a living recognition of the union has enabled many to use every physical catastrophe for their own moral uplifting.

With me the connection between cosmic phenomena and human behaviour is a living faith that draws me nearer to my God, humbles me and makes me readier for facing Him. Such a belief would be a degrading superstition, if out of the depth of my ignorance I used it for castigating my opponents.

Harijan, 16-2-1934

171. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

CUDDALORE,
February 16, 1934

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I got the letters from both of you. I am writing this letter before the morning prayer in Cuddalore near Pondicherry. If you can prevent personal estrangement with Sorabji, try to do so. You shouldn't mind his having withdrawn the advertisement. It is desirable that there should be no bitterness between you two. I have already started receiving letters on this subject. Bhavani Dayal has published an open letter against you. There was a letter in *The Times* [*of India*] on the opposite side too. If I can find it, I will ask them to enclose a cutting. I only tell you about the reports which reach here. Whether or not there is any truth in them, you two alone can say. Some of these reports may also be inspired by selfish motives. I send you whatever falls into my hands. Maybe these reports also affect the collections for the Bihar fund. What is the circulation of *I.O.* now?

Devdas and Lakshmi are in Delhi. He has been appointed on a salary of Rs. 250. Rajaji has joined me now. My health continues to be good. I enclose with this some letters from Ba.

I had asked for permission to see Mahadev and Mani, but it has been refused. I had asked for it because I am to go to Belgaum.

Kishorelal has gone to Deolali. His health is fairly good. Many of the inmates of the Ashram who have been released have gone to Bihar. Kakasaheb will get imprisonment at last. They have arrested and set him free several times. They have arrested him again but this time will not set him free.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4815

172. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KARAIKAL[1]

February 16, 1934

It is a matter of very great pleasure to me during this tour to enter the French territory for the second time. I had the pleasure of entering the French territory for the first time in India in Malabar, in Mahe. It was a great joy for me to meet both the officials and the people there. It does not surprise me today that you have given me this purse. It can be said that it was France that first gave the world the three significant words, "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity". But it is not given to all to enforce the three things in practice and I am ashamed that Hindus have been the worst criminals in this respect. It was reserved for them to invoke the name of God for untouchability. But after having studied the Hindu Shastras for a number of years to the extent that a layman could do, I have come to the definite conclusion that there is no warrant for untouchability in the Hindu Shastras. Historians have testified from the dawn of human wisdom to the unity of God; and the unity of all life in God was taught in the earliest hymns that the world first knew —the *Rigveda*. They first taught that God was one and all; life was created by Him and born in Him. Untouchability that we practise today is the very negation of this magnificent truth. I am, therefore, glad to see this crowd of men and women and the purse and gifts they have offered testify to the fact that they at least do not believe in untouchability. You will not consider yourselves discharged from the duty that every one owes

[1] Gandhiji reached Karaikal, a French territory, at 8.45 a.m. A huge crowd had gathered at the place of the meeting. Addresses of welcome were presented to Gandhiji on behalf of the public and Harijan Seva Sangam. Besides that a purse was also presented by the Vice-President of the Consulate General. At the end of the meeting Gandhiji auctioned the gifts.

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to Harijan brothers and sisters by merely paying contributions to the purse. But I flatter myself with the hope that your money and your presence here are an earnest of your determination to treat the Harijans as brothers and sisters of the same blood. I hope that you have already subscribed and, if not, you will now subscribe, to the Bihar Earthquake Relief Fund now being collected. That Divine visitation which within the twinkling of an eye destroyed over 25,000 souls, shows in a striking manner that we are all one. Let us be one in life as on the dreadful day they were one in death.

The Hindu, 17-2-1934

173. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, SHIYALI[1]

February 16, 1934

I see that some people are waving black flags on the fringe of the meeting. I congratulate them on their courteous behaviour even as they are waving their black flags. They have a perfect right to exhibit their feeling in the manner they are doing. I know that they have deep down in them the suspicion that the money that is being collected will not be used in the manner it has been proclaimed. Those that are at the back of these black flags are also under the impression that I am purely a tool in the hands of the capitalists and rich men. Whether I am a tool in their hands or not is not a relevant matter. It is enough that there is a belief that I am their tool. But I can give them this assurance that, so far as I am aware, I am no tool in the hands of anybody but God Almighty.

There are so many things, as I said yesterday, in common between those that call themselves "self-respecters" and myself. "Self-respecters" say there is no God of Justice on this earth and, therefore, they say, if they have to believe in a God, it is humanity. I confess I am superstitious enough to believe in God. But I do not propose to quarrel with them about the use of words, and if the word humanity will please them, I shall call my God by that word. They say their motto is love and sympathy. I congratulated them upon their motto and told them I could subscribe to their motto to the fullest extent. Then they said they wanted equal distribution of the riches of the world. As an ideal,

[1] Extracted from Chandrashankar Shukla's "Weekly Letter"

I had no difficulty in subscribing to their creed. I gently suggested to them that, while they were talking about the ideal, I was endeavouring to approach the ideal by lovingly dispossessing the rich men of India of as much as they would give me, whether it is for the Harijan cause or for the sufferers of Bihar or some such cause of the poor. I am glad to be able to inform those who are waving the black flags or who are at the back of these black flags and you, the audience in general, that several thousands of fairly well-to-do men and women have gladly shared their possessions with the poor.

Harijan, 23-2-1934

174. SPEECH AT ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY, CHIDAMBARAM[1]

February 16, 1934[2]

You have in your address told me that you are conducting a night school and that some of you are interesting yourselves in the education of Harijans and rendering other kinds of service. Whatever good and useful work has to be taken up it can much more readily and much more easily be taken up by the younger generation than by the older. I have said that this is a movement of self-purification and self-humiliation. You do not need to be told that untouchability has come to us as a blighting curse. That it should have come to us in the name of religion is really sad. Yet untouchability has crept into the Hindu religion.[3]

I do not know when untouchability crept into Hindu religion. But after studying Hindu Shastras, or the books that go by that name, as carefully as a layman having no axes to grind and having no preconceptions of any kind whatsoever should, I came to the conclusion that there was no warrant in the Shastras considered as a whole for untouchability as it is practised today. There are undoubtedly some passages—not a single passage in the Vedas, but some passages of doubtful authenticity in the *Smritis*—which bear the interpretation that there is some kind of untouch-

[1] According to The *Hindu* report, Gandhiji was received by the Vice-Chancellor of the University. An address of welcome along with a purse was presented to him. He was given some other gifts also.

[2] *Harijan* gives the date as February 17, which is evidently a slip.

[3] The preceding lines have been taken from *The Hindu*. What follows is from *Harijan*.

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ability countenanced by them. But there is nothing whatsoever in those passages to warrant the belief that untouchability of today is a Divine institution. There is nothing in them to enable us to identify the body of men who are today described as untouchables with those referred to in those passages. I have talked to learned *shastris* who swear by untouchability and asked them to show me passages enabling them to regard the present Harijans to be the ones contemplated by them. They say they rely on the census reports. You know how these reports are prepared. No student of history can wholly rely on census reports. It is not the function of census enumerators to decide who should be considered untouchables. They but give us roughly the numbers of inhabitants of various places. They give us several other statistics which cannot be considered conclusive. If you study the different census reports, you will be astounded to see that the same men who are classed as touchable in one census report are classed as untouchable in another report, and *vice versa*. Can you imagine that on such flimsy evidence human beings can be deprived of their elementary rights? Had we not been wanting in fellow-feeling, we would not have countenanced this for a moment. It is up to every one of you to study this question; and if you come to the conclusion that it is an atrocious injury to our brethren, you will do all in your power to undo the mischief. For, if untouchability persists, Hinduism and Hindus will perish. What are the qualifications, then, required of a Harijan servant? A character that is above suspicion, boundless patience and a faith which will not be shaken by the rudest shock given to it—these are the qualifications indispensable for one who wants to serve Harijans. This is an effort to save the ancient faith of ours from disintegration. If you will work at it, it will be your real education. You may read books, but they cannot carry you far. Real education consists in drawing the best out of yourselves. What better book can there be than the book of humanity? What better education can there be than to go, day in and day out, to Harijan quarters and to regard Harijans as members of one human family? It would be an uplifting, ennobling study. Mine is no narrow creed. It is one of realizing the essential brotherhood of man. To my mind, the message of the Vedas is unity of God and unity of all life in one God. How can Harijans be left out of that unity?

Harijan, 30-3-1933, and *The Hindu*, 18-2-1934

175. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CUDDALORE[1]

February 16, 1934

I am sorry that I have not been able to come to you at a better time than this, what might be called, unearthly hour. But in order to finish the Tamil Nad tour on the appointed date and in order to accommodate Pondicherry friends at the eleventh hour, there was not any other hour possible except this. I am sure that you do not mind this accommodation for your neighbours and it was only while I was assured that you would not mind this hour that I consented to go to Pondicherry tomorrow morning. While I thank you for your purse, you will allow me to say that you could have done much better than you have done. We have no greater cause than the cause of the Harijans. Every pice or every rupee that we may pay for the Harijan cause, is merely part payment of an obligation that we have owed to them for centuries past and yet no financial compensation that we may make to our Harijan brothers and sisters can possibly undo the wrong that we have done to them and are still doing, unless we raise the bar sinister. Every pice or every rupee that I therefore get for the Harijan cause, I interpret it to mean the determination on the part of the givers that they have abolished from their own hearts distinctions of high and low. I hope therefore that, in your present life, each man and woman in this audience is showing to Harijan brothers and sisters that they are, so far as they are concerned, in every way their equals and in no way their inferiors. I hope that you have collected funds for the sufferers of Bihar.

The Hindu, 18-2-1934

[1] The meeting in the *maidan* at Manjakuppam was held late at night. An address of welcome along with a purse was presented to Gandhiji.

176. APPEAL TO ORGANIZERS AND CO-WORKERS, CUDDALORE

[*February 16, 1934*][1]

You should understand my limitations. You should also understand the object of my mission. My limitations are prescribed by my physical capacity or incapacity. They are also prescribed by Father Time. Everywhere, organizers draw up for me a programme which taxes all my energy and resources to go through from day to day. My mission today is primarily to appeal to the *savarna* Hindus and call upon them to repent for the injustice that has been done for centuries past to Harijans, to tell them in language as precise as I can command that, so far as my study of Hindu Shastras goes, Harijans are entitled to the same rights and privileges as non-Harijan Hindus enjoy, to tell them with all the emphasis at my command that, if this elementary justice is not rendered to Harijans, Hinduism must perish. Co-workers, therefore, should not put a strain upon me to do work which is their primary duty to perform. They may, when I have time, take me to *cheries* to admire the work they have done, but it is their business to sweep them clean; it is their business to open schools and conduct them. It is their business to take a ray of hope to Harijan cottages from day to day. In my present intensive hurricane tour, my energy and my time should be reserved for the chief object of my mission.

Harijan, 23-2-1934

[1] Gandhiji was in Cuddalore on February 16, 1934.

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177. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, PONDICHERRY[1]

February 17, 1934

FRIENDS,

I have great pleasure in visiting your town. You do not expect me to make a long speech; I have a very heavy programme in front of me. This message of untouchability [*sic*] is a message in which all can take part with pleasure. The removal of this curse is primary means to realize the brotherhood of man in the place of suppression and subjection in the name of religion by caste Hindus. You, who have come under direct French influence should have no difficulty in understanding what that means. Equality and brotherhood were brought into France several hundred years before people began to realize that there was any such thing as brotherhood of man. The bravest of them fought and bled for that realization. The aspiration for which so many heroic souls fought and bled is an aspiration that is a universal treasure. The present attempt is essentially an appeal to convert the stony hearts. And let those here understand that it is not through suppression but through full expression that divinity can be realized. I have therefore every hope that you, in Pondicherry, have no untouchability in your midst. And if you have it I hope that you will remove that blot from your midst. You have given me a purse for the sufferers of Bihar also. I wish that you could have collected more for these sufferers. You should know that nearly twenty-five thousand people were swallowed up in the bowels of the earth in the twinkling of an eye. Tens of thousands have been rendered absolutely homeless. Palaces have been razed to the ground. It does appear to me that in the light of this calamity the paltry sum of Rs. 57 is nothing. I invite you therefore to make an honest effort and send a good sum worthy of you to Babu Rajendra Prasad. And now I must hasten away and I ask you to help me in the disposal of these few things.

The Hindu, 18-2-1934

[1] Nearly ten thousand people had gathered in the Odianchalai ground, where the meeting was held. A part of the speech was also published in *Harijan*, 2-3-1934.

178. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKAR H. PAREKH

February 18, 1934

BHAISHRI PRABHASHANKAR[1],

I got your letter. I am returning the letter which you sent with it. You have not understood rightly the reason for my not mentioning your mother. Why need I be angry with you? Moreover, it would be against my nature to vent my anger against you on an ailing person. There is no question at all of my cooling off towards you. The truth is that even in personal letters I don't always make formal inquiries about others in the family, old or young. My letters to you were on business, and since your writing about your mother in your letters seemed to me in keeping with your nature, I didn't think it necessary to say anything in reply. Of course I wish her and your wife the best of health. My good wishes for their health would not be any stronger if I expressed them in words. I daily recite a sincere prayer wishing good health to the whole world, and I strive ceaselessly to live fully in the spirit of that prayer. You will be surprised to know that even in my letters to Ba or to Manilal far away in Africa, I make few inquiries of this kind. Please tell Mother all this. I cannot say whether or not I shall be going to Rajkot. As I shall have to go to Bihar, perhaps I may get no time to go to Rajkot.

Though you have sent Bhagwanji's certificate, how can I disregard my own experience or change my view based on that experience? Why should you fail to do your duty because Chhaganlal[2] fails to do his? If the Doctor's intention to give the daughters a share each is clear, that should be enough for you. Ratilal can never suffer by giving the sisters their share. He himself is in no condition to look after his own affairs. I believe that you, as his guardian, should not permit his money to be squandered away. I don't wish to say anything to Ratilal himself in this matter, as he is incapable of thinking. Champa[3] would naturally be under your influence. Hence all the responsibility rests on you. But I see that you are not discharging it properly.

[1] Father-in-law of Ratilal, Dr. Pranjivan Mehta's second son
[2] Eldest son of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta
[3] Wife of Ratilal

What is the use, then, of your sending me a certificate from Bhagwanji or certificates from any number of other people? Manibehn[1] can afford to forgo her share and Jekibehn[2] feels utterly weak and helpless. I am sorry, but I see no justice in Ratilal refusing his own sisters their share of the property.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

Bhai Bhagwanji's letter is enclosed.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8767

179. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, VELLORE[3]

February 18, 1934

FRIENDS,

Time is short, and you have given me much work to do. Therefore, I would like you to help me to shorten the proceedings. There are two things that I want to say. Whilst I am deeply grateful to the Municipal Council and the District Board for their addresses, and to individual members for the purses that they have given me, I would like to utter a word of request through these two bodies, to other bodies, that they will conserve my energies and time, just now, when I am going through a hurricane tour, by presenting me addresses, if they mean presenting them, on the common platform. Most bodies have very kindly and generously presented addresses on the common platform. I have no difficulty in understanding, and even appreciating the natural desire of local bodies to present their addresses in their own offices. But when they are concerned with a person like me, a humble servant of the nation, trying to utilize every moment of his life for the service of the nation, they might waive their undoubted right of taking me to their own offices and make common cause with others who might present their addresses. In the midst of this noise,[4] I do not propose to mention the second thing that happened at the station last night. So far as the immediate objective of the mission is concerned, I deeply appreciate all these addresses, purses

[1&2] Daughters of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta

[3] The meeting, held in the Gandhi Maidan, was largely attended. Gandhiji made the speech in English and it was translated into Tamil by Dr. Rajan.

[4] The audience had at this stage become noisy.

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and gifts, as, to me, they are a token of your desire to help the Harijan cause and to get rid of the evil of untouchability. I hope that you will not be satisfied until the disease of untouchability is rooted out from our midst in its entirety, for, at the bottom of this movement, there is no less a desire than the realization of the Brotherhood of Man. Now I must ask you to take these things from me and give fat prices.

The Hindu, 19-2-1934

180. SPEECH AT CHRISTKULA ASHRAM[1], *TIRUPPATTUR*

February 18, 1934

FRIENDS,

It seems that I have come to one of my homes in coming here. I have been wanting to come to this place for—I might also say—several years, and when the tour programme in the Southern Presidency was being arranged by Dr. Rajan, I had told him that if it was at all possible, he ought to include this Ashram in the programme. But I do not want to waste many words this evening.

The whole of my party are absolutely tired out. I will therefore just give you the gist of my message, and it is this: Untouchability is the greatest sin that Hindus, the so-called caste Hindus, have committed against God and man, and I have felt the enormity of the crime so deeply that I have stated from many a platform that either untouchability goes, or Hindus and Hinduism go. And let me say what I mean by it. It is not enough that caste Hindus begin to touch Harijans. Mere touch can give me no satisfaction whatsoever. Their hearts must be touched and they must necessarily believe that it is an affront to their own dignity to consider a single human being as lower than themselves. And in that sense, you could easily understand that it is an attempt to realize the Brotherhood of Man, not merely Hindu man but man in general, no matter to what part of the world he belongs or to what race he belongs, or to what faith he belongs. And, for the caste Hindus to change their hearts, in connection with those who are regarded by them as untouchables by birth, it is merely a stepping-stone to this grand realization. Therefore, all those who are caste Hindus naturally can

[1] A summary of the speech was also published in *Harijan*, 2-3-1934.

take part in this movement. It is their duty to do so. They have to make the beginning. But I have invited the whole world to take part in this movement and the whole world can take part in this movement by sympathizing with and understanding the movement and by prayer to God. Repentance and reparation have naturally to be done only by the caste Hindus.

What are the Harijans to do? Since this is a movement of self-purification, they also have to play their part. And that is to examine themselves and get rid of the vices, the bad habits, for which, undoubtedly, originally they probably were not responsible. Whoever was responsible, is just now irrelevant to consider. Somehow or other, these bad habits, or vices, have got to be got rid of. For instance, the laws of hygiene, personal cleanliness, they should understand and they should conform to them. If they are given to carrion-eating, they should give it up. In no part of the civilized world is carrion ever eaten, and so far as my knowledge of all the other races of the earth is concerned, there are very few races outside India who are given to carrion-eating. And since Harijans consider themselves to be Hindus, it is necessary for them to give up beef-eating, if they are given to beef-eating. Personally, I am of opinion that in a country like India, where there are millions of human beings who have to depend upon cow's milk, where they can at all get that, it is a proper thing for anybody to abstain from eating beef. The third thing is to give up drink. I know that many Harijans are addicted to drink. Some of them have told me that they should not be asked to give up the habit before the caste Hindus, who also, many of them, are given to the habit of drinking, are asked to give it up. The logic of this argument may be admitted. But there is no moral justification for saying that if one man commits a vice, others also should do likewise, or may do likewise. Why should I tell a lie because tens of thousands of my neighbours may be telling lies? If thousands commit suicide, why should I commit suicide? And I want to say that taking intoxicating liquors is almost like committing suicide, because a man or a woman who takes intoxicating liquors and gets mad, kills his or her soul, for the time being. Surely, death of the soul is far worse than death of the body. I will ask all those Harijans who are given to the drink habit to give it up.

Lastly, I do not know whether you have been told anything about the sufferers of Bihar. Bihar is the land where Sitadevi was born, and it is one of the fairest provinces of India. In the twinkling of an eye, almost twenty thousand people have been

swallowed by mother earth. Tens of thousands of people are homeless, and for them not only all over India but also all over the world subscriptions are being collected. I do not care how poor you may be, I want you to give your coppers, or your silver pieces, or whatever you can, for the sufferers in Bihar.

The Hindu, 20-2-1934

181. TELEGRAM TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

MADRAS,
February 19, 1934

JAMNALALJI
WARDHA

HOPE YOU QUITE WELL. DATE MY REACHING BIHAR UNCERTAIN BUT NOT LIKELY BEFORE FOURTEENTH MARCH.

BAPU

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 124

182. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

February 19, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

Your two letters came the same time. I am glad you like the place and the people. You should arrange your hours as you think proper in consultation with the manager. For the girls, you should do as the manager advises. When you have acquired sufficient control you may make drastic changes. For the lice, rub spirit into the roots of the hair and wash them with carbolic soap and the lice will disappear. The hair should be combed daily with a clean comb. Let the girls take for the time being the food that is cooked for them.

There can be no harm whatsoever in your being interested in natural scenery and Islamic architecture.

Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

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183. LETTER TO VITHALDAS JERAJANI

MADRAS,
Monday, February 19, 1934

I understand everything. Keep up your effort. You are bound to succeed soon. But as a result of independent thinking, I have come to the following conclusions. They may be modified with further experience. For the present think over them.

1. We must sell unbleached khadi, though we may get it bleached on special request from anybody.
2. We must now try to spread khadi in villages. We should assume that the age of cities for this work is over.
3. We must refuse to be satisfied that khadi has spread till all khadi produced in an area can be sold locally.
4. Concentrating our efforts in cities has done untold harm to our aim of making khadi a permanent feature.
5. It clearly follows from this that there should be no need to send the khadi produced in one province to other provinces. If we create several Manchesters in India, we shall kill khadi with our own hands.
6. We should apply this rule to Bihar right now and decide that it should consume all the khadi which it produces. This will be the best way of using the fund.
7. If this line of reasoning is correct, we should pay more or all our attention to the strength, evenness of texture and appearance of khadi at the production stage itself.

Please don't use all this as a reason for slackening your own effort. Sale, and that in cities, is your special field of work. If, however, you remember our original aim, it is desirable that you should plan your efforts in keeping with that aim.

(Send a copy of this to Shankerlal and get it translated into English for Rajaji. Get the translation done by Valjibhai.)[1]

How is Lakshmi? How can I expect her to write to me now?

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9808

[1] This paragraph was apparently meant for someone handling Gandhiji's correspondence.

184. LETTER TO PARIKSHITLAL L. MAJMUDAR

February 19, 1934

BHAI PARIKSHITLAL,

Ramji's letter is enclosed. You can get work from him only with the utmost gentleness coupled with equal firmness. Read my letters to him before passing them on to him.

If you experience any difficulty on account of Amalabehn, let me know.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4021

185. LETTER TO TARABEHN R. MODI

February 19, 1934

CHI. TARA,

I got your letter. I often wonder why people fall ill so often. I have finally come to the conclusion that illness is a kind of death. Death is the result of violation of Nature's laws by us, and, therefore, is a blessing. Similarly, illness also is the result of violation of Nature's laws and should be regarded as a blessing. Death and illness both give us pain because we don't look upon them as Nature's kindness to us. If we understand this truth, we would spare ourselves all the trouble which we take now to cure illness. May be we succeed in our efforts, but they seem to make our minds more sensitive and even weaker. Please do not understand from this that you should stop the treatment which you are taking. But it certainly means that you should take it with a detached mind and remain unconcerned whether the disease is cured or not. I am trying here to explain the teaching of the *Gita* in a new way.

You may convey the foregoing to Ramniklal[1] and add this: I have read your letter. You have been making good use of your time. If you didn't do that, who else may be expected to do

[1] Ramniklal Modi, addressee's husband

so? When you are released, you will see many changes. But the original determination remains unchanged behind them all. If we understand it, we shall win everything, otherwise we shall lose all. All things with name and form are bound to perish; the essence behind them never perishes. That is the case with our goal too. I realize this more and more clearly with each passing day. Give me a detailed description after you are released. I wish to write about many other things, but I am surrounded by a big crowd. It is nearing the time for the evening prayer. Hence I stop here.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

If Nanibehn can write, ask her to do so. Otherwise give me a report about her.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4179. Also C.W. 1678. Courtesy: Ramniklal Modi

186. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

VELLORE,
February 19, 1934

CHI. VASUMATI,

I got your postcard. I am dictating this letter in the hope that it will reach you. I have kept excellent health, though the travelling has been quite hard. Valjibhai has joined me now. He was not keeping good health and has joined in the hope that touring in my company will improve it. Harjivan also is with me at present. He will leave for Kashmir on the 24th. The tour of Tamil Nadu will end on the 21st. After that, we have to visit Rohini and Poviya's Coorg and shall spend two days there. Then we shall be in Karnataka for ten days and after that most probably I shall have to go to Bihar. Rajendrababu wants me there. Ramdas and Nimu are in Wardha. Ramdas's mind doesn't seem to have become steady yet. Nimu is again pregnant. Devdas and Lakshmi are in Delhi. Lakshmi also is pregnant and this is the eighth month. Maruti's Lakshmi also is in the same stage. Radha is fairly well. She is still at Deolali. Keshu is in Wardha. He seems to have settled down there. Kishorelal was seriously ill. He was in bed for a long time. He has now gone to Deolali. The place will probably do him good. Brijkrishna is fairly well. He has risen from his death-bed, so to say.

I did not criticize your desire to learn English, but wrote to strengthen it. I want you and all other women to learn English. Madhavji and Mahalakshmi have arrived here today (the 19th). They wish to discuss and solve the problem of their children.

Kaka is in jail for two years, and so also is Jawaharlal. Bal is in Patna. Ba is all right. Shanta and Lalita also are with her. You may read what you like in Gujarati, I have nothing to say about it. I understand that *Anasaktiyoga* alone cannot satisfy your hunger. It would not satisfy mine, too. I may mention a few books. All books written by your father-in-law[1], all works of Ramanbhai[2], the poems of Dalpatram[3], the four parts of *Kavyadohan*[4], *Vanaraj Chavdo*[5], *Forbes's Rasamala*[6], some of the books of Manibhai[7], *Chandrakant*[8], *Maniratnamala*, a translation of the *Mahabharata*, all works of Anandshankarbhai[9]. Is this enough to satisfy your hunger?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9382. Also C.W. 627. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

[1] Navalram Lakshmiram Pandya, a Gujarati man of letters
[2] Ramanbhai Nilkanth
[3] Dalpatram Dahyabhai Trivedi (1820-98)
[4] Anthology of poetry edited by Dalpatram
[5] By Mahipatram Roopram Nilkanth, father of Ramanbhai Nilkanth
[6] By Sir Kinlock Forbes
[7] Manibhai Nabhubhai Dwivedi
[8] By Ichchharam Suryaram Desai
[9] Anandshankar B. Dhruv

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187. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

February 19, 1934

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

I got your letter. Please remember that whatever they are, they are Harijans. Bear with them, for they are but a reflection of ourselves, and go on serving them with single-minded devotion, unmindful of the result. They are not even aware that the words we regard as obscene are such.

I have received the papers regarding Bidaj.

I have also heard from Chhotubhai's father.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 366. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P. Pandya

188. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

KODAMBAKKAM,
MADRAS,
February 19, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

Today is my silence day. Preparations for the evening prayer are going on. I am surrounded by people, among whom is Muriel Lester. We are in a poor suburb of Madras today. Ganesan has found a new place. There will be a tannery, etc., here. A dispensary is already in existence. This place is like the walled enclosure of a mahajan or a dharmashala, but it is in a dilapidated condition just now. There is a verandah on four sides enclosing a big open space, in which grow three or four trees. They have had even to fetch water from a distant spot.

Miss Lester has been to Bengal. The Governor gave her three hours and even invited her to dinner. She was treated with the utmost courtesy. He assured her of his determination to tolerate no excesses, but in the end nothing came of the visit.

I must now prepare to leave for Bihar. It seems I shall have to go immediately after finishing with Karnataka. Let us see what happens.

We visited the Christkula Ashram yesterday. Dr. Paton lives there. His superior is an Indian named Jesudasan. He is a good man. He is a friend of Kumarappa[1]. It is a fine place. They have built a church there and spent a large sum on it. One may say that Christianity has been given an Indian garb.

Durga and Mani Parikh have been to see Mahadev. But I have not heard from them as yet.

Nanibehn Jhaveri has been operated upon in Ahmedabad for bleeding. Tarabehn Modi is also in Ahmedabad. She is in pain.

I got your letter regarding Bihar. What you say is perfectly correct. I will certainly make an effort when I go there. Kripalani is likely to come tomorrow.

I am enclosing with this a letter from Kusum regarding her brother. It is heart-rending. Kusum is very careful about propriety and never crosses its limits. You must have come to know about Kaka. His efforts have borne fruit. He will now take rest for two years. You must have read about Jawaharlal, too.[2]

Srinivasa Sastri's wife is ill and is in a hospital. I had sent Mathuradas to inquire after her. I shall see what I can do tomorrow. There is a heap of papers which require to be attended to, and I have still not been able to write a single line for *Harijan*. I will do as God commands.

The frost in Gujarat seems to have damaged the crops much more than I had thought. But who is likely to listen today to the woes of cultivators?

I visited Pondicherry. I could see nobody there. Mother didn't reply at all. But Govindbhai came and saw[3] me when I was in another place. He told me the whole story. The Ashram is being watched, and so there was some risk even in letting me visit the place. Half the number of the inmates are Gujaratis. Govindbhai was also in the Ashram formerly. The daily routine in this Ashram is as follows: They get up at five in the morning. Every *sadhaka* has a separate room for himself. There are about 150 *sadhakas*. They come from everywhere. Among them are Dilip[4] and Harin[5] Chattopadhyaya, the husband of Kamaladevi. The Ashram has rented about 40 houses. The food is similar to that provided in our Ashram. Shri Aurobindo

[1] J. C. Kumarappa

[2] On February 16, Jawaharlal Nehru was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for sedition.

[3] *Vide* "Letter to Govindbhai R. Patel", 17-2-1934, Addenda.

[4] Dilip Kumar Roy, a musician

[5] The source has Hiren which is obviously a slip

comes out only on three days in the year. Shri Aurobindo and Mother don't sleep at all. Shri does recline in an armchair between 3.30 a.m. and 4.30 a.m., but he does not sleep. The *sadhakas* have to send up their diary every day. They can ask questions. Letters from Shri and Mother are delivered to them four times a day. Between them, they write about 200 letters daily. No letter remains unattended to. Shri knows innumerable languages. He reforms *sadhakas* through secret influence on their minds. Harin Chattopadhyaya has given up drinking, etc. Liquor and meat are forbidden in the Ashram. This is the description given by Govindbhai, and he has invited me to join the Ashram. I hope you will be satisfied with this.

Blessings to both from
BAPU

[PS.]

I have received a postcard from Tulsi Maher. He is safe. He has not given more details.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 78-80

189. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

February 19, 1934

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

Your letter. I am considering whether I should write to the Governor or not. The [compulsory] saluting in Midnapore has been stopped but there has been no admission of the error. Miss Lester has now asked the Viceroy for an interview. But these things can bring about no result at the moment. Still, we do not want to miss any opportunity of compromise.

Whatever the Congressmen may say Bidhan Roy should make full effort to seek an interview.

My Bengal tour is postponed at least till I have done with Bihar. We shall see about it later.

You will try to see Jawaharlal, won't you?

I send you the letters from . . .[1] and . . .[2]. They came only yesterday. I now feel that . . . should be advised to remarry; and this time I consider his own choice essential though ultimately what is in his destiny has to happen. It is now useless

[1] & [2] The names have been omitted.

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for . . . to continue to live with . . . . Arrangements should be made for . . . to live separately and continue further her education; and should she want to remarry she should be allowed to do so.

It might be good to send her to Wardha Mahila Ashram or some such place. I am aware of the difficulties involved in all this but such is our dharma, I have no doubt.

Miss Harrison will leave England on March 2. Her coming is all to the good. Haven't I written about this already?

Blessings from
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 7946. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

190. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

February 19, 1934

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

I have been unable of late to write to you. I have now reached Madras on the morning of the silence day. I got your postcard. It would appear you are progressing. Do what Dr. Ansari says. I am going on well. Now it will be the Karnataka tour. After that probably Bihar.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2408

191. LETTER TO BENARSIDAS CHATURVEDI

February 19, 1934

BHAI BENARSIDAS,

I got your letter. I have gone through the rules. My visit to Calcutta now has become most uncertain. But if I do go there I shall certainly try to find some time for you.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI BENARSIDAS CHATURVEDI
VISHAL BHARAT KARYALAY
120/2 UPPER CIRCULAR ROAD
CALCUTTA

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2569

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192. TELEGRAM TO RAJENDRA PRASAD

[Before *February 20, 1934*][1]

MET PROFESSOR[2]. LEAVING HYDERABAD 9TH EVENING. REACHING PATNA 11TH NIGHT.

The Bombay Chronicle, 21-2-1934

193. TELEGRAM TO HIRALAL SHARMA[3]

MADRAS,
February 20, 1934

DR. SHARMA
KHURJA

HOPE FAST ENDS WELL. AMTUL FREE. WILL REMAIN SOME DAYS. NO ANXIETY. PROCEED WARDHA SOON AFTER FAST.

BAPU

Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsha, p. 55

[1] The report in the source is dated February 20, 1934.

[2] J. B. Kripalani

[3] In his Hindi letter dated 15-2-1934 Gandhiji had enquired from the addressee whether he would be able to go to Madras to see Amtussalaam before going over to Wardha (*vide* p. 158). Sharma had agreed to go as regained the strength lost during his last fast.

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194. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

February 20, 1934

MY DEAR CHILD,

I hope Tangai is completely out of fever now. After all you could not get honey at Pondicherry. A basket of fruit with honey was sent yesterday. Miss Lester is with me now. Agatha Harrison leaves on March 2nd.

Love to you all.

BAPU

SHRI ESTHER MENON
ANNE MARIA SCHOOL
PORTO NOVO

From a photostat: No. 124. Courtesy: National Archives of India. Also *My Dear Child*, p. 102

195. LETTER TO TULSI MAHER

February 20, 1934

CHI. TULSI MAHER,

What is this? Why only a few words on a postcard? Why have you not given me all the news? How much loss has been incurred there? What is the State doing in the matter? Give me all details. I shall be leaving for Patna in a few days.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6545

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196. INTERVIEW TO "THE HINDU"

February 20, 1934

Two achievements stand out prominently in my Tamil Nad tour. In spite of the hard times, people have given freely; and in spite of prognostication to the contrary, tens of thousands of people, including a very large number of women flocked to our meetings, although they knew for what purpose the meetings were held.

Q. How is it proposed to harness such enthusiasm as you have aroused in the present tour for constructive effort?

A. In order to make sure that the work will be continued, the Central Board is allowing 75 per cent of the collections to each province to be used for constructive schemes, to be produced by them. If they succeed in doing so, naturally the work done now will be all properly garnered. Constructive work will consist of conducting schools, hostels and, wherever necessary, digging wells and doing work that would tend towards the social, moral and economic uplift of the suppressed classes.

Gandhiji gave the information that total collections, including value of jewellery presented up to Sunday last, amounted to Rs. 1,06,491-1-5 in Tamil Nad.

A couple of questions were then put regarding the temple-entry movement. Gandhiji said:

While I have purposely kept the temple-entry question in the background, the sanatanists have always been keeping it before the public. My own impression is that the public mind is overwhelmingly in favour of entry of Harijans into temples on the same terms as other Hindus. But I have no desire whatsoever to force the issue. For me the acid test is of a change of heart on the part of the caste Hindus; and temple-entry unaccompanied by that change of heart is to me of no consequence. I am, therefore, concentrating my efforts on educating public opinion on the question.

Q. Have you been able to effect any change in the attitude of the sanatanists?

A. I am sure that the rank and file of sanatanists have been visibly affected by the manifestation of the mass mind. After all

those who flocked to our meetings were the sanatanists of yesterday. So far as sanatanists are concerned, I cannot say that their attitude has changed, although I have noticed that they have begun to realize that the public are not with them.

Q. Are you satisfied with the provisions of the Temple-entry Bill in the Assembly? Opinion, even among those friendly to the cause, does not seem to be quite favourable to the Bill in its present form, owing to legal difficulties.

A. The Bill in the Assembly is certainly capable of improvement. When the proper time comes, I would be prepared to offer suggestions. Those who oppose the Bill are so prejudiced against it that they are not disposed even to consider improvements.

Q. Opinion among sanatanists being favourable to the uplift of Harijans, it is suggested that you can enlist their support for social uplift and leave the temple-entry question, which is only one aspect of the big problem, to solve itself?

A. I have never been able to understand the attitude of those sanatanists who propose in a bargaining spirit that on my abandoning the temple-entry movement, they would co-operate with me on the social, moral and economic uplift of Harijans. They must respect the conscience of reformers who believe that temple-entry is an integral part of the Yeravda Pact.

When next the interviewer sought for an expression of his views on one or two political questions, Gandhiji's curt reply was that he could not answer them.

Asked about his further programme, Gandhiji said that as soon as he finished the Karnataka tour, he proposed to go to Bihar in response to Babu Rajendra Prasad's invitation.

The Hindu, 21-2-1934

197. A TESTIMONIAL

February 21, 1934

Kaimal has been a very skilful and attentive driver throughout the exacting tour in Tamil Nadu.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 798

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198. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM GANDHI

February 21, 1934

CHI. PURUSHOTTAM,

I got a letter from you after many days. I didn't know at all that you had been so ill. I hope you will get well soon. Now that you have been engaged, your duty towards your body has increased. Get married only after you have set your health right again. The idea of trying Sharma's treatment appeals to me, too. He is at Khurja just now, and will probably go to Wardha in a few days. If he does so, do certainly go there. His treatment too is not always effective. He himself admits that. All the same, I am personally convinced that your deliverance will come only through some such remedy as his. Write to me and keep me informed about your health and also your general progress.

I had heard about Kanu having been assaulted. But he is a brave boy and I don't worry about him. I had received Jamna's letter. Show this letter to her. I am not writing to her separately. I have written even this under much pressure of other work.

Give my respectful greetings to elders.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Tell Jamnadas that I had received his letter. Ask him to write again.

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

199. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CONJEEVARAM

February 21, 1934

FRIENDS,

This is about the last city that I shall have visited in Tamil Nad during this tour. It is true that on my way to Arkonam, in order to catch the train, I have to pass through Arni and one or two other places. But this is the most important place of the

day. This is the peak of Sanskrit learning. There is a great temple in your midst, and therefore I should imagine that this place should be prepared to come forward to do reparation to Harijans. But such good luck is not in store for us. Sanskrit learning is still being used by some who know Sanskrit against Harijans. Your great temple still bars its gates in the face of Harijans, and I am convinced that the God of Truth and Justice cannot preside in a temple where access is denied to Harijans, and the sin of this denial falls not only on those who are versed in Sanskrit, but on you and me, and all those who call themselves caste Hindus. But I know that public opinion is rising fast in favour of opening temples to Harijans, and I would like you to persevere in formulating public opinion till it becomes so irresistible that pandits and trustees of temples notwithstanding, temples will be opened to Harijans. In one of your addresses mention is made that in this place not much work for Harijans has been done for want of workers. Surely, out of this vast assemblage there must be sufficient number of workers forthcoming who will work for Harijans. There must be students enough in Conjeevaram who would give their leisure hours to this precious service. I do hope you will make every effort to establish in this city a centre of activity for Harijans, and please remember that this is a penance of self-purification and that every one of you can purify himself by eradicating untouchability from his heart. You can, if you feel the inward urge, demolish all distinctions of high and low, and I hope that God will inspire you to work in this great cause of humanity. Lastly, I would like you to remember the sufferers of Bihar, and while I am disposing of these addresses and other things you have given me, I will like volunteers to collect for the Bihar sufferers.

The Hindu, 23-2-1934

200. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, ARNI[1]

February 21, 1934

I thank you for your addresses and the purse. The message on the eve of leaving Tamil Nadu is that every one of us should cleanse our hearts of the sin of untouchability. We must regard

[1] About 15,000 people had gathered to attend the meeting. Three addresses of welcome and a purse of Rs. 801 on behalf of the general public were presented to Gandhiji.

all Harijans as our own blood-brothers and sisters. That means that we must forget all distinctions of high and low. We are all children of one and the same God, and, as such there can be no distinctions of high and low amongst us. Harijans should have the same rights and privileges that other Hindus have. Their children must have access to public schools. They must have access to all public wells, tanks and such other places of utility. All public temples should be flung open to them precisely on the same terms that they are open for Hindus, and if we succeed in doing these things, the natural result will be that we shall realize the essential brotherhood of man. For, removal of untouchability does not merely mean restoration of the privileges and rights of Harijans, but it means the removal of distinctions between man and man, no matter where they exist. I would like you to justify the spirit of brotherliness towards the sufferings of Bihar. I know that collections have been made amongst you, but they were only for Harijans. I hope that you will, all of you, do whatever you can towards the relief of the distress of tens of thousands of people who are homeless and foodless.

The Hindu, 23-2-1934

201. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, ARKONAM[1]

[*February 21, 1934*][2]

FRIENDS,

Tonight, and at this meeting, finishes the long Tamil Nad tour. At the outset I would like to say, as I would be leaving this province presently, how thankful I feel to the police and the railway administration in the South for the help rendered to me on all the occasions throughout the province. It is a great pleasure to me to say that they were acting, the police I mean, as if they were, as they undoubtedly are, or should be, servants of the people. As I am saying this, I am reminded of a conversation I had with two gentlemanly detectives who were appointed in London to look after me. They told me that the constables in London, as the police there are called, before being detailed off for duty for the day, had to go through a rehearsal every morning, at which they had to declare, "We are the servants of

[1] The report of the speech in Chandrashankar Shukla's "Weekly Letter" in *Harijan* has been collated with the report published in *The Hindu*.

[2] From the report of the speech in *The Hindu*

the people and we shall act as such." Whatever my differences with the English official world, I claim to understand the virtues of my opponents. And so, I have ever recognized in the London constable an ideal policeman. I dare say as a human being he also has his limitations. But knowing, as I do, the police at close quarters in several parts of the world, I can say truthfully that my recollections of conduct of the London constables are altogether pleasant. Therefore, it is no mean compliment that I am paying to the police from my experience of them throughout the tour, when I recall the London constable.

I must not omit to mention also the volunteers, who have done duty in all parts of the South. Many of them are often untrained. In spite of their embarrassing fussiness, I would be ungrateful if I did not mention that they were, in every case, indispensable for the success of the tour. They were obliged to work under most trying circumstances, because nobody expected the unprecedented crowds which were witnessed at every place. My thanks are, therefore, due to all these parties who have enabled the tour to become the success which in my humble opinion it has been. I can only hope that my co-workers and others who are identified with the Harijan cause will reap the fullest benefit out of the tremendous awakening that one has seen throughout the province. Unless the workers set themselves to their tasks immediately, there is every danger of this awakening, or the energy created by it, being frittered away. It would be a great tragedy if such a thing happened in a movement of self-purification, which this is. I hope, therefore, that all those who are connected with the Harijan cause will ever remain on the watch-tower and not only watch themselves, but watch also what the public is doing in connection with the cause.

And remember, too, the magnificent result that we intend, or we expect, to achieve from this removal of untouchability—it is no less than the realization of the Brotherhood of Man. You cannot—millions of caste Hindus cannot—do reparation to several million Harijans, whom they have suppressed for centuries, without setting free a power, a force, that will envelop the whole of the human family and knit all its members together into one. And it is because I have never lost sight of this goal that I have called this movement a deeply spiritual and exclusively religious movement. And it is because I realize to the fullest extent how untouchability, as we practise it today in the name of religion, is a stumbling-block in the realization of this brotherhood that I have not hesitated to say that, if we do not cleanse ourselves of this cursed

untouchability, Hinduism and Hindus are bound to perish. As I, therefore, leave you tonight, I should like to leave you with the full hope that you will endeavour to realize to the fullest extent the ideal that I have sketched before you. It is easy enough to do so, if we will but change our hearts. May God help you to do so! I know that there are people among us who still cling to the belief that untouchability is not only not a sin, but is an obligation imposed upon us by the Shastras. As against that, I can but give you my own personal experience based upon uniform conduct for the past fifty years, and that experience is backed by a study of our Shastras such as is possible for a layman, and at that, a busy man like myself. After that prayerful study, after discussion with learned *shastris* who believe in untouchability, I have come to the deliberate conclusion that untouchability has no warrant whatsoever in the Hindu Shastras. It is a sin before God and man. The sooner we get rid of this sin, the better it is for us, for the whole world.

Now I must commence business. Whilst I am conducting auction sales, I would like volunteers to be in your midst and collect for the sufferers of Bihar.[1]

Harijan, 2-3-1934, and *The Hindu*, 23-2-1934

202. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

February 22, 1934

MY DEAR CHILD,

Two baskets were sent to you. The first one contained honey and Tamil-Hindi books I got on the way. The books might be of use there.

I hope Tangai is now quite restored.

Maria has a grievance against you. I have asked her to talk about it to you freely.

I have read the certificates. They are good. You will tell me of the result of Menon's effort.

Kisses to the children and love to you all.

BAPU

From a photostat: No. 125. Courtesy: National Archives of India. Also *My Dear Child*, p. 103

[1] This paragraph has been reproduced from *The Hindu*.

203. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

MYSORE,
February 22, 1934

BA,

I am writing this letter in a train. I got your letter. I had so much work to do that I could not write on Tuesday. Today is Thursday. You can ask me to do anything for you or put me any question that you may wish. I will attend to it or reply to it. At least I will try. You have asked me about Harilal. He had gone to Pondicherry. There also he begged for money and indulged in drinking. He even got some money. I do not know where he is now. I think he will now remain what he is. We must wait till God gives him wisdom. Will not our good and evil actions, too, have their effect in this? How sunk in passion I was when he was conceived! You and I must reap as we sowed. Parents are in this way undoubtedly responsible for the character of their offspring. Now there is only one thing we can do, namely, purify ourselves. Let us be content with the effort that we are making for that. Our purification is bound to have a conscious or unconscious effect on Harilal. There has been no letter from Manu recently, but Jamnadas gave me news about her. I will write to Sushila. Purushottam has been betrothed to Harakhchand's daughter. His health cannot yet be considered as good. The wife of Ranchhodbhai's brother has died, and Motibehn remains depressed because of that. Her responsibility has increased now. Ambalalbhai and Mridula came and saw me. He and Saralabehn are going to England. They will stay there for three or four months. Devdas-Lakshmi are all right. Lakshmi does feel the burden of the pregnancy. Ramdas-Nimu are well. I am sending a copy of your letter to them. The original letter I am sending to Manilal. I have sent a copy to Vallabhbhai too. He also worries about you. There has been no reply yet from Madhavdas. Mathuradas is with me. He will stay for a day or two more and then return to Bombay. Esther Menon has returned from England. She came and saw me. Miss Lester has gone to Ceylon. Rajaji parted from us yesterday at the end of the Madras tour. It seems he will go to Delhi. Amtussalaam is still weak, and so I have kept her in Madras. Rajaji will look after her. You must

have received the slivers. Write to me again when they are exhausted. I will send some more. Kusum has been very much affected by the death of her brother in Zanzibar. Pyarelal was released yesterday. Kishorelal is at Deolali. He is somewhat better now. Lakshmi will have her baby at Bardoli. Manjukesha will look after her. Moti or Lakshmi also will be there at that time. Nanibehn Jhaveri has been operated upon for the trouble in her joints. I think I have given sufficient news. I will leave Hyderabad on the 9th and go to Patna. Rajendrababu has called me there. Prabhavati also is there. It seems I shall have to stay in Bihar for quite a while. And now the discourse.

If you do not remember the *bhajan* "The Name is my support, Your Name is my support", look it up. These days I keep thinking about the idea. Tulsidasji has sung a great deal of the power of the Name. The Name means Ramanama or any name of God. Tulsidas has said that the name Rama is more powerful than Rama himself. In other words, the man called Rama who lived in the past was subject to limitations. His body was perishable but his name is immortal. The qualities of the man who bore that name had limitations, but the attributes of God signified by Ramanama have no limit. We may imagine in Him any attributes that we like. Because His attributes are infinite, God transcends all attributes. That is, He is above all attributes. Since we cannot exhaust the attributes of God by any enumeration of them, cannot we say that He is above attributes? If we inscribe in our hearts the name of God which has such power, there can be no doubt that we shall cross this sea of life and reach the other shore. Repeating that name will drive away all miseries. That is, we shall endure whatever suffering falls to our lot. If such repetition becomes automatic with us, we would need nothing else. That is why the poet wrote and sang that song: "My only support is Rama's name," all else is false. "All friends of the body are selfish and will refuse to accompany us at the end." If we have learnt to repeat Ramanama, it alone will go with us.

Blessings to all women from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Bane Patro, pp. 14-6

204. SPEECH AT HUDEKERI[1]

[*February 22, 1934*][2]

It is a matter of very great joy to me that God has enabled me to come to this beautiful land of Coorg. Ever since I have come here, I have been simply drinking in the natural beauty of the place; and I presume your hearts are as beautiful as your scenery. And yet there is lurking in my mind a doubt as to the beauty of your hearts; for I see that, though there is not that poisonous untouchability here that is found in the plains, there is still some of it in your midst. For, in your address you have said that temples are not open to Harijans. It is just like a father saying to some of his children, 'I give you food, clothing, housing but I won't let you come to the sanctuary of my heart.' Imagine what those children would feel. So long as you do not allow Harijans to enter temples on the same terms as you do, I cannot say your hearts are beautiful. I wish, therefore, that you will take a lesson from Nature and wash out that black spot on your hearts.

Harijan, 2-3-1934

205. SPEECH AT PANAMPET[3]

[*February 22, 1934*][4]

A moment's reflection will show you that it cannot but be a religious question, because we have been told by those who claim to understand Shastras that untouchability is a divine institution. When it comes to me in the garb of religion, I can only meet it by showing that religion has nothing to do with it as we practise it today. Then, take the temple-entry question. What is it if it is not a religious question? In order to have temples opened, I have got to touch your hearts; and anything that touches one's heart, touches one's faith, immediately becomes a religious thing. Indeed, those sanatanists who claim that un-

[1] This has been taken from Chandrashankar Shukla's "Weekly Letter".
[2] From Gandhiji's itinerary
[3] Extracted from Chandrashankar Shukla's "Weekly Letter"
[4] From Gandhiji's itinerary

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touchability is of divine origin fling the taunt in my face that I know nothing of religion. Of course, I cannot endorse that taunt, for the simple reason that the whole of my life is saturated with the religious spirit. I could not live for a single second without religion. Many of my political friends despair of me because they say that even my politics are derived from my religion. And they are right. My politics and all other activities of mine are derived from my religion. I go further and say that every activity of a man of religion must be derived from his religion, because religion means being bound to God, that is to say, God rules your every breath. If you recognize that truth, naturally God regulates every activity of yours. But, then, it is as a man of religion who is trying to live up to it every moment that I am here to tell you that untouchability is not of divine origin. I am here to tell you, after having searched the Shastras in the manner in which a layman like myself can do, that untouchability is a sin against God and man. I am here to tell you that there is no warrant in the Shastras for untouchability as we practise it today and that, therefore, it is sinful to deny entrance into our temples to Harijans.

Harijan, 2-3-1934

206. NOTES

For Bihar's Sake

Hardly a meeting has been addressed by me since the calamity of Bihar without reference to it. It must gladden Babu Rajendra Prasad's and every Bihari's heart to know that I have had the most generous response even from the poorest in the most distant villages. Harijans have vied with non-Harijans in giving their coppers. Where they have not given anything at the meetings, they have been able to say, 'I have already sent my mite to Rajendrababu.' At these meetings women have given their bracelets and men their rings, young students their fountain pens because they had nothing else to give. All together, up to now, the Bihar collections made at the meetings have amounted to Rs. 5135-4-1. Of course, this is nothing compared to the amount required for the relief. But the value of the gifts of the poor lies not in their metallic content, but in their being evidence of genuine sympathy. Man does not live by bread alone. Fellow feeling is often more precious than bread.

And whilst I am writing about the villagers' contributions, I am glad to be able to announce the receipt of a cable remittance of Rs.1,969-3-2 from the Yokohama Indian merchants. The amount has been duly forwarded to Babu Rajendra Prasad at Patna. There is no doubt that the Bihar calamity has stirred the hearts of men and women all over the world.

GOKHALE AND HARIJANS

Several young men have, during the tour in the South, written to me attributing to Brahmins untouchability and other evils from which Hindu society is suffering. I am writing this note the day after the 19th anniversary of Gokhale's death. I am, therefore, naturally reminded of his love of Harijans. It is not possible to imagine a man freer from the taint of untouchability than he. With him there was no inequality between man and man. Once, in South Africa, a man had come to him, asking him to attend a meeting of a sectional character. He was disinclined. An appeal was made to his Hinduism. He was indignant over what he felt to be a reproach and said with a warmth which astonished the hearers, "If that is Hinduism, I am not a Hindu." He could not stand the assumption of superiority by any person or community. In his dealings with fellow men, he exemplified in his own life the spirit of universal brotherhood. He mixed with the greatest freedom with the so-called Pariahs. There was no patronizing air about him. He evolved the ideal of service. Public men and women were not leaders but servants. For him the greatest leader was the greatest servant. And Gokhale was a born Brahmin in every sense of the term. He was a born teacher. He loved to be called Professor. He was humility personified. He surrendered his all to the nation. He might have amassed a fortune, but he deliberately chose a life of poverty. Will not the haters of Brahmins be proud of a servant like Gokhale? And Gokhale was not the only one of his kind. It is possible to make out a long list of Brahmins who have stood up for equality between man and man. To decry the Brahmins as a class is to deny ourselves the benefit of the selfless service for which many of them have specially fitted themselves. They stand in no need of certificates. Their service is its own reward. In the words of Gokhale written on a momentous occasion in his life, "Service undertaken at the bidding of no one cannot be given up at the bidding of anyone." The safest rule, therefore, is to take a man at his present worth, irrespective of his birth, or race or colour. In the campaign against untouchability, we may

despise no service, be it ever so small, so long as it is service and and not patronage.

A Worthy Example

In response to my speech to the students of the Trichy National College, I got the following letter, signed by thirteen students, on the day of my departure from Trichy:

> We, the following students of the National College, paying our respects to you, Sir, express our desire to work for the cause of the Harijans and other schemes like child-welfare scheme. But students as we are, our time is not wholly ours. We are willingly prepared to devote our leisure hours for such holy duties.
>
> We humbly request you, Revered Mahatmaji, to be kind enough to give us instructions for our future guidance and bestow on us your sacred blessings.

The signatories are to be congratulated on their decision. Let us hope that they will carry it out with unflagging zeal. The signatories want guidance. The only guidance I can give is to ask them to do to the Harijans as they would have the Harijans do to them if they were untouchables. In other words, they should regard Harijans as their blood-brothers and sisters. If they will visit Harijan quarters in that spirit, they will always find the right word and the right action.

Harijan, 23-2-1934

207. 'AN APPEAL FOR PEACE'

A correspondent from Bengal writes:

> The present quarrel between the reformers and the sanatanists is causing much bitterness on both sides. It is desirable that the quarrel should be stopped at an early date. I would, therefore, appeal to both the parties to show mutual tolerance. India is a country of many races and creeds, and it is essential for the peace and progress of the country that there should be tolerance between different creeds and races. Tolerance has been one of the most beautiful features in the history of India. There is no reason why there should be quarrel and bitterness when Gandhiji carries on a reform movement against untouchability. But it is necessary for Gandhiji and his followers to show some tolerance while carrying on their movement. The reformers might think that untouchability is bad. But they should not try to deprive orthodox people of the right to worship as they like in their own temples.

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If the Anti-untouchability Bill and the Temple-entry Bill are passed, will not orthodox Hindus be deprived of this right? Suppose an orthodox Hindu builds and endows a temple and allows all *savarna* Hindus to enter the temple and worship the deity, but excludes Harijans whom he considers untouchable. According to the Anti-untouchability Bill, his desire to exclude the Harijans will not be respected, because the law will not recognize any person as untouchable. According to the Temple-entry Bill, if the majority of the upper caste Hindus desire to admit the Harijans, they will be able to override the desire of the donor. That would be obviously unfair.

I believe that among the reformers there would be many who would not like to deprive orthodox Hindus of reasonable facilities in the matter of conducting religious ceremonies. Such liberal reformers should not support these Bills which would deprive the orthodox people of their legitimate rights as explained above. Difference of opinion should not cause bitterness, if there is no attempt on the part of either party to deprive the other of its reasonable privileges.

As regards existing temples, it is necessary to consider the interests of three parties: (1) reformers, (2) sanatanists and (3) Harijans. At present Harijans do not enjoy the right to worship in the temples. It is proposed that they should be allowed to worship in the temples. The sanatanists believe that they cannot worship properly if Harijans are admitted. The sanatanists may be wrong in thinking so, but there is no doubt that they do think so. Is it not natural that they should feel sorely aggrieved, if a privilege which they have enjoyed long is taken away? Will it not be the most peaceful way of introducing the reforms to build new temples where reformers and Harijans may worship together? The reformers may, of course, boycott orthodox temples. If (as the reformers claim) a great majority of the countrymen are against untouchability, the orthodox temples will be deserted and the reformers will be able to demonstrate that untouchability has left the country. Gandhiji is collecting lakhs of rupees in his tour and should have no difficulty in building new temples for reformers and Harijans if he likes. The money is worth spending, if it can save a split among the Hindus.

At Trichy, the other day, a pleader, describing himself as a liberal sanatanist brought a written statement from which I extract the following:

We believe that the item relating to temple-entry may be dropped for the present and the resources of all Hindus including the sanatanists may be pooled together for promoting the material, moral, educational and spiritual welfare of Harijans in consonance with the tradition of Hindu religion, so that the Harijans may become the equals of *savarnas*

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> in every respect and there will not be any curse of untouchability, if they are treated as our kith and kin. No impartial observer will fail to recognize that the removal of the customary social disabilities effecting the Harijans is absolutely necessary. The reform must proceed gradually step by step. Our Harijans should be admitted to our homes just as Europeans and Muslims are admitted. Our Harijans should be admitted to the several callings or professions open to *savarnas* and ought not to be segregated, and they should be taught to assert their rights of elementary citizenship. It is likely that, in the course of fifty years, our Harijans will be admitted into the temples.

These are two typical statements. Both want the temple-entry question to be dropped. The first letter makes an "appeal to both parties to show mutual tolerance" but in effect insists on even one sanatanist excluding Harijans from temples, even though all the rest may be prepared to admit them. In naked terms, this is coercion of the worst type—a minority of one bending the will of the majority to its will. None but tyrants are reported by history to have succeeded in enforcing their will against all others, and that they did to their own utter destruction. So far as I can speak for the reformers, their position is plain. They do not wish to see a single temple opened to Harijans until there is an overwhelming majority of existing temple-goers in favour of such entry. There is, therefore, no question of compulsion or coercion, unless the enforcement of the will of an overwhelming majority may be so called. The majority may be, ought to be, expected to be forbearing and accommodating towards a minority. How that can be done I have already shown in these columns. But the minority wants no accommodation, it insists on the present position remaining intact. This would mean stagnation and ultimate death. Hence it is that I have been saying: either we kill untouchability or it will kill us as surely as the rising of the sun on the morrow.

There is no question of mutual bitterness or quarrel. Reformers have no bitterness on account of the sanatanists' opposition, for they give to them the same credit for honesty of purpose as they claim for themselves. The reformers are showing exemplary toleration in that they refrain from opening temples where there is a fair division of opinion, even though a clear majority may be in favour of reform. The reformers' task is, therefore, confined to the conversion of popular opinion to their side. And if the sanatanists will but recognize this undoubted right, there need be no friction whatsoever.

Whilst the first writer asks nothing from the sanatanists and wants everything from the reformers, the second recognizes that

the temples will have to be opened some day to Harijans. But he pleads for time and recommends common work in all other matters. The only amendment I would suggest is that, whilst the temple-entry question may not be given up altogether, the agitation should be carried on with the greatest consideration for the orthodox sentiment. If the sanatanists would respect this very moderate position, instead of staging opposition, sometimes not quite wisely, and would make common cause in all other matters, the whole movement could be carried on with the greatest decorum and without wounding anybody's susceptibilities.

As for the proposed legislation, it is necessary for the sake of removing the obstacle that is said to exist at present in the way of reform. There is no compulsion in it, unless the prevalence of the will of one person against any number, be it ever so large, is insisted on. And in no case have I any desire to see the Bills passed in the teeth of the opposition of a majority of Hindu members. I should wait till the majority of Hindus of the existing or any future legislature or legislatures are ready for the long overdue reform.

Harijan, 23-2-1934

208. SPEECH AT VIRAJPET[1]

February 23, 1934

It was an agreeable surprise to me to receive an address in very choice, correct Hindustani. I am a lover of Urdu and Urdu literature. But I have noticed that down South it is rare to find an Urdu scholar; and I was not prepared to find good Urdu writing and speaking in Coorg.

This address asks me to do whatever is possible in order to unite Hindus and Mussalmans throughout India as you are united here. Of certain things which I hold as dear as life itself, Hindu-Muslim unity, i.e., unity among all the races in India, is one; and as I did some years ago in Delhi, I should be prepared, given the occasion and the inspiration, to stake my life again for the same cause. My life is one indivisible whole, and all my activities run into one another; and they all have their rise in my insatiable love of mankind. Seeking to realize oneness of life in practice, I cannot be happy if I see communities

[1] Extracted from Chandrashankar Shukla's "Weekly Letter", dated February 23

quarrelling with one another or men suppressing fellowmen. I am, therefore, glad that this address admits that this Harijan movement is one for realizing the substantial oneness of man. And if I have thrown myself heart and soul in the campaign against untouchability, it is because I know that untouchability is the greatest stumbling-block in this realization.

Harijan, 2-3-1934

209. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MERCARA[1]

February 23, 1934

I finish this evening this all too short visit to your beautiful province. Though the two days, or almost two days, have been strenuous, they have been most agreeable to me—agreeable not merely because of the magnificent scenery that surrounds you, but also because untouchability has such a slight hold on you. In your address, you have confined yourselves to facts and figures in connection with Harijans. I appreciate the manner in which you have prepared your address, which in fact is a report. It gives me illuminating and exhaustive information about Harijans. It is a matter of regret that Harijans here are daily becoming landless. I see that what little land they still possess is lying fallow. It is up to the local Harijan Sevak Sangh to examine critically this situation and see what it is possible to do to prevent the Harijans from losing their lands. It may be that there are economic causes applicable to all which it is not in your power to prevent. It, therefore, becomes necessary for the Harijan Sevak Sangh to understand the economic condition of Harijans who have become landless. It may be that as a result of the investigation it will be found that, though they have lost their land they are not the poorer. But, should it be otherwise—as I fear it is—it will be up to the Harijan Sevak Sangh to apply the necessary remedy in order to improve their economic condition.

But, in my opinion, the greatest question with you, so far as Harijans are concerned, is the temple-entry question. It seems to be monstrous that public opinion here should not be able to open temples to Harijans. I see that you have no fixed prejudices such as are to be seen on the plains. I would, therefore, ask all workers

[1] According to *The Hindu*, 25-2-1934, the meeting was held at Raja's Seat Maidan at 6.30 in the evening. About 15,000 attended. At the end of the meeting a collection was made for Bihar relief.

who have the Harijan cause at heart to apply themselves to the solution of this problem; and I would like you to cherish the ambition that you may give the lead to India in this respect.

I would like also to mention to you the sufferers of Bihar. You are living somewhat in isolation from the rest of India. You seem also to be mostly self-contained. I hope that has not hardened your hearts. After all, you are but a part of the whole of India; and the sufferings of Indians in the extreme North should be shared by you as by others. You may know that Bihar is a sacred land because of the birth of both Sita and Gautama Buddha. Our countrymen in Bihar believe that every particle of the soil in that land is sacred. And to a man like me, it would almost appear that God has selected that sacred land for castigation for the sin of untouchability. It does not matter to me in the least degree that my imagination may be wrong. But let us cherish the thought and make greater effort to purify ourselves. After all, if we will feel that all mankind is one, the distress of one single man on any part of the earth should be shared by us. How much more so, then, when it is in connection with those whom we consider as our kith and kin! And after all, that to me is one of the implications of the removal of untouchability. If we believe that all mankind are touchable, it necessarily follows that we should share the sufferings of all mankind. Therefore, whilst I conduct the auction, volunteers will go amongst you, and you will give to them whatever you can. It is not that you will thereby give much material help to the sufferers. But in the face of a calamity so great as has befallen Bihar, every copper given is a token of tangible sympathy with the sufferers. And do we not all know that sympathy in distress often goes much further than material help brought to us?

Harijan, 2-3-1934

210. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

February 24, 1934

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

Miss Schlesin has complained bitterly against the article on Thambi Naidoo which appeared in *Indian Opinion*. I think her complaint is justified. The criticism of Thambi is altogether improper. There is a saying in English to the effect that one must speak nothing but good about the dead. Miss Schlesin even says

that the criticism is not just either. Please write to her. And explain the matter to me too. Besides, take whatever steps may be necessary to perpetuate Thambi's memory.

We are in Coorg today. It is a small hilly tract below Mysore. It is a very beautiful region, quite small in size. The population must be at the most a hundred and fifty thousand. It is 6 a.m. just now. I rose at 2.45. At seven we descend from here and go to Mangalore.

I shall be going to Bihar from Hyderabad on the 9th. I don't know how long I shall have to remain there. I hope Sorab is helping you in the Bihar collection.

I stop here today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4816

211. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, PUTTUR[1]

February 24, 1934

FRIENDS,

It is a matter of great pleasure to me to be able to come to your taluk. I thank you for all these numerous addresses, purses and ornaments. Karnataka is always used to receiving me with many ornaments and many purses. I do not think any province has beaten Karnataka in the giving of jewellery. I think that you have made a good beginning. In your principal address you tell me that suffering as you do from malaria and general depression you cannot present a substantial purse. I do not know what you call a substantial purse. But I can tell you that the purse you have given me is substantial enough from my standpoint. I know that you are none too rich and you tell me that because you cannot present a substantial purse you will lay your hearts at my feet. Well, that is an expression which is merely courteous. But instead of putting your hearts at my feet, if you will lay them on my head, I should be more than satisfied. If your hearts are at my feet, I can make no use of them. But if you will put them on my head, I can do without any purse and any ornaments and make of them the fullest use possible. I propose to take you at your word and take your hearts away with me and hold you to account, if you dare to neglect Harijan service hence-

[1] The meeting was held at the Travellers' Bungalow and was attended by more than four thousand people.

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forth, and the way to do it is simple. You can all, men, women and children treat Harijans as if they were our own blood-brothers and sisters. When I have said that, I think, I have said all.

I was to have gone to the Harijan *cheri* in the afternoon but having come here half an hour in advance of time we were taken to the *cheri* just now. If we treated them as our brothers and sisters, we would certainly not have neglected them to an isolated spot as these Harijans are, and it cannot be a matter of congratulations to you that they are cut off from you by a ditch, so that in the monsoon season the Harijan *cheri* must be almost inaccessible. Then on going to the *cheri*, what do I see ? The children are absolutely unkempt. I do not know that their hair has ever been washed. I suggest to all these sisters and these young men who have Harijan service at heart to go to the *cheri* and transform it. It will cost you nothing but a little time. And that will be one test of your word that you have given your heart to the work.

Lastly I hope that you have collected funds for the sufferers of Bihar. I hardly think I need describe the sufferings of Bihar to you. But this you should know that the sufferings of Bihar are going to last for some time. Therefore as Rajendrababu has suggested, you can make your payments to Bihar in instalments. I am supposed to leave for Bihar on the 9th March. And I should like to be able to tell the Biharis on your behalf that you are fellow-sufferers with them. Now I must hurry forward.

The Hindu, 26-2-1934

212. SPEECH AT BANTWAL

February 24, 1934

There is really no message[1] to deliver to you who have produced so many purses and made so many presents. But if you will have a message you must realize that your duty is not finished with giving presents and purses. But your duty commences with the realization that this is a movement for self-purification. Therefore, I expect you to wash yourselves of the sin of untouchability. And that means that you will forget all distinctions of high and low. It is not elevating, but only degrading, to imagine that a single human being can be inferior to oneself.

Harijan, 9-3-1934

[1] Gandhiji was asked to deliver a message after he had received a length of cloth woven from yarn spun by a person in the spinning *yajna*.

213. SPEECH AT JNANODAYA SAMAJ, MANGALORE[1]

February 24, 1934

I thank you for the purse and for your address. I am glad that you have frankly admitted the existence of the drink evil amongst fishermen here. I myself belong to a fishermen's village. And therefore I know what fishermen do. And I suppose, it is from their habits that we have got the phrase, "He drinks like a fish." I am glad, however, that your Sabha has been tackling this drink evil. I am glad that your effort is being crowned with some measure of success. Having worked at prohibition, I know how difficult it is to deal with this drink curse. I hope, however, that you will not relax your effort because you may not see full success. I would leave with you one suggestion: that you must not be satisfied with merely asking the people not to drink. I have found that many people drink because they have nothing else to do. Therefore you must find out a variety of ways whereby you may occupy their attention, their minds, their hands and their feet. You must study what other people have done wherever this drink habit has been tackled.

What you say about the necessity of salt for fishermen is but too true. I have certainly every hope that some day or other we shall tackle this salt problem. I have absolutely no sense of despair about it. It is a humane cause. And no humane cause, if it is backed by proper effort, has ever suffered reverse.

The Hindu, 26-2-1934

[1] Gandhiji was presented an address by the Jnanodaya Samaj, a body engaged in temperance work among Moghaviras, a community of fishermen. The speech was also reported in *Harijan*, 9-3-1934.

214. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, MANGALORE[1]

February 24, 1934

In the course of his reply, Gandhiji said that this was not the first time he had met the women of Mangalore. He remembered at least two occasions when they had tired him out by their gifts of jewellery. He would now see what they would do for Harijans. He could not be satisfied with a couple of hundreds of rupees. If the Hindu heart was to be cured of the taint of untouchability, women must do the lion's share of the work. It was a movement of purification, in which women were any day more efficient than men, for women had been the guardians of religion all the world over, owing to their superior capacity for renunciation and penance. He hoped, therefore, that women would remain in the forefront of the Harijan movement and fulfil all his expectations. He did not think there was a single mother present who discriminated between her children. If human beings made of clay were rarely guilty of such discrimination, how could God, Whose progeny all of us are, classify one class of men as touchable and another as untouchable? He was certain that there was no warrant in the Shastras for untouchability. A religious book could never teach irreligion. *Advaita* (oneness) was the fundamental principle of the Vedas, which ruled out all distinctions between man and man. He, therefore, hoped they would not consider anybody as untouchable and would look upon Harijans as their blood-brothers and sisters. He has just been to Sjt. Rangarao's Harijan School. If he had not been told that the children were Harijans, he would never have discovered it, as he noticed no difference between them and the children he now saw before him. The Harijan boys had sung as sweetly as the girls sang here. To consider anyone as inferior to oneself was a heinous sin, and he prayed to God that they would not fall victims to it. Gandhiji then appealed to them on behalf of the suffering people of Bihar, whose very dust, as the Biharis said, had been sanctified by the footfalls of Sita and Buddha.

Harijan, 9-3-1934

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter". The meeting, which was held at the National Girls' School, was attended by about 1,500 ladies.

215. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MANGALORE[1]

February 24, 1934

FRIENDS,

I am grateful to you for all these addresses, purses and various presents including caskets. I am not a stranger to you, nor you to me. I have therefore no hesitation in endorsing the opinion expressed by the giver of purses that it was a very poor purse. But I appreciate your difficulty. You have already sent a good sum for the relief of distressed Bihar, and you are no exception to the general rule that prevails all over India, perhaps all over the world, the deep depression that has overtaken it. I am therefore not surprised at the leanness of your purse. I know that untouchability is not a cause which can be advanced by mere purses however fat they may be. Not even a crore of rupees subscribed by a few millionaires can remove the stain of untouchability, unless the hearts of caste Hindus are changed. Therefore, as I have said at many meetings, I would like to repeat here also that every rupee that comes to the Harijan cause is of no value unless it is backed by a change of heart on the part of the donors. Throughout the Central Provinces, Andhradesha, Malabar, and Tamil Nad, it has gladdened my heart to see tens and thousands of people, giving their coppers for me in spite of the warning given to them by me that they must be a token of their determination to get rid of untouchability. I therefore rejoice to see in the municipal address that there is a change of heart on the part of the citizens of Mangalore in connection with untouchability and, as their address says very properly, without the opening up of temples to Harijans removal of untouchability cannot be said to be complete. If Harijans are an integral part of Hinduism, they must have the same rights and privileges as to temple-entry as the caste Hindus enjoy. No amount of economic betterment can possibly bring Harijans on the same platform as caste Hindus without the same rights and privileges for temple-entry as caste Hindus. But temple-entry is not a matter that can be forced.

[1] A summary of the speech was also published in Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter", *Harijan*, 9-3-1934. About 10,000 people attended the meeting. A purse of Rs. 1,001 and several addresses of welcome were presented to Gandhiji.

It can only be brought about by educating caste Hindu opinion. I hope therefore that you will make ceaseless efforts to educate caste Hindu opinion in the right direction. You have saved my time considerably by giving me the information that you have understood your duties by the sufferings of Bihar. But I would like the volunteers to spread in the midst of the audience and if those who have not given at all to the Harijan purse will kindly give their coppers or whatever they would like to give, it would be indication to me of your own wishes in the matter. Meanwhile I shall conduct a sale of all the numerous things on behalf of the Harijans.

The Hindu, 26-2-1934

216. LEAVES FROM A DIARY[1]

February 25, 1934

There is a little place called Vannivalasi, about 10 miles from Udumalpet in Dindigul District, which was one of the places I had to visit on my way to Dindigul. It may be called a model hamlet, having become one inside of a few months through the earnest labour of a few staunch workers in the Harijan cause.[2] The Secretary of the local Sangh is an enthusiast. He has prepared a diary of the work done and he presented me with an English rendering of it. I condense it below:

The condition of the village before the starting of this Sangham.

POPULATION

(1)	Harijans	185
(2)	Others	125

HARIJANS' HABITS

1. Almost all the adults were in the habit of drinking.
2. They lived on thieving.
3. Morals loose
4. They used to go to the surrounding villages for taking part in riots on receipt of money.
5. There were no literates in this village.
6. They were very lazy.
7. Sanitation bad

[1] The Gujarati translation of this was published in *Harijanbandhu*, 25-2-1934.
[2] *Vide* "Speech at Public Meeting, Thevaram", pp. 139-40.

Other Hindus' Habits

1. They were also all illiterates.
2. Several of them were leading the lives of thieves.
3. Addicted to drink
4. Laziness was not uncommon among them.
5. Morals not so bad. 4-4-'33

On 29-5-'33 sixteen people of a hill tribe, by name Koottathar, inhabited this village. Their main occupation is begging.

Only 20 people (belonging to 3 families) are living on their hereditary properties. All the others of the village are chiefly coolies or something equivalent to that.

This was the condition of the village and its people before the starting of the Sangham in this village.

Condition after

5-4-33	The cleaning of *cheries* and bathing of Harijan children, youths and old people were begun.
27-5-33	Entered Harijans' houses, removed the filth inside them and completely whitewashed them.
29-5-33	We began to fetch the Harijan children to the river Amaravati and induce them to bathe.
„	Public meeting. Asked the Harijans to live pure and be busy.
„	Allotted a separate quarter for the homeless Kootta-thar tribe, who were alien to the village.
2-6-33	Three houses belonging to the Harijans were recon-structed.
„	Reconstructed the road running from east to west. Reconstructed the village bathing-ghat. Streets were reconstructed. A house that stood in the middle of the road was demolished and a new one was built in a good quarter of the village.
9-6-33	It was made a rule that all Harijans must begin their daily work only after prayer in their houses.
13-6-33	The Harijans promised that they would not touch pork.
17-6-33	The public promised to do away with the evil of untouchability.
25-6-33	Began to look after the profession of the Thotti (scavengers).
1-7-33	The workers of this Sangham began to visit the Harijan houses daily and clean them.

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9-7-33 A separate quarter outside the village was allotted for latrines.
17-7-33 The streets were reconstructed.
8-8-33 Four new houses were built.
18-8-33 A new house was built by a caste Hindu for Harijans' use.
7-11-33 The villagers began to reconstruct the road running westwards.
30-11-33 A street was reconstructed.
12-12-33 Light posts were removed to the bathing-ghat.
14-1-34 A separate road was constructed for the arrival of the Mahatma to the village. Two hundred people worked to construct the same.

The neat appearance of every cottage and the lay [out] of streets furnished an ocular demonstration of the solidity of the work. The workers' daily routine is also interesting and worth copying.

Morning:	5 to 6	...	Prayer
	6 to 7	...	Cleaning streets
	7 to 8	...	Bathing of Harijan children
	8.30 to 9	...	Breakfast
	9 to 11.30	...	School hours
	11.30 to 12	...	Rest
Evening:	12 to 1.30	...	Cooking and taking meals
	1.30 to 2	...	Rest
	2 to 4.30	...	School hours
	4.30 to 5.30	...	Reading newspapers and telling villagers the important news of the day
	5.30 to 6.30	...	Going to the *cheries* and giving talks about sanitation
Night:	6.30 to 7.30	...	Cooking and taking meals
	7.30 to 8	...	Rest
	8 to 10	...	School for adults

This is one of the rare examples of what earnest, persistent work can bring about.

Harijan, 16-3-1934

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217. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

February 25, 1934

MY DEAR CHILD,

I have your letter. I am glad fruit reached you safe. Another basket was sent. Do not hesitate to ask for more when you have the need.

I don't wonder at Maria's dragging my name with your alleged breach of promise. My conscience is clear. I would not have tolerated your remaining with me if a breach of promise to the children had been involved. But from Maria's letter I gather that her complaint against me is deeper and wider. I wish she would discuss the whole thing with you. And if she does not, you need not worry. I have written to her at length and invited her to unburden herself completely.

Yes, I would like Menon to get the Bangalore job. I have gone through the certificates. They are good and should procure Menon a good job. Do you want the certificates back?

I leave for Patna on 9th March from Hyderabad (Deccan).

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: No. 126. Courtesy: National Archives of India. Also *My Dear Child*, p. 103

218. LETTER TO NAN MENON

February 25, 1934

MY DEAR NAN,

I have your very good letter. I am glad you are spinning every day. You know the golden rule: whatever you do, do well and with your whole heart in it.

Love and kisses.

BAPU

My Dear Child, p. 120

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219. LETTER TO TANGAI MENON

February 25, 1934

MY DEAR TANGAI,

I hope you are quite well. Never wander in the hot sun. Eat plenty of fruit and avoid starchy things.

Love and kisses.

BAPU

My Dear Child, p. 120

220. SPEECH AT STUDENTS' MEETING, MANGALORE[1]

February 25, 1934

MR. PRINCIPAL, BOYS AND GIRLS,

It is a matter of great pleasure to me that early in the morning I was able to see two beautifully kept clean *cheries* in which the scavengers of Mangalore are living, and then the sacred function of laying the foundation-stone of a common temple organized by the Old Boys' Association and now I find myself in the company of the students. You have given me a small purse. I call it a small purse because in several places students have given me much more than you have done. I do not want to draw distinctions and cavil at the smallness of your purse because I have no recollection of Mangalore, and for that matter Karnataka, having ever proved stingy or miserly. All the recollections that I have of Karnataka are very pleasant, so far as subscriptions and collections are concerned. I do not think that throughout my various tours, Karnataka has come second best. It has always occupied the first position, that is, it has been amongst the first to subscribe. Therefore, I have no doubt that this time also you have done your best. I know how depression has overtaken our entire land.

You have told me that you have got now two or three Harijan students and, circumstances being as they are, you have

[1] The meeting was held in the Kanara High School compound. Gandhiji delivered the speech after unveiling the portrait of Vithalbhai J. Patel. A summary of the speech was also published in Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter", *Harijan*, 9-3-1934.

CWMG - LVII

taken some pride in informing me of this fact, and it gives me some pleasure, but it gives me also considerable food for thought that we should be able to congratulate ourselves that there are even two boys belonging to the Harijan community in this big High School, because you are numerous and your High School, as you very properly say, ranks very high and in a High School of this nature there are only two Harijan boys. Well, that is like an oasis in the desert of Sahara, very pleasant and very nice when you are walking through a desert. But the question is why we should find ourselves in a desert at all and why this school should not have hundreds of Harijan boys here. No matter where I go, I discover the same capacity to draw the best out of you and amongst Harijans also. I was talking to an elderly lady, who has got a house, a princely house. It has got a beautiful fence, very nice large rooms, absolutely no dust anywhere, fit enough for a prince to live in. When I compare it with the palace of the old Maharani of Travancore, I tell you, there is not much distinction between this house and the palace which I had the pleasure of seeing in Travancore. When I talked to the old lady who is the owner of the house, she was able to anticipate what I was driving at and therefore able to give me a smart reply. I was struck with the intelligence of this old lady.[1] Therefore, it seemed as if these Harijan boys are not behindhand in intelligence or in capacity. They are not backward. It is our backwardness. It is the caste Hindus who have descended upon them like a blight and have suppressed them. So, as we have kept them and still keep them under suppression, we find it worth while to congratulate ourselves when we have two boys. I have taken a long time in describing this thing but I want to drive a lesson home to you. I know that you have a principal and a staff of teachers, who are exceedingly interested in the welfare of Harijans. They want to do as much reparation as it is within their power to the Harijans. I suggest to them and to you, the student world, that you will not rest satisfied until you have got the numerical strength of depressed class boys or Harijan boys and girls in the High School increased. You have no prejudices, because you have got three Harijan boys now. You must set to work. Go to the *cheries*, and to the other places where these people are living, and find out every boy and every girl who can study and see to it that they are on a par with you. That is what I would like to leave with you this morning. And who can work more efficiently than the student world? That is what I have been saying everywhere. If the students desire to

[1] From the *Harijan* report it seems that the lady was a Harijan.

do so they can really change the condition of things so far as Harijans are concerned and that without any undue strain upon their time or upon their mind. They can do it during their recreation hours. It will really stimulate their minds, their curiosity and fill them with the spirit of service and with the spirit of love.

The Hindu, 28-2-1934

221. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MULKI[1]

February 25, 1934

I am obliged to you for this address and the purse. I must congratulate you on your being able to recite the many things you have done in connection with the removal of untouchability and I hope that your belief that sanatanists' opposition against temple-entry is dying down is well based. There is the last sentence in your address which requires explanation. You have prayed to God Almighty that by the power of Harijans, the Hindu society may be strengthened. If thereby you mean that justice having been rendered to Harijans and reparation having been made to them by caste Hindus, Hindu society will be purified and therefore by reason of this purity it will gain moral height, I can join in that prayer whole-heartedly. Whereas if this prayer means that because caste Hindus who by reason of their being pampered and degraded have become infirm in bodies will receive access to physical strength from the able-bodied Harijans, it is impossible to join in that prayer. I must tell you that that thought has never crossed my mind. And I shall never allow myself to be associated with a movement which is based upon physical strength. It is my conviction that no religion on earth can be sustained by brute strength. On the contrary, "those who rely on the sword shall perish by the sword" is an eternal truth. Religion is a mighty tree which derives all its sap from the moral height of those who profess that religion. Hence I have repeated from a thousand meetings that this is essentially a movement of self-purification and repentance. You will be glad to know that this purse of Rs. 501 contains Rs. 200 given by the fishermen. I congratulate them on their handsome donation. I know that they are a flourishing community. And I know also that if they got rid of the drink habit and if they had the free supply of salt they could do much

[1] A brief report of this was also published in Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter", *Harijan*, 9-3-1934.

better. Free supply of salt depends upon circumstances over which we have no control. But upon the liquor habit, we have full control. And I would like my fishermen friends to carry on this reform which they have well begun in Mangalore. It is a habit that destroys the soul.[1]

The Hindu, 28-2-1934

222. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, UDIPI*[2]

February 25, 1934

FRIENDS,

Udipi has been on my brain for many many days. Of course the fame of Udipi has really preceded you, for so many people have explained to me the beauty of Udipi. And then there is your famous temple, where God himself turned away from the Brahmins, because they would not allow Harijans to approach Him.[3] And then I was promised all sorts of things if I came to Udipi, including, of course, jewellery and rich ornaments from ladies. Well, now you have begun redeeming the promise by giving me a purse containing Rs. 1,240. I have just now come after opening a khadi store and in order to open it I had to cut a cord with silver scissors. But I must take you into my confidence and tell you that the scissors were not required to cut the cord, which was slender. Well, I am expecting now that you will create such public opinion in this place that the temple, which is now not open to Harijans, will be presently opened to them. That opinion can only be formulated by the gentlest of means. Since opening of temples is part of self-purification and reparation to Harijans, no temple is worth opening except when the temple-goers desire by a majority of opinion that those temples should be opened to Harijans. If you will be true to your promise, I expect to see Harijan activity redoubled in Udipi so that you will become an example to the other places in Karnataka. I cannot imagine a nobler task for citizens of any place in India than that they should remove the sin of untouchability from their midst. We are all children of one and the same God and God

[1] At the end of the meeting the presents were auctioned and fetched Rs. 312.

[2] A brief report of the speech was also published in Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter", *Harijan*, 9-3-1934.

[3] According to a legend the image of Krishna in the temple had turned round to give *darshan* to Harijans.

would not be God of justice if He discriminated between His children. Therefore the message of anti-untouchability is the message of realization of brotherhood of man. Therefore I hope that we will all cleanse our hearts of untouchability, that is, distinction of high and low.[1]

The Hindu, 28-2-1934

223. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KUNDAPUR[2]

February 25, 1934

FRIENDS,

I thank you for your addresses and your purse. It is a matter of great joy as also a good omen that we have as our chairman a gentleman eighty years old.[3] That shows that old men are not behindhand in appreciating the necessity of the reform. You know what we are aiming at. Untouchability has got to be removed root and branch. This is a very simple proposition. But, as I have said elsewhere, untouchability is a hydra-headed monster and it has affected every branch of society and therefore we have become untouchables one to the other, and one community has become untouchable to another community, till at last there is absolutely no caste, no section, which does not consider itself superior to some other section or caste. There may be and there are many other causes but I am convinced that this superiority and inferiority complex is at the bottom of many of our communal troubles. Therefore the implication of this campaign against untouchability is that we want to achieve brotherhood of man. And that essential brotherhood of man is unattainable so long as we believe that untouchability has Divine sanction. It is therefore up to the caste Hindus to consider and make their choice. They perpetuate untouchability and they and Hinduism die. If they will kill untouchability altogether, that is the only way to live. I have therefore called it a movement of self-purification, a movement of repentance and reparation to Harijans. For centuries past caste Hindus have suppressed Harijans and, in suppressing them, we have degraded ourselves. Let us now learn the lesson before it is too late and root out un-

[1] At the end of the meeting Gandhiji auctioned the presents which fetched Rs. 400.

[2] A brief report of the speech was also published in Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter", *Harijan*, 9-3-1934.

[3] This was Savarkar Manjaya Sherigara.

touchability from our hearts. I see that you have a Hindi class conducted here. I congratulate you on it. I wish that you will popularize this national language much more than you have done hitherto. Hindi or Hindustani is the language spoken and understood by nearly twenty crores of Hindus and Mussalmans. It is a language in which you have a mixture of Sanskrit words, Persian, Arabic and what not, so simple, that either party understands it. It is an incredibly simple language to learn and you ought to take sufficient trouble to master the elements of that language.[1]

The Hindu, 28-2-1934

224. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

February 26, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

Am I not right in calling you idiotic? Instead of appreciating a postcard from one of the best of ashramites when I do not write myself, you write a peevish postcard and harp on the badness of the people in Wardha! Do you not owe an apology? And what shall I do with your apology? You will do the same thing again and again. Therefore I shall bear your idiocy. I must take you as you are and hope to see you as you ought to be even as you have to take me as I am and hope for the best. So we may be quits and get to business. I am glad you are getting on. Remember I need more than 6 hours' sleep during 24 hours. And so do you. You can take more without difficulty. Therefore you ought to. Keep yourself in good order and condition. Mind the hot weather. Don't wait till you collapse. Keeping good health in all weathers is an art.

Do you know that on the address part of a postcard nothing but name and address should be put. You put more and I had to pay a fine of 1½ as. Next time beware.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

On 9th I leave Hyderabad for Patna and reach there on 11th.

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

[1] At the end of the meeting Gandhiji made an appeal for the Bihar Earthquake Relief Fund.

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225. LETTER TO DUDHIBEHN V. DESAI

February 26, 1934

CHI. DUDHIBEHN,

I had your letter. If you are afraid of the children getting smallpox and if you have no religious objection to vaccination, I think it would be best to get them vaccinated. I oppose vaccination because I disapprove of it from every point of view and have little fear of death, but you or others certainly need not object to it because I object to it. Dharma is a matter of each individual's own conscience. It is not a rule that all who get smallpox die. Show this portion to Motibehn too—she has asked me about this.

I am writing today to Mavo[1].

I hope you don't worry about Valji. He keeps fairly good health. He has certainly been helping me. Thanks to his being with us, Chandrashankar gets plenty of free time. He could even go on leave.

I hope you keep good health.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7464. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

226. LETTER TO SUDARSHAN V. DESAI

February 26, 1934

CHI. SUDARSHAN,

You have ceased to be Mavo and have now become Sudarshan. I hope you will forgive me for not writing to you in time for your birthday on your completing six years. May you live long and serve the country well. Your handwriting cannot still be said to have improved. It is too early yet to take you with me on my tours. I can't say whether you can stand the strain of touring with me.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 5742. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

[1] Sudarshan Desai, son of Valji Desai; *vide* the following item.

227. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

KUNDAPUR,
February 26, 1934

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I got your message through Lakshmidas[1]. The description is good, the whole of it. You seem to have done very good reading.

My mental condition at present is such that I don't feel happy when somebody asks me for my decision on any matter and I hesitate even to offer advice. Since, obeying my nature, I regard myself as released only for Harijan work, I feel very reluctant to offer advice to or guide anybody. Moreover, in individual civil disobedience where is the need for advising anybody? My attitude, therefore, is that you should follow your own inclination. Don't think what would please me. You may assume that your wish will be mine.

Having said this, I will now say what I think. I think it would be better not to remove Dhiru from Bhavnagar. You may go and see him. I think it would be advisable to let Rama stay in Wardha. You should, therefore, go and see her too. If you are very eager to see me, you can do so in Belgaum on the 5th and the 6th. How can they let you come to Belgaum without permitting you to cross into British territory once? If they do permit you and if you very much wish, don't have the slightest hesitation in coming. You need not go anywhere to attend a wedding. It may perhaps be your duty to satisfy your wish to see your brother. I have said all this without taking into account your feelings or those of Rama, Dhiru and Kalyanrai. Not only are you free but it is your moral duty to make whatever changes may be dictated by those feelings. Reflect over verses 6 and 7 in Chapter III [of the *Gita*]. "What then will constraint avail?"[2] applies in circumstances like these. We can control our feelings only up to a certain point. If we repress them beyond that limit, they poison the system and erupt like raw mercury. Everybody, therefore, should fix his or her own limit.

[1] Lakshmidas Gandhi, a satyagrahi of Bombay, who was in Thana Jail with the addressee

[2] *Bhagavad Gita*, III. 33

Pyarelal has been released. He is in Wardha. Chandrashankar has gone somewhere there for 15 days. I therefore wonder if they will meet at some place. I don't write anything about myself, as I wish to save time. If I had sufficient time, I would fill pages.

I have just received a wire informing me that Lakshmidas[1] has been having enteric fever for the last eight days. The mercury shoots up very high. Swami is with him. He is in Patna.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5516

228. LETTER TO DHIRU JOSHI

February 26, 1934

CHI. DHIRU,

It seems you have completely forgotten me now. Do you still get fever?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5317

229. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

February 27, 1934

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

I had your letter. I have written to you regularly. It was you who wrote your last letter after keeping me waiting for a long time.

To save time, I am not writing separately to Jayaprakash this time. It is 3 a.m. just now. I will ask for the money for Rajeshwar after I arrive there. About the other money we shall talk when I am there. I had read all the letters from Jayaprakash. But I don't have all the letters with me when I am replying to the last one. The previous letters may have been left behind. I may also forget what I had said in reply to a letter. Hence I may have to ask again sometimes. After I had been told that some other arrangement had been made, there was

[1] Lakshmidas Asar. He had gone for relief work to Bihar, where he fell ill.

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nothing for me to do. When I remembered about the difficulty, I asked you again. We shall now discuss the matter when we meet there. My question regarding the earthquake was about you both. It was whether the earthquake had affected you two mentally and economically as it has done many others. But we shall discuss this also when we meet. I hope both of you are well. If necessary, when I arrive there we shall also discuss where you should live. For the present I hope both of you keep yourselves occupied in some public work there.

I am in excellent health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3443

230. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

February 27, 1934

BA,

I have not yet received your letter this time. I also am wandering about in a part where the post is very irregular, because there is no railway. I am touring small villages on the coast, and there are so many streams and rivulets that building a railway would be too expensive. At the foot of the hills is the sea. The rivers flowing from the hills form a big estuary which can be crossed only in a boat. In a region like this, it is not possible to travel fast and, therefore, letters take very long to reach. This morning we boarded a steamer at a place called Kundapur, and it will bring us to Karwar at night. We shall be on the sea for twelve hours. You have been to Mangalore. We were there yesterday. From there we reached Kundapur at night, crossing many rivers on the way, and at that place we boarded the steamer. The people here speak Kannada. All these places are in the region from where Gangadharrao hails. The province is called Karnataka. On the 5th and the 6th I shall be in Belgaum. Since we are on the sea-coast, the air is cool. It has been decided that, after completing Karnataka, I should go to Patna. I shall be in Hyderabad on the 9th, from where I will board a train for Patna. I will most probably meet Sarojinidevi in Hyderabad. Padma at any rate is there. In Wardha, which is on the way to Patna, Pyarelal is likely to meet me. He has just been released and after his release he has gone to Wardha. Most probably Jamnalalji also will go to Patna. Thakkar Bapa will

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not come with me to Patna but will go to Delhi instead. He will have to work there. Lakshmidas is in Patna. He is quite ill. He has got typhoid. There was a wire from Swami to that effect. Chandrashankar has taken leave for 15 days and gone to see his wife. I have written to him and asked him to call on Madhavdas. I have received no reply to my letter to Madhavdas. Narandas will be released on the 9th and Chhaganlal on the 3rd. There was news of Vasumati having been released. I have not heard from her. Prithuraj is still with me. At the moment he does not wish to go to Patna. Poor Velanbehn must be pining to see him. I have not received Manilal's letter as yet. Mahadev keeps good health. Durga has been to visit him. She was accompanied by Jivanji. Prabhavati and Jayaprakash are in Patna. They are doing relief work. And now the discourse.

Last week I wrote about the power of the Name. But the question arises: how should one repeat the Name? What good does it do to keep repeating it when thousands of idle thoughts distract the mind? Either one should repeat the Name from the heart, or not at all. This is partly right and partly not. If one repeats the Name for outward show, it has no meaning. On the contrary it is a sin to do so since it amounts to deception. But a person may wish sincerely to repeat the Name, and yet his mind may be continually distracted by other thoughts when he is repeating it. He should not lose heart, however. He should go on repeating the Name in spite of the distraction of thoughts. If he keeps up the practice, some day the Name will get inscribed in his heart. This is the reason why the power of the Name has been glorified. Even an illiterate or dull person can repeat the Lord's name. One can learn to do so in one second. After that one has merely to keep repeating it. By and by this becomes so much a habit that one does not feel happy unless one is going on with it. When the habit becomes so strong that one goes on repeating the Name at all hours of the day, whether eating or drinking or working or resting, then it may be said that the Name has sunk in one's heart. Such persons are rare, but they rise above all suffering. An interesting story about Hanuman illustrating this was told in the Ashram once by Panditji's guru. I will narrate it next week.

Blessings to all from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Bane Patro, pp. 16-7

231. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

February 27, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I am writing this letter on Tuesday on board the *Dayavati*. We are going from Kundapur to Karwar. Chandrashankar has gone home. Since Valji is with me, there was no inconvenience in letting him go. I have to leave Hyderabad on the 9th and reach Patna on the 11th. Soon after reaching there, I shall be entering upon my weekly silence, but it seems necessary that I should reach Patna on that date. It was difficult to leave earlier. All preparations had been made in Karnataka and it would have been difficult to return to Karnataka from Bihar. Ambalal and Mridula came and saw me. They had just come to see me through their love for me. Ambalal and Saraladevi are going to England. So long as Bharati[1] and Suhrid[2] are there, the two cannot feel easy in mind. On the one hand, they give complete freedom to all their sons and daughters and, on the other, there is a strong bond of love. I have found them a wonderful couple.

I have already written to you about the Professor's[3] visit. He also had nothing particular to discuss.

Miss Lester has gone to Ceylon. Agatha Harrison will leave London on March 2 and come to India.

Lakshmidas has been suffering from enteric fever for the last eight days. There was a wire about him from Swami yesterday. I have asked him to wire to me every day. Prithuraj is with me. So far he has not expressed a desire to go. But I have given him my permission. Velanbehn must be very unhappy. Swami informs me that Lakshmidas is being properly looked after.

Enclosed are a letter from Ba and Bhansali's postcard which I had preserved for you. I have already given you the contents.

You must have read in *The Times* [*of India*] about me. It is all poison. Even if I make a joke, it is described as my belief. Could I do anything except joke with that "self-respect"? But even that has been misrepresented. How can one counter such

[1] Daughter of Ambalal Sarabhai
[2] Son of Ambalal Sarabhai
[3] J. B. Kripalani

propaganda? This is only the poison that comes into the open. There is plenty being poured out behind the scenes. How can one reply to it? I am firm in my faith that this falsehood will not succeed against truth. So far I have not found that faith to have been proved false in any instance.

Chhaganlal (Joshi) will be released on the 3rd. I have written to him. Pyarelal is in Wardha. Chhaganlal seems to have done good reading while in jail. He has acquired some proficiency in Marathi also. He seems to have read a good deal on other subjects, too. I have told him in my letter that he may come and see me in Belgaum if he wishes. Kanjibhai did not come after all.

Thakkar Bapa will part company with me at Itarsi. He need not come to Patna just now. I have not yet been able to decide what Pyarelal should do. In the last resort he can of course resume the work which he was doing. The prevailing atmosphere is such as would confuse anybody.

I have had no letter from Devdas.

Raja left our party at Arkonam. Amtussalaam must still be at Tiruchengodu. I have had no letter from her after leaving Arkonam. I shall reach Karwar tonight. I would not be surprised if I got a letter from her there.

Jamnalal was to go to Patna, but has postponed doing so because of cough.

I have not heard from Dahyabhai recently. When you write to Mani, please tell her how my attempt failed. How painful it would be not to be able to see her or Mahadev though I would be in Belgaum for two days? But we are helpless.

The dairy, which was being run separately, has been made a part of the Harijan Ashram. It has been decided to make a separate trust for it.

. . .[1] has been released. He was fined, and he paid up the fine. Such things go on. He was not keeping good health.

You must have come to know that Vinabehn[2] is no longer in your hospital[3] now. She has taken a separate house in Bombay and is living there. She has got custody of her daughters and intends to file a suit against her husband for their expenses. She will probably get them.

[1] The name is omitted in the source.

[2] Mrs. Lazarus. Kumarappa introduced her to Gandhiji.

[3] Vadilal Sarabhai Hospital run by the Ahmedabad Municipality

I met Kamaladevi's son and mother in Mangalore. The son was dressed in U.P. style. I called on Sadasiva Rao's mother and mother-in-law. Kamaladevi's mother and son had called on me. A case is going on against Sadasiva Rao. Today was the last hearing. We shall know the outcome in Karwar. If I get time I will let you know about it.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 81-3

232. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

February 27, 1934

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

Every day I have been intending to write to you but where was I to find the time? I am writing this on finding just a few minutes to spare. I hope you are doing well. I have heard nothing so far from Sharma. I do not know if some information has come your way. I am in a region where letters, etc., reach very late. We are all doing well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 294

233. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

February [*27*][1] */28, 1934*

CHI. NARANDAS,

The date of your release is approaching.[2]

I didn't wish to write to you in jail. What could I write about? There was no need to express sympathy and no special news to give. You would hear the ordinary news from others. And so I did not write. But I did inquire and get news about you from time to time. Pyarelal has given a more detailed report about you. You should now narrate all your experiences.

[1] As Gandhiji says in the last paragraph, he started writing this letter on the previous day.

[2] The addressee was in the Nasik Jail.

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Dharma requires that you should return to jail as soon as you are released. That is what Prema did. I would not suggest that you must necessarily do so. It may even be your duty to remain outside for some time and observe things. If your health has suffered, it may be necessary to recover it first. Or it may be your duty to go to Bihar. I will not think about all these points and decide. You should do that yourself. I am sure that whatever decision you come to will be in accordance with dharma. If you remain outside, you may come and see me at Wardha. If you wish to go to Rajkot first, you may do that and then see everybody in Ahmedabad, discuss all matters with them and then come to see me at Patna. I will reach Patna on the 11th.

Chimanlal will explain to you the reason why the dairy has been sent back to the Ashram. It has been decided to make a new trust, but that will be done after I know your views in the matter. It has also been decided to hand over the land at Bidaj to the Harijan Sevak Sangh. But I will change my mind if you have some other plan.

Chhaganlal will be released on the 3rd. See him if you can.

We have stopped using the Red Bungalow, because Champa has changed her colour. She does not want to do even her clear duty to Jeki and others. We cannot, therefore, live in her bungalow as her dependents.

Lakshmidas is seriously ill in Patna. He is suffering from typhoid. There was a wire from Swami to this effect the day before yesterday. Prithuraj is with me. He joined me at Calicut. Velanbehn also is very ill. It seems an operation will be necessary.

Devdas's Lakshmi, Maruti's Lakshmi and Ramdas's Nimu are pregnant. The time for all three confinements is almost the same. It is approaching now.

I was glad to know about Purushottam's engagement. The marriage should take place after some time. He is not yet fully restored to health. If, however, Purushottam himself desires that the marriage should take place immediately and the girl also is of the same mind, we are helpless. Purushottam intends to undergo Dr. Sharma's treatment. Sharma will most probably come and stay in Wardha. If he does so, Purushottam may certainly get himself treated by him. But what can we do if Dr. Sharma doesn't come over?

If you have not heard about N.[1] you will hear it from somebody. Amala is at Sabarmati. Mary Barr is at Wardha, or under the charge of the Ashram at Wardha. Duncan is living in a jungle. His *tapascharya* is hard indeed. He lives on a hill near Betul. He recovered from a serious illness and went back to the same place.

Amtussalaam came to see me but fell ill. She must be in Rajaji's Ashram now. I have had no news about her after leaving Arkonam, i.e., after the 22nd.

I finished this letter in three parts in the midst of loud noises. I began writing this yesterday. I get up at 2.45 every day, and only then can I write fairly detailed letters. If anything is left out, then sometimes it is completely forgotten afterwards. You should write to me regularly—if you do not come to see me immediately.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Kanu is displaying great courage.[2]

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8394. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

234. LETTER TO KSHITISH CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

Unrevised *February 28, 1934*

DEAR KSHITISHBABU[3],

Hemprabha has described to me how you and your wife are ailing. My whole heart goes out to you. Have I not seen you as one with a strong wiry constitution? It is difficult for me to imagine you as ailing. But there it is. A satyagrahi's reward is his suffering in which he is expected to rejoice. Sudhanva is depicted as dancing in the frying pan. Therefore whilst as a frail being I grieve over your illnesses, as a satyagrahi I congratulate you on your suffering. Do please drop me a line when you can and tell me all about your experiences and, if your wife can write in Hindi or English, I must have a line from her too.

[1] The name has been omitted.
[2] He had gone to jail at the age of thirteen.
[3] Brother of Satis Chandra Das Gupta

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May God bless you both.
Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 9070

235. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

February 28, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

Your Gujarati is good. Your letter is undated. If you have malaria, you ought to take quinine. In all illness please do as the doctors there may advise. You cannot mechanically follow me and seek my permission about taking medicine. In such matters everyone must be a law unto himself or herself.

If you do not believe in God as a permanent, living and the only Reality pervading all, naturally you cannot feel Him while praying or in the earthquake. The belief comes to a certain extent through reason and finally through faith. As children we derive belief from parents, as grown-ups we reason and then we have faith or become sceptics. You will grow to faith in time because I believe you to be a seeker and because you have faith in one who believes in God.

I wrote to you yesterday.
Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

236. LETTER TO PARIKSHITLAL L. MAJMUDAR

February 28, 1934

BHAI PARIKSHITLAL,

Thakkar Bapa has replied to your letter.

There will be no difficulty about providing your monthly expenses. Please send a detailed budget to Thakkar Bapa as desired by him. Ambalalbhai has undertaken to make up the deficit. You need not spend time in collecting funds.

If Amalabehn gives you any trouble, please let me know. She is very good at heart, possesses great purity of character

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and is very eager to serve. But she lacks imagination and is obstinate. Nevertheless she yields to love.

You must have now got the cow. Train as many Harijans as possible in that work.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Enclosed is a letter for Amalabehn. Read it and pass it on to her. If she is having fever, call in a doctor.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4025

237. LETTER TO HEMPRABHA DAS GUPTA

February 28, 1934

CHI. HEMPRABHA,

What can I write to you?

The devotion of Tulsidas will help you, it will give you tranquillity. Is it a complete translation of the *Ramayana*? What is the price? I shall be content if even 1,000 copies are sold in Bengal.

That such a strong constitution as that of Kshitishbabu has been afflicted with illness pains me. His wife too has followed suit. But all this is part of satyagraha. Whatever may happen to the body the soul must remain shining bright.

I reach Patna on March 11. Perhaps we shall meet there one day.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1709

238. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, SIRSI[1]

February 28, 1934

Gandhiji said the name Sirsi was not unfamiliar to him. When his Karnataka programme was arranged, Sirsi was bound to be included, as so many of his comrades lived in it, and if he could not exact Harijan service from comrades, he had little right to expect it of others. It was his constant expe-

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter"

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rience that untouchability was vanishing from places where his comrades were to be found in large numbers. And who were his comrades? They only were his comrades who looked upon the entire people of India, Muslims, Christians, Jews, etc., no less than Hindus, as brothers and sisters, who, while holding India dearer than life itself, did not wish ill to any other country on earth, who did not despise or hate anyone even in a dream, who were ready to lay down their lives in the quest of truth. Such comrades could never consider anybody as untouchable or inferior to themselves. He was, therefore, confident that in Sirsi at any rate he would not meet anyone capable of upholding untouchability, and he was, therefore, not surprised to hear that its Municipality had accorded assistance to the local sangh and given free studentships to Harijan boys. Indeed, it would have been a painful surprise to him if it had been otherwise. The Municipal address admitted that they had "not yet been able entirely to throw off notions of superiority". That admission was creditable to them, for consciousness of imperfection is the first step in the march towards perfection. However, he hoped they would surmount the superiority complex, which was at the root, not only of untouchability, but also of communal bitterness. Removal of untouchability would go a long way in bringing about universal brotherhood. . . .

Gandhiji congratulated the trustees of the temple[1] for flinging it open to Harijans, but he was deeply pained to hear that animals were offered at that shrine. He would not consider any place holy where animals were slaughtered for sacrifice. Millions killed animals in other countries for food, but did not pretend that they did so to propitiate God. It was an insult to human intelligence and an outrage on the human heart to imagine that one could propitiate the deity by sacrificing animals. One can please God only by self-sacrifice and self-denial. He, therefore, hoped that the trustees of the temple would take a strong line and put an end to the evil practice in question. He would go so far as to say that Harijans ought not to be encouraged to visit any temple where animal sacrifice was offered.

Harijan, 9-3-1934

[1] Marikamba Temple

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239. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

March 1, 1934

DEAR ANAND,

I got both your letters at the same time, i.e., last night. I am glad of your closer bond with Jairamdas. May it ever grow closer.

It gives me great joy to find Jairamdas agreeing with me. He never agrees except through his whole heart. I know that I retain Dr. Choithram's devotion even when I cannot secure his agreement with my views. And I do not want his or anybody's mere mechanical assent to my proposals.

Vidya will have to be both gentle and firm with Mahadev whilst he is growing. To bring up children is a great art. Vidya must master it.

For the time being you should both be in Karachi. After I reach Patna, I shall know whether you are wanted. If you are, I shall send for you. If not, what to do will be considered.

A paper which requires security to be given is no good. I am quite clear that no paper is wanted today.

I think I have answered all your questions.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI ANAND HINGORANI
C/O R. B. TOTARAM HINGORANI
SAHITIPUR
BUNDER ROAD, EXTENSION
KARACHI

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

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240. LETTER TO RAMABEHN JOSHI

March 1, 1934

CHI. RAMA,

I have your letter. Joshi will soon be released now. You two, therefore, may discuss and decide the matter. I will approve of whatever decision you arrive at. I have written to Joshi in detail. I thought both of you, mother and daughter, were quite happy there. I also believe that it can do no good to continue to stay in a place where one feels ill at ease.

Write to me from time to time.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5364. Also *Bapuna Patro–7: Shri Chhaganlal Joshine*, p. 299

241. LETTER TO VIDYA ANAND HINGORANI

March 1, 1934

CHI. VIDYA,

You have spoilt your handwriting. Don't be lazy in writing to me.

I have written to Anand about Mahadev. If Anand goes to Patna, you will have to stay in Karachi or Multan. No time to write more.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] This sentence is to be found only in *Bapuna Patro–7: Shri Chhaganlal Joshine*.

242. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, SIDDAPUR[1]

March 1, 1934

Gandhiji said that the complaint[2] was perhaps rather exaggerated, but he had no doubt that it was substantially true. He, therefore, hoped that the *savarna* Hindus of Siddapur would remove the disabilities of Harijans. Or else it was no use their contributing to the Harijan fund. No one should regard such donations as a licence for the sins for the removal of which they were made. Donations intended as atonement for sin should be a token of future abstinence from it. In future, therefore, they should treat Harijans as blood-brothers and sisters. Oppression of Harijans was a potent factor in our present degradation and India could never expect to be happy so long as Harijans were in chains. . . . A peasant presented Gandhiji with samples of arecanuts, cardamoms and pepper, on which he had marked the comparative prices of these products in 1929 and 1933.

Adverting to this, Gandhiji said he would point out a remedy which they might apply if they chose. That remedy was spinning. They must grow profitable crops and utilize their leisure fully. They must not sit idle because spinning did not promise any large returns. Something was better than nothing. They must produce strong and uniform yarn, get it woven and wear the cloth themselves, or sell it if not required for personal use.

Gandhiji did not wish to suggest that there were not many other measures necessary for a radical cure of the depressions, but that was a larger question to be dealt with by statesmen and politicians. His appeal was directly to the men in distress, and he was trying to show what each individual could do for himself to alleviate the distress. And that was obviously to make use of enforced idleness further intensified by the distress. It was open to others to suggest more remunerative occupations. He could find no other that would apply to millions of men and women.

Harijan, 9-3-1934

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter"
[2] Of the local Harijans that they were treated as slaves

243. OPINION INVITED

DRAFT RULES FOR THE DISBURSEMENT OF GANDHIJI'S HARIJAN PURSE TOUR FUND[1]

(1) About a month or two after the collections of the purse fund of each province, the existing financial relations between the Central Office and the Provincial Office may cease in favour of the new financial relations arising out of the new Purse Fund, which are described below. The fund is called the Gandhi Harijan Purse Fund.

(2) The money for all welfare work expenses incurred after the passing of the welfare schemes should be charged to the Purse Fund, that is, it will come out of the 75 per cent quota of the Purse Fund, or out of the 50 per cent in the case of principal cities. Grants for administrative and propaganda expenses will be continued to be paid according to the existing system, that is, one half or two-thirds, or whatever the ratio may be, of such expenditure, out of the central fund, from which the Purse Fund will be kept separate.

(3) Except for Bombay, Calcutta, Karachi and similarly circumstanced cities, at least 75 per cent of the money collected in each town, district or province will be spent in that place, or area or province, if the following two conditions are satisfied:

(a) A scheme, including all the old commitments, of welfare work for utilizing the quota of the Purse Fund money is proposed, submitted and approved by the Central Office.

(b) Whole-time, honorary or part-time workers are forthcoming for working out the approved scheme or schemes, and their names approved. In appointing permanent workers, care should be taken to see that they have had at least 2 years' continued service.

(4) The Purse Fund should be spread out over a period of not less than two years, according to circumstances, at the discretion of the workers of the locality concerned, with the approval of the provincial workers.

(5) The money will be forthcoming by instalments, as may be required, on presentation of monthly bills of expenditure incurred on welfare schemes. Reasonable advances, however, will be made to keep the work going.

It is the special desire of Mahatma Gandhi that out of the Purse Fund not a single rupee should be spent for administration and propa-

[1] These were framed by Harijan Sevak Sangh, Delhi.

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ganda of the provincial, district or other offices and that the purse money cash should be utilized for no other purpose than the execution of schemes for Harijan welfare work.

(6) The earmarking of donations should be done at the time of the donation and not after. And in each case, when earmarking is done, it will be accepted only if Gandhiji approves.

(7) Special cases of districts requiring extra help over 75 per cent would be considered only on the grounds of the poverty of the district, or the extraordinary scope for work in the district or the unusually large number of Harijans in the district.

(8) In regard to taluk organizations and their finances, schemes from the taluks which have paid money to the Fund will receive due consideration in relation to such schemes. There need be no paid secretary or office in the taluks.

(9) The Provincial Secretary as also District Secretaries, should cease to be office men, but should become necessary parts of the welfare schemes. The charges of the provincial staff needed for supervising schemes in the districts will thus be met from the 75 per cent quota and taken from the districts in proportion to their budgets. Workers necessary for supervising welfare schemes may be treated as part of the constructive expenses.

All those who belong to various Harijan Sevak organizations or are otherwise interested in the cause are invited to send to the Secretary, Central Board, as early as possible their suggestions on the foregoing draft rules. The object is to incorporate in the final rules the wisdom of those who have helpful suggestions to make. Perhaps it is more difficult to spend the money wisely than it was to collect it. The chief difficulty will be to find whole-time, trustworthy and otherwise competent workers. In making their recommendations, therefore, local sanghs and individuals will bear in mind the difficulty about workers. Schemes, moreover, which would admit of employing Harijans by preference must be more acceptable than those in which such special qualifications may be required as to make it impossible to employ Harijans. Suffice it to say that the aim of every scheme should be the greatest and the quickest amelioration of the educational and the economic condition of Harijans with the funds available. Thus the general rules can only be indicative and elastic, so as to cover as wide a range of schemes as might be formulated by the provincial and district sanghs.

Harijan, 2-3-1934

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244. NOTE

For Bihar

From far-off New Zealand, the Wellington Indian Association has cabled £ 93 for Bihar relief. The amount has been transferred to Babu Rajendra Prasad.

Harijan, 2-3-1934

245. A WAIL FROM MELA-ARASUR

I cannot recall a place where I have not received addresses from Harijans. Most of them have dealt with general grievances, but in two or three cases I can recall having had instances of specific complaints against the tyranny of caste Hindus. Mela-Arasur is a village in Lalgudi taluk, not far from Trichinopoly. After the usual complimentary paragraph, the appeal proceeds:[1]

> We, the inhabitants of the village of Mela-Arasur, have got two tanks of drinking-water, one of which is big and the other small, but both of which are being utilized by the *savarnas* to our exclusion. We are debarred from touching the waters of the tanks. . . . We are about eighty families. . . . Our petition to the Government to remove this ostracism . . . resulted in the putting up of notification that nobody should be obstructed from using the waters of the tank, but did not succeed in removing the ban, for the *savarnas* would take our attempts to heart and would not employ us in their fields. . . . Thus, in this poor condition, we are undergoing a lot of inexpressible difficulties for the past nine months. . . .
>
> . . . We take this opportunity of presenting to you . . . knowing that you alone will be able to relieve us of it. . . . Furthermore, we request you to be kind enough to relieve us from poverty and suffering by giving to each family some donation at least for sustaining three months, in such manner as you think it best.

This was received at Trichy and I made public reference to it in my speech.[2] If the statements made are true, the position reflects no credit on the *savarna* Hindus of Mela-Arasur. It is

[1] Only extracts are reproduced here.

[2] *Vide* "Speech at Public Meeting, Trichinopoly", pp. 146-8.

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to be hoped that the provincial Harijan sevak sangh will use all its efforts to secure justice for the helpless Harijans who are so dependent upon the caste Hindus. It is relevant to know whether the Harijans have facilities for getting pure water apart from the tanks in question. If they have not, humanity demands that the supply of pure water is guaranteed to them by those who deny the use of public tanks to which the Harijans are entitled in law. The boycott of Harijans for their having dared to enforce their right to the use of the tanks is adding insult to injury. I hope, however, that the good offices of the local Harijan sevak sangh will result in justice being done to the Harijans and in the restoration of good relations between the two divisions of the same family.

The last sentence of the appeal demands an answer. Even if I had the ability, I would not have the wish to satisfy the signatories in their appeal for a "donation" that would sustain them for at least three months. Such donations are a waste of public money. They degrade those who receive them and put a premium on laziness. The able-bodied should ask for work, never charity. I know that in these days of scarcity even work is difficult to find in the case of the general body and more so in that of Harijans. But I believe that a person who is ready for any honourable labour will not have much difficulty in finding some work. I would, therefore, urge all friends of Harijans to discourage appeals for doles and endeavour to find employment for the unemployed who would not refuse to do any honourable labour.

Harijan, 2-3-1934

246. TO THE SUBSCRIBERS OF "HARIJAN SEVAK"

Harijan Sevak has completed its first year. Subscribers know the policy of this journal. Political questions are not even touched upon. It exists solely for the service of Harijans, and the attempt is as far as possible to make it self-supporting, which it is in a way, since any deficit that occurs is not made up by the Harijan Sevak Sangh. But looked at from another angle, it is far from self-supporting for the number of subscribers so far is far below the mark. There are at present roughly 1,600 subscribers. To make the journal self-supporting we need at least another 800. But if even the present number is further reduced, then there would be no justification left for continuing the paper. Subscribers are therefore requested to send in their subscriptions as soon as they get this issue. Readers who fail to send the subscription will not be sent

copies of *Harijan Sevak*. The annual subscription of the paper is Rs. 3-8-0 and half-yearly Rs. 2. Friends who have helped the paper by finding subscribers or in any other way are requested to continue their help in the current year also. Let everyone remember that news items of a general interest are not published in *Harijan Sevak* and also that it is the sole organ of the Harijan Sevak Sangh brought out in Hindi.

M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]
Harijan Sevak, 2-3-1934

247. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

March 2, 1934

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

I got your letter yesterday and read it fully. My being pained does not mean that I was displeased with you. And now I have forgotten even the cause. There was no question of forgiving, you had committed no grave error. What more do you want? Stay there as long as Rajaji wants you to.

There is no hurry about going to jail. You have admitted that you will not even talk about going to jail till you are perfectly fit. You may be sure, too, that you will benefit by Rajaji's company as long as you can have it. So stay on and take what service you can. I have not received any letter or wire from Dr. Sharma. Now, don't be crazy. Be cheerful and keep writing to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 295

248. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BELLARY[1]

March 3, 1934

Gandhiji congratulated the Chairman on his frankness and said that it was for the first time that he had heard of such dissociation. He had also learnt

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter". While presenting the purse the Chairman of the Reception Committee mentioned that there were some *savarna* Hindus who did not contribute to the fund. But there were others, too, who dissociated themselves from the presentation of the purse.

that the sanatanists resented his attempt to procure legislation on temple-entry. He assured them that there was no question of compulsion in the proposed Bill. On the other hand, it was designed to remove the legal compulsion that was then existing. He, therefore, appealed to the Bellary sanatanists to help where there was no difference of opinion. He pleaded for mutual toleration. Surely they could have no ground for complaint if they accepted the assurance that no temple would be opened without the express consent of an overwhelming majority of *bona-fide* temple-goers. The Bill therefore, even if it was passed, would not be sufficient automatically to open a single temple. It was designed to authorize the opening of temples to Harijans when a clear majority desired it. This was not possible under the existing law. Apart from this question, surely they could have no objection to the education of Harijan children, the opening to Harijans of public wells or tanks, or their general economic betterment. He could say without hesitation that the moneys that were being collected were not to be used for building temples. They were to be used solely for constructive work of the kind mentioned above. Whilst, therefore, he made this appeal to the sanatanists, he said, he would like to test the feelings of the vast gathering in front of him. He, therefore, asked the volunteers to go amidst the men and women present and collect whatever they might give for the Harijan cause, knowing what it was to be used for.

Harijan, 23-3-1934

249. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

[After *March 3*,][1] *1934*

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I got your letter. You must have received mine in jail. You may stay in Dwarka and Rama may also join you there. But a player would always know better than a spectator. In all cases my views follow the basic principle, but they are of little value because of my ignorance of the facts. The sun is said to be a source of life and energy. As a general principle this is true. But it would make one who is burning with heat feel much hotter. That is the fault not of the sun, but of that person. Such a person would want the sun to be hidden. It is thus for you to determine how far you would follow general principles. It is not for me to forgive or not to forgive you for what you decide to do. I shall have to approve of it as being the best course for you.

Your duty towards your mother is included in your duty towards Mother India. Or you can include the latter in the for-

[1] The addressee was released on March 3.

mer. If you did that, however, you should adopt a different way of life. Both the duties are right and each proper in its place. But you cannot combine the two. That is also true regarding your duty to your brother's wife. However, we shall discuss all this if and when we meet. Meanwhile keep me informed about developments there. I shall be there on the 11th.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5527

250. LETTER TO W. H. BROWN

DHARWAR,
March 4, 1934

DEAR FRIEND,

Sjt. A. V. Thakkar has shown me your letter of even date in connection with the flying of the national flag on the bonnet of the car that drove me from Hubli to Dharwar. You are right in surmising that the flag could not have been put up with my consent. It was put up only in Dharwar at the instance of Sjt. A. V. Thakkar who, noticing the absence of it on our car, said to the responsible workers that if it was omitted by design, there was no occasion for the omission, as to his knowledge the flying of the flag was not declared illegal. I overheard the conversation, but I expressed no disapproval of the attitude taken up by Sjt. Thakkar. My position has been one of absolute neutrality. I have not asked for the flying of the flag, nor have I discouraged it anywhere. Indeed at least at one place I recollect having been called upon publicly to unfurl the flag in the Central Provinces, and I did so without any hesitation. I have scrupulously abstained from taking part in any political agitation directly or indirectly ever since my premature discharge, and in the prosecution of the self-imposed vow I propose to do so up to the end of 3rd August next, so far as it is humanly possible. But this abstention does not in any way mean that I have ceased to be a Congressman, or that I should hide my colours. My abstention means that I would not offer civil resistance myself, nor incite others to do so during the period named. I take it that Sjt. Thakkar is right in his interpretation of the law as it stands that the flying of the national flag is not an offence.

I may add that throughout the tour in the C.P. and the Madras Presidency, I have often driven in cars flying the national flag.

I am due to leave Belgaum at 3 p.m.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

W. H. BROWN, ESQ., I.C.S.
DISTRICT MAGISTRATE
DHARWAR

From a photostat: G.N. 1019. Also C.W. 7777. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

251. *SPEECH AT RAILWAYMEN'S MEETING, HUBLI*[1]

March 4, 1934

Gandhiji claimed to be a fellow-labourer, as he had lived in the midst of labour from his youth upwards. He asked the workmen not to be disheartened or lose faith in themselves or feel helpless before those whom they called capitalists. Labour itself was a form of capital. It was not necessary that a man's capital should be measured in coins. In ancient times it was described in terms of the cattle possessed by him. Capital owned by a working man was his labour. The difference, therefore, was not in kind or quality, but it was purely in quantity. Capitalists might possess thousands of rupees, whereas a labourer or a working man possessed labour which might represent only 8 annas per day. But the combined labour of 50,000 working men would represent capital earned in one day of Rs. 25,000. Instances could be given to show that under certain circumstances the golden coins of the capitalists had proved valueless when they could not command labour, whereas the labour of one single labourer had proved invaluable. If, therefore, the labourers acted as one man they could be as good capitalists as their employers. Employers and employed were, therefore, interdependent. And no cause for complaint need ever arise if each party recognized its limitations. What he had said, Gandhiji proceeded, applied to Harijans with double force. When they had become conscious of their own strength, no power on earth would be able to check their economic progress.

Harijan, 23-3-1934

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter"

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252. A LETTER[1]

[Before *March 5, 1934*][2]

As you may have known, I am not now coming to Orissa soon. I go to Bihar first. I do want to finish Orissa before July. I shall be able to know my way clear after reaching Bihar which I do on 11th March.

New Orissa, 7-3-1934

253. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

BELGAUM,
March 5, 1934

CHI. VASUMATI,

I got your postcard on my arrival here last evening. I find it difficult to guide you or anybody else, for my mind is still in Yeravda. I take interest in things outside only in connection with Harijan work. I also feel that all of you should act as you wish. Wasn't our last decision to the effect that everybody should act on his own responsibility and according to his own inclination? Isn't this the only way in which everybody would be tested? Nevertheless, I realize that I am in duty bound to advise a person like you. I advise according to my lights anybody who consults me.

I am as eager to see you as you are to see me. But I suppress my wish. My immediate reaction is that you should go to Wardha, and observe things there. I shall be passing through it on the 10th. You can join me a few stations before Wardha or at Wardha and travel with me for a few stations beyond it, and discuss your problems with me. Stay at Wardha and have some experience of the work there. If you don't like this plan, you may stay in Borivli. I would not advise you to go to Ahmedabad. There are few places there where you can stay. The Red Bungalow must be avoided. Nor can you stay in the Harijan Ashram. Thus Wardha is the only place where you can live peacefully.

[1] The addressee is not identified in the source.

[2] The news item reporting the letter is dated March 5.

I understand what you say regarding your study. Reading books is not enough. You should reflect over them. For that you should read some of them over again. If you wish I would make another list and send it to you. You should also study a book on grammar. The *Gujarati Vanchanmala* series also is not bad.

Probably you will wonder why I don't call you to Patna. Just now the conditions are very difficult there. I don't even know what kind of accommodation we might get. People have no peace of mind at all. There are fears of more tremors still. In such conditions, I don't feel inclined to ask anybody to come there to see me. But I shall be able to write to you more after reaching Patna.

Durga is coming here today to see Mahadev. Probably she also wants to take this opportunity to see me. It was only yesterday that I came to know about her coming. Dahyabhai and Chandubhai of Broach also are coming. I really feel how pleasant it would have been if you had come, too, along with them. Perhaps I shall find that you have indeed come. I am writing this early in the morning after the prayer. My health is excellent. From here we go to Nipani on Wednesday, thence to Bijapur and then take a train to Hyderabad.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Where is Gangabehn? If she is there, please tell her that she had promised to write to me again but has not done so.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9383. Also C.W. 628. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

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254. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

March 5, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

I have your letter. My weight is 107. Food as usual. B. P. not taken for some time. Health quite up to the mark.

Yes I had your Gujarati letter. It was quite good. By all means learn Sanskrit.

I wish I knew German grammar. I am sorry I was never able to learn German.

I can suggest no reason for the change of 'વું' into 'વા' when it is joined on to 'આઉં છું' except that it is easier to pronounce.

I am glad you went to Sharda Mandir.

I cannot believe R. approving of the persecution of the Jews in Germany.

Of course I want you to attain perfection. Nothing like trying for it.

Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

255. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

March 5, 1934

We had a good experience during the tour from Mercara to Mysore. I am glad we had it. Without such experience life would be uninteresting. When they are able to grow "cultured" roses which have no thorns, such roses will not have the bloom which the roses have now. The value of the rose lies as much in its thorns as in the flower itself. The thorns even increase the value of the flower.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 143

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256. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

March 5, 1934

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

The tour this time is proving so demanding that I am unable to write letters to my satisfaction. So you have entered your thirty-fifth year! My blessings are ever with you. God will see to your well-being and take further services from you. As for the treatment, you must implicitly follow Dr. Ansari's directions.

Mother, I trust, has recovered.

I reach Patna on the 11th instant.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2409

257. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

March 5, 1934

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

Your letter. You have my orders to remain there till you have gained sufficient strength.

Blessings from

BAPU

AMTUSSALAAM

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 296

258. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS[1]

BELGAUM,
March 5, 1934

There was a meeting of Harijan workers at Belgaum, when Gandhiji had his silence and *Harijan*-editing days there. One of the workers had brought typed questions from which the most useful may be culled.

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter". The questions were put to Gandhiji at a meeting of Harijan workers. Since it was a silence day the questions had been typed out.

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Q. Is your Harijan work based purely on religious or political grounds?

A. Purely on religious grounds.

Q. When you know that there are pandits and sanatanists who derive untouchability from Shastras, why do you take the opinion from those who hold the contrary view?

A. I have taken my opinion from nobody. My opinion on untouchability was formed many years before I had discussed the question with a single pandit. But when I began to preach against untouchability, and more especially when, owing to my first fast, the question attracted world-wide attention, I had to study the position of those who defended untouchability as having its origin in the Shastras. And in doing so, if I found pandits who defended untouchability, I also found men who held strongly that the Shastras did not warrant any untouchability as it was practised today, and I found also that they were just as learned as the others. Surely, I was entitled to use in support of my opinion the authority of these pandits. But supposing these pandits came to hold a different view, I believe that my conviction is strong enough to stand without the support of any pandit.

Q. You have said times without number that you have committed Himalayan blunders. Are you quite sure that you are not committing another such blunder again?

A. I am not sure at all, for I do not profess to be omniscient. But if I discover that I have made a mistake, I should have no hesitation in retracing my step. And I know that God will forgive all errors committed unconsciously, as He has done in the past.

Q. Some say that there should be no separate schools for Harijans at all, whereas others say that separate schools are absolutely necessary.

A. My opinion is that, whilst every facility should be provided for the admission of Harijans to public schools, for some time to come preparatory schools will be absolutely necessary for preparing Harijan children for the primary schools. It is futile to expect Harijan children all at once to flood public primary schools. There is also a possibility of opposition to wholesale admission. Hence preparatory schools are necessary if we honestly want to foster the education of Harijan children.

Harijan, 23-3-1934

259. LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

As at Wardha, (C.P.),
India,
March 6, 1934

DEAR SIR SAMUEL,

You will recollect that whilst I was returning to India in December of 1931 you had a cable caused to be sent to me in regard to an interview alleged to have been given by me to a journalist in Rome and that I had sent a categorical denial.[1] To this there was a counter-denial which I had not seen till recently, being in jail within less than one week of my landing in Bombay.

After my discharge from the last imprisonment in August last, I was told by Mirabai Slade that an English friend—Prof. Maclean of Wilson College, Bombay—had thought that although the matter was stale, it was worth while my clearing it up, as the denial by the Rome journalist had created a profound impression at the time of its publication and had probably precipitated the Viceregal action against me in 1932. Agreeing with Prof. Maclean, I at once asked Mirabai to write to Miss Agatha Harrison to procure the relevant newspaper cuttings. After much search she was able to get them. The last and the most important I received from her last month in the midst of my hurricane tour in the cause of the anti-untouchability campaign. For ready reference, I send you copies of the three cuttings marked 'A', 'B' and 'C' respectively.

It should be noted that these cuttings were for the first time seen by me on their being received from Miss Harrison. I have now read and reread them several times, and I have no hesitation in saying that 'A' and 'C' are a caricature of what took place. 'A' professes to be a summary of a long statement said to have been made by me to an Italian journalist. In 'C' *The Times* correspondent, on seeing my denial regarding the alleged interview, makes a halting admission that I might be correct in so far as Signor Gayda did not "request any formal interview and no such interview was granted," but insists that the statements attributed to me were substantially correct. But truth will perhaps be better served by my simply stating what I do know than by analysing 'A' and 'C'.

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLVIII, p. 426.

1. I never made any statement, much less a long one, to Signor Gayda as suggested in 'A'.

2. I was never invited to meet Signor Gayda at any place. But I was invited by an Italian friend to meet some Italian citizens at an informal drawing-room meeting at a private house. At this meeting I was introduced to several friends whose names I cannot now recall and could not have recalled even the day after the meeting. The introductions were merely formal.

3. At this meeting the conversation was general, and not addressed to any particular individual. Questions were put by several friends and there was a random conversation as at all drawing-room meetings.

4. It was therefore wrong for Signor Gayda or *The Times* correspondent to reproduce my remarks as if they were one connected statement to one particular person.

5. Signor Gayda never showed to me for verification anything he might have taken down.

6. The conversation, among other things, referred to the Round Table Conference, my impression of it and my possible future action. Many of the things that have been put into my mouth in 'A' I had never said. All my hopes, fears and future intentions were expressed in as precise a language as it was possible for me to command and use in my speech at the close of the Round Table Conference. Whatever I said in private conversation was but a paraphrase of the sentiments expressed in that speech. I am not given to saying one thing in public and another in private, or to saying one thing to one friend and something else to another. I could not have said that there was a definite rupture between the Indian nation and the British Government, for I had said to several friends about the same time that I was determined to strain every nerve to prevent a rupture and to continue the peaceful relations established by the Irwin-Gandhi Pact. Being an optimist, I do not believe in a final rupture between human beings.

7. I never said that I was returning to India in order to restart the struggle against England. Certain possibilities about which I was questioned at the informal meeting have been so described in 'A' as if I was actually going to India to bring them about if I could.

I would add that the public had neither the original notes supposed to have been made by Signor Gayda nor the latter's own version wherever published. In 'A' and 'C' they had only the impressions of *The Times* correspondent about what Signor Gayda wrote or said.

I do not know how you were affected by 'C'. If your faith in my denial was shaken, perhaps in any case I should have been acquainted with the rejoinder to my denial as you had kindly brought to my notice the first report. I do not know how you will take this letter. If you have any doubt about my *bonafides*, I would like to clear it, if it is at all possible for me to do so.

Miss Slade was the "follower" referred to in 'C'. I enclose herewith her recollections of the conversation.[1]

I am not publishing this letter. I am sending copies to several friends for their private use. But I would like you, if you could, to give it publicity, or to ask Prof. C. F. Andrews,- Woodbrooke, Selly Oak, Birmingham, to make such public use of the letter as he might wish.[2]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 7942. Courtesy: G. D. Birla. Also *In the Shadow of the Mahatma*, pp. 130-3

260. LETTER TO HIRALAL SHARMA

BELGAUM,
March 6, 1934

BHAI SHARMA,

Your letter is good.

My advice to you is to use the house Jamnalalji suggests. You should take the children too. Your duty is to look after them. You should use the tent if one is provided. Your day must be spent wholly in the Ashram. I find your temperament is such that you can adjust anywhere. I want you to reach the Ashram soon. I have to take plenty of service from you. I want to know your wife too. I pass through Wardha on the 10th instant. You can try to arrive there by that date. I wish to send Amtus salaam when you are at Ashram.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsha*, between pp. 56-7

[1] For the texts of enclosures 'A', 'B' and 'C' and Mirabehn's recollections, *vide* Appendix II.

[2] Sir Samuel Hoare in his reply dated April 7 said that he did not propose himself to send Gandhiji's letter to the Press, but that he had no objection to Andrews doing whatever he thought desirable in regard to it.

261. SPEECH AT MERCANTILE ASSOCIATION, NIPANI[1]

March 7, 1934

I speak as a merchant to fellow-merchants. The difference is that you are doing business for your respective families, perhaps not exceeding more than 100 members in each case at the outside, whereas I do business on behalf of a family consisting of several crores of people, called Harijans. I have found that mercantile credit does not depend upon the cash that merchants can produce, but upon the prestige they have for redemption of their promises. A bank having hoards of gold in its coffers would lose credit in a moment if it dishonoured a cheque drawn upon it, that is to say, if it did not redeem the promise underlying the cheque that it would be honoured on presentation, if there was a credit balance in favour of the drawer. I, therefore, hope that you will not fail to redeem the promise which you are reported to have made in respect of crores of Harijans.[2]

Harijan, 23-3-1934

262. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

ROADBELL,
March 8, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I have not heard from you recently. I am writing this letter before the prayer. We left Belgaum yesterday. This place is a small town but there is a railway station.

I am writing this letter after a longer interval than usual as Dahyabhai, Chandubhai, Durga and Jivanji had come to see me in Belgaum. Dahyabhai saw Mani. Durga, Jivanji and Bablo saw Mahadev. One may say that Mani and Mahadev are all right. Mahadev is engrossed in his work. I heard everything from

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter"

[2] Gandhiji had been told that there was some disinclination on the part of the merchants to redeem the promise. However the Chairman assured him that there was no basis for such apprehension.

Chandubhai. Kanjibhai has still not come to see me. Please take care of your nostrils. Keep up the practice of *neti*. And remember that the correct way of doing it is with a piece of fine cloth.

Miss Lester has gone to Delhi. Harrison is arriving on the 16th. Ba's letter is enclosed. Her brother has passed through a severe illness. Lakshmidas is out of danger now. Tarabehn Modi is very ill. She has developed a tumour in the throat and it has burst. Her teeth have been giving her much pain. Kishorelal's fever has still not left him.

I will reach Patna on the 11th. Thakkar Bapa and his retinue will go to Delhi. If after going to Patna I find it possible to continue the Harijan tour, I will ask him to join me.

Lilavati (Asar) is pretty ill. I don't worry, however, since Prema is with her. Amtussalaam may still be described as ill. Brijkrishna is improving. I suppose you know that there is an epidemic of a children's disease in Ahmedabad. Please be satisfied with this much today. It is now time to see visitors.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 84-5

263. LETTER TO TARABEHN R. MODI

March 8, 1934

CHI. TARA,

It is 3.30 a.m. just now. This is a small village. We reached the place at 9 last night after travelling the whole day. I was given your letter immediately on arrival and am writing this reply now.

Five systems of treatment are current in India at present: (1) allopathy, (2) ayurveda, (3) unani, (4) homoeopathy and (5) nature cure. I leave out the use of *mantras* and magic. Of these, allopathy is the most widely in use. I am inclined towards nature cure and, if further help is needed, I would have recourse to allopathy, but within limits. In certain cases surgery is indispensable and some of the drugs, like quinine, are very effective. I would put you under nature-cure treatment and, for the trouble you are having with your teeth, etc., I would advise you to take help from allopathy. But I am not with you just now and don't

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wish to offer guidance from this distance. I, therefore, feel inclined to let things go on as at present. Allopathic practitioners are comparatively more honest. In the West, they are continually experimenting. Their treatments, therefore, are often found to succeed. But I would say this even from here. After commencing a treatment, one should think no more about it and watch the effect patiently. One should not feel impatient for the result. Let it be what it will, good or bad. After all, how do we know what result is good and what bad? "What we regard as misery is not misery, nor what we regard as happiness happiness. The only misery is forgetfulness of Narayana's name and the only happiness is constant memory of Him." Let the attachment to the body fall away slowly. Keep on writing to me. I will then write if I have any suggestion to make.

Don't think about anything till the body is completely restored to health and you can work. There will be plenty of time to serve after you have recovered.

Kishorelal is at Deolali. Fever does not leave him completely. Going to Deolali does not seem to have made much difference. I had a letter from Vasumati. Pyarelal is in Bombay.

You have done well in renting a separate room there. But who is with you to help you? Who does your cleaning, sweeping, cooking and other chores? I am sure you must be realizing the usefulness of the Ashram in your present circumstances. The test for us consists in creating the atmosphere of the Ashram even when there is no Ashram now.

The noise has started now. The hands of the clock are moving to 4.20. Wherever I go, a thousand or two thousand persons attend the morning and evening prayers. Since it is a new place every day, people don't feel it a hardship to forgo one night's sleep. They come to the morning prayer even from great distances.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4180. Also C.W. 1679. Courtesy: Ramniklal Modi

264. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

March 8, 1934

CHI. LILAVATI,

Please believe me you are as much in my thoughts as I seem to be in yours. I didn't write to you after you had been imprisoned because I didn't think you would get my letter. But I see now that you can get letters, and so I am writing this. You don't seem to have received the letter which I wrote to you after you were released. You were rather hasty in returning to jail, but I have no doubt that you have proved your courage by doing so. I am sure all will be well with you. Now exercise strict self-control and get rid of your fever. Don't worry about anything. Don't think about events outside. If you are permitted to write to me, write as long a letter as you would like to. I am fine. I hope to reach Patna on the 11th. Is Prema permitted to look after you?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9327. Also C.W. 6602. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

265. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

BIJAPUR,
[*March 8*][1], *1934*

BA,

I got your letter. Since, even after much waiting, I didn't hear from Madhavdas, I wrote to Mathuradas and asked him to look him up. He did so, and the letters received from Madhavdas and Krishna are enclosed. A letter from Manilal also is enclosed. Apart from what you will read in these letters, there is nothing more to write about these persons. You should now stop worrying about Manilal. I hope you do remember that he is past forty now. He is able to look after himself and doesn't

[1] January 8 in the source. However, Gandhiji was in Bijapur on March 8.

worry about anything. He does his work and shoulders his expenses. Manilal is quite happy. You, therefore, ought not to worry about him. From Belgaum I have come to Bijapur. At Belgaum Durga, Jivanji, Dahyabhai, Bablo, Chandubhai and Mohanlal came and saw me. Durga and Jivanji visited Mahadev and Dahyabhai saw Mani. They are all quite well. Siddhimati also came and saw me. She must have gone to Ahmedabad with Durga. Pyarelal writes to me from time to time. Jamnalalji has gone to Patna. I will reach there on the 11th. Thakkar Bapa will separate from the rest of the party. Valjibhai has been with me and will accompany me to Patna. Kisan and Om also are with me. I have dictated this letter to Om while eating my meal.

Blessings to you all from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Bane Patro, pp. 8-9

266. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

[Before *March 9, 1934*][1]

CHI. MARY,

Your letter. As I am in Hyderabad for 12 hours, do come and then you will travel back with me.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Your fast is good. You must describe it more fully when we meet. Kisses to Chandra.

From the original: C.W. 3350. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

[1] This letter was written before Gandhiji reached Hyderabad on March 9.

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267. OUR SHAME

Reference has already been made in these columns to a memorandum which was received by me at Coonoor on behalf of 'Adi-Hindus of Tamil Districts'. It is signed by thirty-six representatives some of whom are members of municipal councils or taluq boards. From this, I condense below the catalogue of their disabilities. In condensing it I have not materially changed their language. Criticism interspersed with the recital has been removed as being superfluous. The list is otherwise untouched.

1. We have no access to eating-houses, laundries, shaving saloons, coffee and tea clubs, restaurants, choultries, schools, *agrahārams*, wells, tanks, water-taps, springs, post offices (located in villages) and other places of public resort, not to speak of temples in several places.

2. In some places, holding umbrellas, wearing sandals, wearing dhotis below the knees are considered as a great crime. Wearing jewels made of gold by our women-folk and using clean cloth over their body would be regarded as an ill omen by some caste Hindus.

3. We are not allowed to carry our dead within particular union board areas alongside the highway, simply because there is a temple of a deity on the road-side. We are compelled co carry the dead body through a paddy field even when there is knee-deep mire during rainy season.

4. The Headman of the so-called untouchables within a particular union board area is not allowed by the caste Hindus to get on horse-back and pass along the highway during his investiture ceremony as Head-man of the said classes.

5. In some village bazaars, bleached cloth cannot be touched by us when we are desirous of buying it for festivals.

6. If cooked bread or other eatables are touched in bazaars knowingly or unknowingly, the whole cost of the food-stuff will be extracted from our people for the sin of touching them.

7. Since a very high percentage of our people living in rural areas have no habitation of their own in most of the districts of the presidency, but are allowed by sufferance to live on the lands of the land-owning classes, any demand for wages for work contributed by our people in their lands is highly resented by their masters. They do not get living wages and the hours of work are unlimited. These are often paid in unwholesome grain in short measures.

8. For marriage occasions or processions of our deity, we cannot get the services of caste Hindu musicians when we cannot find some among us.

9. Young men of our community riding on bicycles are being regarded with severe displeasure. In remotest villages, *jutkas* (horse cabs) cannot ply for us, as the caste Hindu owners refuse to take us. The same is the case with motor buses.

10. In public latrines, built out of public funds in a particular municipal area, the so-called untouchables are actively prevented from using them. After a good deal of assertion, they were provided with separate latrines.

11. In some of the dispensaries run under the control of particular local bodies, our people do not get proper treatment at the hands of caste Hindus employed there.

12. In the temporary water-sheds erected by caste Hindus during the hot season, the distinction made by them in pouring water to the Adi-Hindus for drinking purpose is highly intolerable and offensive.

13. When our people get into local bodies and panchayats the orthodox caste Hindus resign their seats by way of protest, and in some cases our people are given separate seats.

14. When an Adi-Hindu rests on the *pial* in front of his house, he should get up and bow his head before a caste Hindu and worship him with due veneration when the caste Hindu happens to pass that way. If this custom is neglected by the Adi-Hindus, they will be taken to task severely by the caste Hindus.

We are often asked to set our own house in order. This is simply begging the question. Where the Hindu society is one vast system of gradations and degradations based on caste and birth, there is no use in accusing the so-called untouchables of being divided among themselves. After all, the so-called untouchables are themselves victims of circumstances.

15. In municipal areas, separate water-taps are maintained wherever caste Hindus object.

16. To rural elementary schools maintained out of public funds our children have no free access. When they are admitted, they are given separate seats, or they are asked to sit on the floor. If the pupils approach the caste Hindu orthodox teachers employed there, knowingly or unknowingly, to clear some doubts, they are pushed back by the teachers with the help of slates or sticks for fear of pollution. In some cases, our children are made to stand outside the main school premises in all seasons, in order to receive instruction through the window, and hence our children cannot even see the blackboard. When the lower elementary

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course is completed in the separate schools established for our children, we are not admitted in the higher elementary schools run under the public management in the same village. Even trained teachers belonging to Adi-Hindu community are not appointed in such higher elementary schools. Our children cannot use the common latrine. It is a great pity that even our representatives serving on different local bodies do not pay surprise visits to such schools, where caste Hindus predominate, for fear of molestation and endless trouble. Singanallore and Irugur villages near Coimbatore have become famous in this respect. The elementary schools in urban areas are not free from such defects.

In high schools our students cannot take drinking water from the pots used there during hot season; but they must depend upon some caste Hindu students to pour water for our young men and girls. Even vessels are not given to our students, but the students have to use only their hands as vessels for drinking. To the common tiffin rooms our students have no free access.

17. In post offices located in inaccessible places, we cannot post letters straightaway or transact any other business. Even for buying post cards, covers or stamps, we will have to stand at a great distance from such post offices and beg some caste Hindu passers-by to comply with our request. There are two things involved in this. Firstly, we cannot pass through the public pathway. Secondly, we are prevented from transacting business straightaway in the post office.

18. *We feel sorry that your august person has not taken birth in the Adi-Hindu community to realize our practical difficulties.*

This is a formidable catalogue. There is no exaggeration in it, if one or two mental reservations are understood. Every statement is true of some place. No disability is universal. Some are rare. And all are being abated by voluntary effort. These reservations should be known in order to get the proper perspective. They do not in any way reduce caste Hindus' shame or warrant inaction on the part of reformers. The shame of caste Hindus will continue so long as these disabilities are practised in the name of religion, no matter to how little or great an extent. It is the clear duty of sanatanists so called to denounce the disabilities in the severest possible language and join hands with the reformers in protecting Harijans from humiliation heaped upon them under the sanction of religious custom. The eighteenth grievance which the signatories have specially underlined I regard as a compliment paid by them to me. Yes, it is quite possible that I would have felt the force of these terrible grievances much more, had I been born an Adi-Hindu. Not having had that luck, I

have become one by adoption. There will be no rest for me nor society, so long as untouchability persists.

Harijan, 9-3-1934

268. LETTER TO G. V. MAVALANKAR

March 9, 1934

BHAISHRI MAVALANKAR,

Thakkar Bapa is going there specially to see you. He wants to discuss with you the position about the Relief Fund, of which he is one of the Trustees—what the total amount is and where the sums have been deposited. If you send me particulars of where other funds, too, are deposited and of withdrawals from them, I can think further about them. If you wish to make any suggestions, kindly send them in writing.

I hope you keep good health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1238

269. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, HYDERABAD

March 9, 1934

As you women are the housekeepers I expect that much reform and good work can be done by you. By their very instinct women are more patient and can better bear suffering than men, and therefore, any work that is undertaken by women is sure to be successful. It is inhuman not to recognize one section of our own people whose religion is the same as ours. It is indeed very pleasing to me to see a very large crowd of people all eager to work for the betterment of a section of our people. I am thankful to you all for the money and the jewels that you are giving me today out of free love and love for the work that I have undertaken. It is not these which matter but it is the practical work that leads to the salvation of those in suffering. I hope that the ladies of Hyderabad will devote their time and do as much work as possible, for which money will be forthcoming if good service is rendered.

The Hindu, 13-3-1934

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270. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, HYDERABAD[1]

March 9, 1934

He thanked the public for their addresses and purses. He was speaking to them in a language which was partly Urdu and partly Hindi because he considered both the languages to be one and the same. The distinctions between higher and lower classes should not be perpetuated, for all were one in the service of the country. He had given his thought to the question for the last 50 years and he felt that there should be no distinctions drawn between the Harijans and the other classes. In fact, there should also be no distinctions between Hindus and others like Muslims, Christians and Parsis; they should all be united, like the five fingers on one hand. Hindus owed a special responsibility for removing the blot of untouchability. Friends from America, Japan and other countries were writing to him, saying that there was no untouchability in those countries.

Replying to orthodox opposition, Gandhiji said that his critics alleged that he was out to destroy Hinduism. The charge was not at all true; he was only trying to remove a stigma from it. In conclusion, Gandhiji made a fervent appeal to all to help him in the work of ameliorating the condition of Harijans.

The Hindu, 13-3-1934

271. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, SECUNDERABAD

March 9, 1934

Gandhiji began his speech with the remark that until he was told to that effect he did not know that the girls were Harijans. There was no means of distinguishing them from the caste Hindus, although the latter might think it a sin to sit next to them. He had come to Hyderabad in the course of his work for Harijans and he appealed for help. The public were quite welcome to give him whatever gifts they liked but it must be distinctly understood that the money would be spent for Harijans. Harijan work was for the purification of the soul and the age-long curse was fortunately fast disappearing. There was no room in the movement for hatred or selfishness. Gandhiji appealed to the orthodox also to help him in removing the obstacles in the way of the Harijan community, such as want of educational facilities, disabilities as

[1] Held in the V. V. School premises, the meeting was attended by about 10,000 people. Many officials also attended the meeting.

regards water, etc. It was doubtful whether a high-class Hindu would care to treat a patient of the Harijan community. There would be no end to the tale of sorrow and shame, concluded Gandhiji, if he wished to recount the sufferings of Harijans, and he appealed to all to help him.

The Hindu, 13-3-1934

272. *INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA*[1]

HYDERABAD,
March 9, 1934

I have not the faculty of others for looking ahead, much less across three months.[1] When the period of my self-imposed inactivity for the moment ends on 31st July there will be time enough to consider the position. Till then, I have my hands full with anti-untouchability work and the Bihar programme.

Questioned about the duration of his stay in Bihar, he said he was entirely in the hands of Babu Rajendra Prasad in that regard but hoped to take advantage of his present visit to tour Orissa and Assam in connection with anti-untouchability work. Gandhiji emphatically denied the report that his visit to Hyderabad marked the end of his tours for the uplift of Harijans. He said he was only suspending his programme on account of the emergency in Bihar. He added while much had been achieved in the past few months a great deal still remained to be accomplished.

Asked about the results of his recent tour in South India, Gandhiji said it was an unqualified success. He found nothing throughout his visits in those parts to support the suggestion that South Indians were less disposed than people in other parts of India to help in the eradication of untouchability. On the contrary, he declared, everywhere he observed as much enthusiasm over his campaign as elsewhere while in throwing open the temples and contributing to anti-untouchability fund South Indians were second to none. Guruvayur was an exception which bore out his experience in South India. Even here he was confident that popular opinion would prevail.

The Hindu, 10-3-1934

[1] Gandhiji had been asked what the future programme of the Congress would be.

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273. A WAIL FROM UDUMALPET[1]

Udumalpet is a township between Podanur and Dindigul. Among the addresses received there was one from its Harijans. I extract the following from their long and bitter address.

> In this town we are not allowed to draw water from any of the common fresh water wells. Our females and children have to depend upon the mercy of caste Hindus for a pot of drinking water. We have to be waiting for hours and hours together and put up with all abuses the caste Hindu showers upon us before we can get a pot of water.
>
> Owing to extreme poverty many of us are homeless and shelterless. We are exposed to the sun and rain and are suffering from innumerable difficulties. In our *cheries* the huts are so closely situated that very often we meet with fire accidents which cause loss of life and property. The town municipality is not attending to the sanitation of our *cheries*. They never clean our *cheries*.
>
> There is no proper drainage, no regular cleaning of night-soil, no facilities for the hygienic living of our men. No street light is found in our *cheries* and there is no regular street for us to walk on. The town municipality confers so much benefit on all other portions of the town, but won't attend to our *cheries*.

If the complaints are true, they require immediate attention from the Municipal Council, the public and the Local and Provincial Harijan Sevak Sanghs. I shall be glad to publish a refutation, if there is any exaggeration in the complaints. Meanwhile I defer further criticism.

Harijan, 16-3-1934

[1] The Gujarati translation of this was published under "Notes" in *Harijan-bandhu*, 11-3-1934.

274. TO AFFLICTED BIHAR[1]

PATNA,
Silence Day, March 12, 1934

This is just to report myself to you. I have placed myself at Rajendrababu's disposal. Though I was at land's end when the calamity descended upon you, my heart was with you. Rajendrababu knew that he could call me when he desired. I would like you to remember that the quake of untouchability is much worse than that of Mother Earth. Let this reflection chasten us and make the calamity more bearable.

M. K. GANDHI

The Searchlight, 14-3-1934

275. LETTER TO GANGABEHN MAJMUDAR

March 12, 1934

CHI. GANGABEHN,

You have many times promised to Chhaganlal that you will go to Vijapur, but you have never kept the promise. I wouldn't have felt it if the land at Vijapur were mine. But it belongs to the poor and your failure to do your duty[2] of ensuring its proper management hurts me. You look upon me as your father. I didn't seek that honour. Now do your duty as a daughter and do the work for the sake of which you adopted me as a father and end my pain. I hope you and Kiki are all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9583. Courtesy: Chhaganlal Gandhi

[1] This is the message Gandhiji had written in the Earthquake Bulletin.

[2] The land at the Vijapur Ashram was purchased in the addressee's name. Chhaganlal Gandhi had tried to persuade her to transfer the documents in favour of the Ashram trustees.

276. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

PATNA,
March 12, 1934

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I got your letter. I am enclosing a letter to Gangabehn. You may use it if necessary. Let me know if there is anybody else who can persuade her. Would you say that we can pay for weaving a higher rate of wage than that fixed by Shankerlal? I hear from Prabhudas from time to time. I reached Patna last night. For the present I have decided to stay in Bihar. I shall be able to arrive at a definite decision after I have been here for some time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9582. Courtesy: Chhaganlal Gandhi

277. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

PATNA,
March 12, 1934

CHI. MANUDI,

You wrote after keeping me waiting for quite a long time. I understand the reason now. Bali writes and tells me that you did not listen to her advice. You should avoid pickles and oil. You should live only on milk, unspiced vegetables, fruit and *rotli*. If you do so, you will not fall ill. One should learn to relish food that is good for one's health.

I will convey to Ba the contents of the letters from all of you. She will feel very happy. I hope you have all completely recovered now.

Write to me regularly. Obey Bali's instructions. Write to your friends at Wardha.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 1530. Courtesy: Manubehn S. Mashruwala

278. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

PATNA,
March 12, 1934

BHAISHRI MUNSHI,

It is only today that I am able to answer your letter. To me, at this juncture, your letter is like a lake of fresh water to a traveller in a desert. I thank you both. Your decision is perfectly correct. If you are forbidden to go to a hill-station, why don't you go to Hajira? I, of course, have never been there. But all those who have been there have praised it very much. Is Sinhagad also considered a hill-station? Take treatment for whatever disease there may appear to be in the intestines or any other part of the body, but do it in a spirit of detachment. Thinking constantly about a disease only aggravates it. *Dhyayato vishayanpunsah*,[1] etc., applies in this case too.

Sarojinidevi tells me that you have started visiting astrologers. Even if there be truth in their predictions, they ought to be shunned. She told me about the new party also. If a party of Congressmen is formed with a definite programme, I would certainly welcome it. Even if it makes some honest mistakes I would tolerate it. The members will learn from mistakes. If, however, they refuse to learn, the party will only be a burden.

At present I desire two things from you. First, consider yourself as a trustee and earn as much money as you reasonably can. You should regard even such indulgences as you think necessary for your happiness as a trust. Secondly, I should like you to build up your body. For that purpose, you may try nature cure methods if they appeal to you. Not far from where you live are Mehta of Poona and Kuvalayananda of Lonavala[2]. Both the institutions have branches here.

Sarojinidevi told me about the Socialist Party also. I read its manifesto. I did not like it. I think I should write about it. I will do so when I get the time. Purushottam has asked my opinion. If from the very start they think what the Government will do, how will the Party be able to go ahead with its programme?

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 62
[2] This word is not clear in the source.

I can definitely say that I shall be here for one month at least.

I will await Lilavati's letter. She still does not seem to have discovered the best way of using her abilities.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Will you make a list of Gujarati books specially suitable for women and send it to me? Of course I do not want you to give too much time to it.

From Gujarati: C.W. 7533. Courtesy: K. M. Munshi

279. LETTER TO RAMIBEHN K. PAREKH

PATNA,
March 12, 1934

CHI. RAMI,

I saw your handwriting after many months. Please write to me from time to time. Ba is always inquiring about you all. She would feel happy if I could give her some news about you. Take care of yourself. Ask Kunverji to write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9720

280. LETTER TO BALIBEHN M. ADALAJA

PATNA,
March 12, 1934

CHI. BALI,

I have been writing the whole day and feel so tired now that I cannot write any more with the right hand. I am, therefore, writing with the left. Your letters sometimes bring tears to my eyes. You, who are like a tigress, behave like a slave towards children whom you regard as your own. This seems to be the fruit of your and your parents' virtuous deeds in past lives. You say that Manu is not your daughter. If so, she is a daughter to nobody now. She used to be one to Ba. Since, however, Ba started going to jail, their bond is no longer what it used to be.

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You seem to be living only for Chanchi's[1] children. It cannot but hurt me to remove Manu from your charge. I must admit that I did not always feel thus. But your love for the children has won my heart. I am father or grandfather in name only. In trying to be father and mother to countless children, I have remained so to none. My only consolation is that all of you tolerate me. Don't let your love for me diminish and continue to regard me as your father.

God will surely lead all of you to your good.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 5052. Courtesy: Surendra N. Mashruwala

281. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

March 12, 1934

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

Your letter. Make yourself comfortable there, and go to Wardha on getting well. Dr. Sharma's wire has been received just now; he is going to Wardha. I shall tell you when it is time for you to go to jail. That is my worry. You have to concern yourself only with getting completely well. I cannot have you here because of the difficulty of accommodation, food, etc. We shall see later on. Send the letter to Krishna[2] and let me have her address.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 297

[1] Chanchal, also known as Gulab, wife of Harilal Gandhi

[2] Krishnakumari, an Ashram inmate who had been in jail with the addressee

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282. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

PATNA,
March 13, 1934

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I am sending with this the second letter received from . . .[1] The girl is unhappy. I have consoled her. I do not know to what extent what I am doing will be agreeable to you brothers and to . . .'s father and other people. I suppose I shall continue writing to her till you people wish me not to. . . . has, in my opinion, as much right as . . . . If. . . is inclined to remarry, it is our dharma to encourage her. I am sure she will not want to, still, she must have the freedom. Be frank with me in this matter. You may certainly restrain me, though . . . has now become like a daughter to me.

I enclose with this a copy of a letter I have written to Sir Samuel.[2] I also enclose a copy of another[3] I have written to the magistrate of Dharwar. The latter is merely for your information. As regards Sir Samuel there is something I want you to do. Ask Scarpa, if he is here, what happened at that meeting. He was present there, and even if he was not, the meeting had been arranged through him. It will be good if he can provide the names and addresses of the people who were present. I want to collect whatever facts I can. So far this affair has been discussed only in English. The whole thing is a fabrication. It is like "Ajmer" being twisted into "*Aj mara*"[4].

You want to come to see me. I shall call you after a short while for Harijan work. I have let Thakkar Bapa go to Delhi. He was not needed here. Of course a worker like him is useful everywhere. There was no special need . . .[5]. But you wish to discuss about . . . and . . ., or Bihar or the correspondence taken up with Sir Samuel. You may come whenever you want to. I

[1] The names have been omitted.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Sir Samuel Hoare", pp. 251-3.

[3] *Vide* "Letter to W. H. Brown", pp. 244-5.

[4] Literally, 'died today'. Gandhiji is referring to a joke involving the misreading of the word 'Ajmer' in the Persian script.

[5] Some words are missing in the source.

shall be in the Motihari region from Wednesday to Friday, returning here on Friday evening.

Agatha Harrison will arrive in Bombay on the 16th. Lester has seen the Viceroy. She will be here tomorrow.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 7947. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

283. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

March 13/14, 1934

BA,

You must have received my letter of last week. It was dictated to Om. Today is Tuesday. I am writing this after brushing my teeth. It is not yet four. I am in Patna. The Relief Committee has rented a building. In the compound they have put up tents. Some persons are staying in these tents, too. Rajendrababu, his sister, Prabhavati and her husband, all of them are here. Jamnalal also is here. Bal, Maganbhai, Swami, Kripalani, Somanji and the others are here, too. Tomorrow I shall be visiting the part which has been worst hit. Lakshmidas is better now. He can even walk about a little. He is regaining strength. Velanbehn is trying hard to come, but has not come so far. I had letters from Manu, Bali and Rami this time. All of them had fallen ill together, so that none of them could write. Manu and Bali say that in their illness all of them forgot the grief of Kusum's death. They are all better now. Rami must have gone to Bombay or will go now. Manu has been able to make no progress in her study. She started eating pickles, etc., as a result of which she got fever and also sore throat. They all send their *pranams* to you. In fact in every letter there are *pranams* for you. Kaka is happy in Hyderabad. Chhaganlal Joshi is in Dwarka and so Ramabehn also has gone there with Vishnu. Vasumati is in Borivli. Gangabehn had gone to Kutch, from where she has returned and gone to Ahmedabad. Krishnakumari is ill. Amtussalaam is still with Rajaji. Pyarelal is in Bombay. Kusum Desai had come to meet me at Wardha Station. The station was on the way when I came here. I came in Hyderabad. Sarojinidevi had come there. She also is quite happy. Thakkar Bapa has gone to Delhi and Mama has accompanied him for keeping accounts. We are, therefore, only seven now. Before that we were sixteen. Ramdas met me. He

travelled with me for one or two stations. He is all right. And now the discourse:

As I wrote in my last letter, I will narrate the story told by Vishnu Digambar Shastri. It has been devised to explain the meaning of *bhakti*. When Rama returned with Sita to Ayodhya in the flying-chariot Pushpak, he was accompanied by Hanuman and others. It was time now to bid them farewell, and so a durbar was held. Rama embraced all and Sita blessed them by putting her hands on their heads. The eyes of all were moist with tears. Rewards were distributed to all. It was Hanuman's turn to receive his. Sita took off the necklace of precious jewels which she was wearing, put it round Hanuman's neck and embraced him. But what could Hanuman have to do with a necklace of jewels? He snapped it into two and started opening up each bead with his teeth and, not seeing Ramanama inside, would throw it away. Everybody was stunned. The necklace which Sita had given from off her neck to be thus treated! Sita asked Hanuman why he was acting in that manner. Hanuman replied: "Mother, what shall I do wearing a necklace consisting of jewels which do not contain Ramanama? I want to have nothing but that." The reply increased their amazement. Somebody said: "If that is so, Ramanama cannot be seen in your body either; what about it?" Hanuman burst out laughing and said: "All right. Look." He then tore open his chest and there flowed out a stream of blood in every drop of which they saw Ramanama. They all shouted : "Enough, enough. We have seen it. Please forgive us." Hanuman closed the cut and the court was filled with shouts of victory to him. Sita embraced him and bathed him in tears of joy.

This is an invented story. It is not found even in the *Ramayana*. There was no need for Hanuman to tear open his chest in order to show his *bhakti*. But we have to learn something from this story. Hanuman did not care for a reward. To him his service was its own reward. His *bhakti* was not for show. Nor did it require expression in words. Service itself constituted *bhakti* for him. Rama filled his whole being and accompanied every breath of his. He thought of nothing but Rama whether working or resting, eating or drinking, waking or asleep. He had put himself, mind, speech and body, in the hands of Rama. His heroism was dependent on his *bhakti*. It sprang from it. If we try, we can attain to *bhakti* like Hanuman's. If Ramanama is on our lips all the hours of the day, some day it will sink into our heart; and once it has sunk into the heart it is bound to fill the whole being.

Prabhavati specially sends her *pranams* to you. She has inquired after everybody. I started writing this letter yesterday and have finished it today, Wednesday. It is still not four.

Blessings to you all from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Bane Patro, pp. 17-9

284. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

PATNA,
March 14, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

You must have received the letter which I wrote from Belgaum. It was posted only on Thursday.

I am writing this letter on Wednesday morning. It is not yet four. Having finished a letter to Ba, I have taken up this. I arrived in Patna on Sunday night. Today at 6 I am leaving for Motihari. I spent the whole of yesterday in discussions with co-workers. We are getting a good amount of money. But the need is equally great. We shall have to see to it that every pie is put to good use. Jamnalalji is here. Lakshmidas is recovering. He can now walk about in the house. Rajendrababu's health may be described as completely all right. He has forgotten his complaint under the load of the work which has fallen on him. I visited the city yesterday. Many Government buildings have been rendered unserviceable. In Patna alone there has been an estimated loss of about a crore and a half. Eighty persons were killed and 400 injured. But the destruction in Patna is nothing compared to that in the other parts. Committees administering the Viceroy's fund and Rajendrababu's fund are separate. We have to see now what we can do.

Miss Lester and her friend returned from Delhi yesterday. Both of them will accompany me. The friend will shortly have to return to England. Miss Lester will remain in India. She wants to study the whole situation. Agatha Harrison is arriving on the 16th. She also will come here.

Thakkar Bapa and party separated themselves at Hyderabad. He will rejoin me later when I am able to take up the tour of Orissa. I see that I shall have to remain here for about a month. It will probably not be necessary to stay longer.

We passed through Allahabad on our way. As we had to wait there for three hours, I called at Anand Bhavan. Swaruprani (Nehru) felt comforted. I was with her for a long time. I spent some time with Kamala (Nehru) too. She is ill. The mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, both were confined to bed. Kamala was waiting for Dr. Bidhan.

Shastri (of *Harijan*) had two fine boys, to both of whom he and his wife were devoted. The younger boy was five years old. He is dead. The parents are now disconsolate. The boys were both extremely intelligent. They could follow Tamil, Hindi and Bengali and could dance and sing. The parents had given them the best kind of training.

I cannot write more today. My eyes are too tired. It will soon be time for prayer. I cannot go to sleep again.

There is no letter from you even this time. For my part, I shall go on writing.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 85-6

285. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

PATNA,
March 14, 1934

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. For the present you should go to Wardha. I do not call you here right now because I shall be touring the area affected by the earthquake. I do not intend to take anyone with me there. It will be easy for you to come here from Wardha, and in any case you have to get some experience of that place.

Tell Durga that I have written to her and that, after consulting Anasuyabehn, she can certainly go to Ahmedabad.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

You may address your letters to Patna.

SMT. VASUMATIBEHN
C/O SMT. GANGABEHN VAIDYA, RAMBAUG
BORIVLI, *Via* BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9384. Also C.W. 629. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

286. REMARK IN THE VISITORS' BOOK OF SHARDA SADAN LIBRARY, LALGANJ

March 14, 1934

Though the building has collapsed, learning cannot be destroyed. Let the people therefore acquire the wealth of learning from the library.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 10502

287. SPEECH TO VILLAGERS[1]

March 14, 1934

There is one thing I want to say to you. Those of you who are getting work from the Central Relief Committee are in honour bound to work well. Do good honest work; and you who are not already working should do so. To give money for bad work or for no work, is to make beggars. And you must put away untouchability from your hearts and lives.

Mahatma, Vol. III, pp. 253-4

288. INTERVIEW TO UNITED PRESS[2]

[Before *March 15, 1934*][3]

The report is entirely misleading. What I said was: "If the Harijan sufferers in Bihar needed special help, apart from others, the Central Board of the Servants of Untouchables Society would have to consider how it could be rendered."

But that would mean that the Bihar Central Relief Committee had neglected the Harijan sufferers in the affected areas.

[1] This was while Gandhiji was on his way from Lalganj to Motihari. The source does not identify the village where Gandhiji spoke.

[2] The United Press correspondent drew Gandhiji's attention to the report published in *The Statesman* that he intended to spend part of the Harijan Fund for Harijan earthquake-victims in Bihar.

[3] The report in the source is dated March 15.

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I am quite sure that such an occasion would never arise, because the Central Relief Committee, as at present reconstituted, is well able to take care of the Harijan sufferers in Bihar.

The Bombay Chronicle, 16-3-1934

289. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

[*March 15, 1934*][1]

MY DEAR CHILD,

I have your two letters. I am writing this at 12.15 a.m. in Motihari thinking it was 3 a.m. I got up and found it was 12 midnight. But I had no desire to sleep with the correspondence in front of me.

I see what you say about Menon. I must not write to the Diwan of Mysore in a personal matter. Menon should apply to all the possible hospitals and go where he may be wanted irrespective of climate. You will have to be where the climate and other considerations suit you and the children for the time being. Like the legal profession, the medical is crowded at the top. Anyway you must keep me informed of what is happening. You should tell Menon that he is at liberty to write to me whenever he likes.

I hope the children are faring well. Yes, you will have to take them to a hill-station during the hot weather.

I understand what you say about the promise. Whether there was a breach or not you alone can judge. I am sorry that Maria was angry over my not going to Porto Novo. She gave me to understand that she had caught the spirit of my self-denial. It was as much a deprivation to me as it was to her. But self-denial to be true has to bring joy not sorrow, never anger.

Love to you all.

BAPU

From a photostat: No. 127. Courtesy: National Archives of India. Also *My Dear Child*, p. 104

[1] From the reference in the letter to Motihari where Gandhiji reached on this date.

290. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

March 15, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

It is just now 12.40 a.m. The alarm that should have gone off at 2.30 a.m. went off at 12 midnight. Having got up, I am attending to arrears at an affected place in Bihar.

That many Hindus are callous to the sufferings of animals is but too true. It is a mark of degradation and lifelessness of the religious spirit. You do not need to be a Hindu but a true Jewess. If Judaism does not satisfy you, no other faith will give you satisfaction for any length of time. I would advise you to remain a Jewess and appropriate the good of the other faiths.

My weight is 107; the b.p. has not been taken for days now.

Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

291. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

March 15, 1934

BHAI THAKKAR BAPA,

The enclosed was sent by Dr. Ambedkar. Please go through it and let me have your opinion.

I hope you have written to Venkatasubbiah[1] in connection with the demand for a separate plot for Harijans in Porto Novo.

I have started touring the affected areas here. It seems it will easily take one month at the least. After that it may be possible to tour Orissa and Assam. Hariji[2] is pressing me to visit the U.P. at an early date. Please consider all this.

I am writing this at 1 a.m. in Motihari. The alarm which was set for 2.30 rang at 12. I cleaned my teeth without having looked at the clock. And then the heap of letters would not let me go to sleep again.

[1] Of the Servants of India Society, Madras

[2] H. N. Kunzru

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I have brought along with me here only Mirabehn, Lester and Hogg and no one else from the party. There is not such an abundance here of transport and other facilities.

Having grown used to your company, I rather miss it. But what can one do?

I also used to get dreams.

BAPU

[PS.]

You should continue to write at the Patna address.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1136

292. LETTER TO LORD WILLINGDON

AS FROM PATNA,
MOTIHARI,
March 15, 1934

DEAR FRIEND,

Miss Lester has described to me, under your permission, the conversation she had with you. The impression left on her mind is that you consider me to be insincere. That I am mistaken about the many views I hold may be found to be true. But I know that I am not insincere. Beyond giving you my assurance that I have never in my life been insincere to anybody on earth, I do not know how to prove my sincerity. I should be glad to explain whatever in me might have appeared to you to be insincere. I have felt called upon to write to you because any doubt about my *bona fides* in a person occupying the very high position you do must postpone the peace between England and India, which I am working for and praying for all these long years. I would like you to believe me when I tell you that I am your and England's sincere friend.

To

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY

From a photostat: G.N. 6564

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293. LETTER TO AMINA G. QURESHI

March 15, 1934

CHI. AMINA,

I had your letter. Aren't you yourself also to blame for your persistent ill health? You just don't take care of your diet. You must have spices, you cannot do without rice and you also want this and that. You ought to live on milk and fruit. Your body too is bulging out of shape. Hamid must be allowed to stay in the hospital and get rid of his eczema. You and the children must regain your health somehow.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Write to me at my Patna address.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10624. Courtesy: Amina G. Qureshi

294. LETTER TO PARVATI P. DESAI

March 15, 1934

CHI. PARVATI,

You have been to see Pragji and still given me no news of him. Why? How is Pragji? What does he read and what physical work does he do? What is his food? Is he happy? Who are his companions? Why is he silent?

How are you and the children?

. . .[1] write . . .[2] to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5037

[1] & [2] Not decipherable in the source

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295. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

March 15, 1934

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

I got your letter. You have done well in buying a clipper and scissors. One must become one's own barber.

Galiharilal will not come.

I understand about Manibehn. Forget her if you can. . . .[1]

Blessings from

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 367. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P. Pandya

296. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

PATNA,
March 15, 1934

CHI. BABU,

How very sad that I receive news about you but you do not give any news yourself! It means that you people would write letters to me when I provoke you to do so, not otherwise. Isn't that so? I would certainly expect that you would not behave in that manner. I have always thought that you were a wise and sensible girl. I hope you remember that your health is in your hands. Do you?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9968. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

[1] The sentence that follows seems to make no sense. For Gandhiji's comment when asked by the addressee to explain it, *vide* 'Letter to Bhagwanji P. Pandya", 9-4-1934.

CWMG LVII

297. FRAGMENT OF STATEMENT[1]

March 15, 1934

Precis of Mr. Gandhi's statement made on Thursday 15th March, in North Bihar, when I asked him to give half an hour to concentrate on his memories of the tea party in Rome [in] Dec. 1931.

I was asked to go to some lady's house to tea. I went, not knowing that a specially invited set of people would be present. I do not remember nor did I take particular notice at the time of the names of any of them.

They asked me more questions than I cared for as I had made it clear in Italy that I would give no interviews. They pressed me a good deal.

As I was giving my usual answers to the usual stock questions, one of them asked for a pencil and paper and began taking notes. Mahadev Desai generally takes notes of what I say, but as it happened to be, Devdas and Pyarelal all arrived later on—you also stayed away that afternoon.

I should like to see the original of the notes that the Italian caller took, for I cannot even imagine that I said what *The Times* reports. If I did, I must have been intoxicated or in some other . . . .

India Office Library, London

[1] On the so-called interview given to Signor Gayda of *Giornale d'Italia* in December 1931. The statement was presumably made to Mirabehn, who was with Gandhiji at the time as also during his tour of Bihar in March 1934.

CWMG - IVII

298. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MOTIHARI

[*March 15, 1934*][1]

This is no time for talking. I have come to see and help you, and not to talk. But there are just two things I want to say to you. The first is this. The relief committees have the money, and either beggars or workers will take it. And I want no beggars. It would be deplorable if this earthquake turned us into mendicants. Only those without eyes, or hands, or feet, or otherwise unfit for work, may ask for alms. For the able-bodied to beg is, in the language of the *Gita*, to become thieves.

The second thing is this, that God had Himself sent us this gift. We must accept it as a gift from Him, and then we shall understand its meaning. What is the meaning? It is this, that untouchability must go, that is to say, nobody must consider himself higher than another.

If we can understand these two things, this earthquake will be turned into a blessing. At present we count it as a sorrow, and no wonder when we see these fair fields and lands devastated. But I pray to God that He may give us strength to make a blessing out of this destruction.

Mahatma, Vol. III, pp. 254-5

299. INTERVIEW TO MIDDLE-CLASS DEPUTATION, MOTIHARI

March 15, 1934

Mahatmaji told the deputationists that it was no use calling the help solicited by the name of loans.[2] His experience of Gujarat famine was that such loans were never returned. To call any help given by the relief organizations by the name of loans served only one purpose. It saved the face of the middle-class people and it also gave the relief committees the consolation that the money given would be returned, but as a matter of fact this money was never returned. Mahatmaji saw no difficulty in giving gifts to the middle-

[1] From the report of the speech in *The Searchlight*, 18-3-1934

[2] The deputationists had told Gandhiji that they badly needed loans and not gifts for rebuilding their fallen houses and restarting their businesses.

class people on a higher scale according to their needs, though, at the same time, he said while considering the cases of the middle-class people the cases of those who were dying of starvation could never be ignored. He enquired from the representatives what would be the minimum and maximum requirement of a middle-class man, upon which one of the deputationists said that it was no use fixing a figure when no help was to be given. Mahatmaji thereupon told him that that was not the correct attitude to adopt. The committee of the middle classes should be prepared with their case to be placed before any organization—private or Government—and it would be for the relief organization to decide what help and in what form they could give to the middle-class people whose sufferings were certainly great and needed redress.

The Searchlight, 18-3-1934

300. INTERVIEW TO RELIEF WORKERS OF CHAMPARAN

MOTIHARI,
March 15, 1934

Mahatma Gandhi tendered some valuable advice to the relief workers of Champaran District who met him on the eve of his departure from Motihari.

Regarding the problem of reclamation of land Gandhiji said that it was a difficult problem for the Central Relief Committee. He thought that the Central Committee should take up only such programme of work as they could do full justice to.

It was true, further stated Gandhiji, that the people looked up to them for redress of all difficulties due to land problem, but he thought that beyond representing their case to the authorities concerned the Relief Committee should not take upon themselves any responsibility.

Neither the Government nor the zamindars, further said he, could be unmindful to this question for they were vitally interested in the reclamation of lands or else it would affect their revenue and rent.

Asked how he liked the idea of loans being advanced by the Bihar Central Relief Committee to the affected cultivators for reclamation of their lands, Gandhiji said that the question of granting loans to the cultivators was the question of granting loans to the middle-class people also in the towns and loans in neither case could be realized by a private agency like the Central Relief Committee.

Any monetary help in this direction, said he, could only be in the nature of free gifts. But he was doubtful if the Central Relief Committee had ample means at their disposal to meet the requirements of a large number of people who stood in need of such help.

Concluding, Gandhiji said that they should not court popularity, but conserve all energies in order to utilize them when other agencies had failed and need of rendering help became very acute.

The Bombay Chronicle, 19-3-1934

301. TEMPLE-ENTRY v. *ECONOMIC UPLIFT*

One sees sometimes in the public Press criticism on the temple-entry question. It is double-barrelled, being directed on the one hand by Harijans and on the other by sanatanists. Some of the Harijans say, "We do not want temple-entry; do not build temples, but use all you receive for economic uplift." Some sanatanists say, "Give up the temple-entry question altogether. You are hurting our feelings by forcing Harijans into temples." Both are wrong in substance. Not one single pice out of the purse has been or will be spent for building temples. Attempt is being made only to have public temples opened to Harijans on the same terms on which they are open to the other Hindus. It is a matter of choice for the Harijans to visit or not to visit them; *savarna* Hindus have to lift the bar against Harijans. For those millions who regard temples as treasure-chests of spiritual wealth, they are living realities which they hold dear as life itself. If they are truly repentant towards Harijans, they must share these treasures with the latter. I know what the opening of temples means to Harijans. Only last week, between Dharwar and Belgaum, I opened three temples to Harijans in the presence of crowds of *savarna* Hindus and Harijans. If critics had been present at the opening and noticed the pleasure on the countenances of the Harijans present as they bowed before the image and received the *prasad*, their criticism would have been silenced. Harijan critics would have realized that, apart from themselves, Harijans at large did desire temple-entry. Sanatanist critics would have realized that temples, wherever they were opened, were being opened with the fullest concurrence of the temple-goers concerned and in the presence of crowds of them. No hole-and-corner opening can do any good whatsoever to Hinduism. To be of spiritual or any value at all, the opening has to be performed with due publicity, solemnity and the willing consent of the existing temple-goers, and not of such self-styled reformers as have no faith or interest in temples and for whom temples may even be a superstition. Temple-entry agitation requires no financial outlay, it does not lend itself to agitation except by a few workers who

have faith in temples and whose word would command attention from the mass *savarna* mind. It is, therefore, a question that can only be and is being gently and cautiously handled. The only insistence is on the right and the duty of the believing reformer advocating temple-entry and showing that without it the reformation will not only be incomplete but fruitless. For, without temples being freely open to Harijans, untouchability could not be said to have been removed root and branch.

As for the economic uplift, it is altogether wrong to put it in opposition to temple-entry. Temple-entry can only help such uplift. For, when Harijans are freely admitted to temples, all the avenues to economic betterment must be automatically open to Harijans as to others. So far as the moneys received are concerned, they will *all* be used *only* for economic uplift, if it is admitted that educational uplift also means economic, in that it makes the educated Harijan fitter for running life's race. I am aware that education among the *savarnas* has often rendered them less fit for the race. But that has been so, because their education has meant contempt for labour. There is not much danger of such a mishap with the general body of Harijans for some time to come at least. And the danger can be averted altogether, if those who are in charge of the movement will take care to purge Harijan education of the evils of the current method, which ignores the technical side for the most part, if not altogether.

Harijan, 16-3-1934

302. HARIJAN FINANCE

Correspondents sometimes ask why the public do not know what moneys are being received during the tour and how they are being spent. Those who thus ask or write in the columns of the Press evidently do not care to look at the *Harijan*. Accounts have been and are being published from time to time in these columns giving as full details as possible of the receipts. The reader will find therein all the purses, individual donations and prices realized for jewellery. Three account-keepers travel with the party and work day and night under the direct control of Thakkar Bapa, the ever vigilant secretary of the Central Board. More often than not, they have to burn midnight oil in order to cope with thousands of copper and silver pieces and to tally cash from day to day. These moneys are all sent to the Central Board at Delhi and there safely banked. Of course, an accurate

system of account-keeping has been devised at Delhi and every pice received or spent is to be found in the account books. Accounts are audited and produced before the Board meetings from time to time. All the transactions of the Board are public and duly recorded. In other words, the Board follows the accurate methods of banks and regards itself as a public institution responsible to the public regarding its financial and other management.

The public will be interested to know that up to 2nd March Rs. 3,52,130-9-7 had been received during the tour.

As to expenses, they will be largely regulated by the provinces which have produced the moneys, subject to sanction by the Central Board. The draft rules[1] for the disposal of the funds were published the week before last and criticism has been invited. More than this it is humanly impossible, and even unnecessary, to do.

Harijan, 16-3-1934

303. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MUZAFFARPUR[2]

March 16, 1934

Gandhiji said that that was not the time to speak to them at any length. It might be possible to do so next time, if he found time and if Rajendrababu thought it desirable to bring him to Muzaffarpur. But at the present moment he would like to tell them that it was not at all desirable for any able-bodied man or woman to take advantage of the present situation and benefit himself or herself by begging. Begging was against one's self-respect and according to the *Gita*, an able-bodied man or woman, capable of earning his or her living, if he or she begged, committed the sin of thieving. Gandhiji desired that none of them should be held guilty of having committed that sin. Secondly, they must bow to the will of God and see to it that even out of this calamity came some good by their doing away once for all with the curse of untouchability. They must realize that the distinction of high and low between one man and another, or between one woman and another—who were all equally the creatures of one God—which this curse of untouchability involved was a great sin and could never be enjoined by the Vedas, for nothing that was not based on truth could be a *vedavakya*. He, therefore, wanted all of them to realize the true significance of the great calamity that providence had chosen to inflict on them and profit by it.

The Searchlight, 18-3-1934

[1] *Vide* "Opinion Invited", pp. 238-9.

[2] The meeting was held in the Darbhanga Raj compound and was largely attended.

304. INTERVIEW TO "THE SEARCHLIGHT"

PATNA,
[*March 16, 1934*][1]

My impressions are that what used to be for me a fair land I witnessed as a land of desolation. Motihari, Haripore, Lalganj and Muzaffarpore are places which I had visited before. Other places, which I visited this time I have no recollection of having visited before. In Motihari I lived for several months, that being my headquarters during my stay in Champaran in 1917. To see in these places house after house, some of which I knew so well, in a dilapidated condition or a heap of ruins was a heart-rending sight to me. Field after field covered with sand showed how difficult life must have become for the peasantry of several thousand acres of land. The problem of restoring conditions to anything like pre-earthquake days is calculated to baffle the combined efforts of the best workers in the land. In the midst, however, of this desert, it was a matter of joy to me to meet representatives of different relief societies, including those representing the Government Relief Department, and to find that they were working more or less in consultation with one another, all having one end in view, namely, relief to the distressed people to the best of their ability.

The Searchlight, 18-3-1934

305. SPEECH AT BIHAR CENTRAL RELIEF COMMITTEE, PATNA[2]

March 18, 1934

I must tell you that this resolution[3] has been drafted by me. The author of non-co-operation as I am, I have recommended co-operation in the task before us without the slightest hesitation. On the very first occasion when I spoke on the earthquake disaster in

[1] The date is taken from The *Hindu* report.

[2] Among those who attended the meeting were Madan Mohan Malaviya, Jamnalal Bajaj and Rajendra Prasad.

[3] The resolution tendered "respectful co-operation to the Government in the prosecution of the common object of relieving the unparalleled distress that has overtaken Bihar".

Tinnevelly,[1] I said that such a catastrophe imperatively demanded the co-operation of India as a whole and that we must offer our co-operation to Government. The whole country has evinced its sympathy with Bihar in its unforeseen affliction, and it would be highly improper to make any distinction between the various agencies that are out to assist Bihar to stand on its legs again.

When a death occurs, we forget all dissensions for the moment, apply ourselves to the reverential performance of the last rites and follow the bier as a mark of respect. But thousands have died in Bihar and many cities and villages have been razed to the ground. The earthquake has taken a toll of about 25,000 lives according to our records, while the Government figure is about 10,000. Whatever may be the correct figure, the need of the hour undoubtedly is that we should try our utmost to succour the distressed people of Bihar, and while doing so put all distinctions out of the account. The disaster is so tremendous that the wounds it has inflicted cannot be healed by the mere collection and distribution of funds; it is only the consciousness of the world's sympathy that can carry comfort to the lacerated hearts of the sufferers.

Let us, in the face of this calamity, forget the distinction between Hindus and Mussalmans as well as between Indians and Englishmen. And the same principle should impel us to cooperation between the Government and the people and, therefore, it is our duty to offer our respectful co-operation to Government in the prosecution of the common object. The Government has a number of experts and has control over lands and other facilities; while our resources are insignificant in these respects. In such circumstances it would be impossible to make the best use of the funds at our disposal in the absence of co-operation between Government and ourselves and I am certain that Government would equally fail to render full assistance to the sufferers without the whole-hearted co-operation of the people. Let us not be afraid of the bogey that we would be strengthening the hands of the Government by our co-operation. If the Government has an accession of strength through the common attempt to succour the distressed, it is entitled to it. We are offering to co-operate with a view to the protection and relief of the people, and not to their injury.

I have been to Motihari, where I met and learnt a good deal from the representatives of a number of relief organizations as well as two Government officers. The latter showed me the plans of new houses in contemplation and explained to me how Government was going to help, with the result that I had a clearer idea of the

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Public Meeting, Tinnevelly", pp. 44-6.

scope of our activities. I also met some members of the middle classes whose problem is so much more difficult of solution and who could not receive the assistance they require without co-operation between the Government and the people.[1]

If the Congressmen fear that the prestige of the Congress will suffer through such co-operation, I submit that the fear is purely imaginary. The thing is that we are going to work not as Congressmen but as humanitarians. The question, therefore, of Congress prestige being enhanced or diminished does not arise. The prestige of the Congress must depend upon the Congressmen's purity and capacity for service. We do not cease to be Congressmen because we co-operate with the Government in a humane task. Has Rajendrababu ceased to be a Congressman? Or have I ceased to be one because I am sponsoring this resolution?

It would be sinful on our part to import any other extraneous considerations into the all-important question of alleviating human suffering. When in Champaran I did not need to name and did not name the Congress even once. The country has contributed over 20 lakhs of rupees today at Rajendrababu's call. The people know Rajendrababu alone and rely upon his sincerity. They remember the great sacrifices he has made for the country. It is now our duty to ensure that these funds are utilized in the purest possible way. It was with this end in view that Rajendrababu constituted a mixed committee, and wrote to the Government offering his co-operation.

I would therefore adjure Congressmen to decide in the first instance whether or not we should take up this task of reconstructing Bihar. If yes, we ought to sincerely co-operate with all workers in the field, including the Government. And we should do so whole-heartedly. In prosecuting the common object, we must forget non-co-operation, or else leave Bihar relief severely alone. Therefore, if you adopt this resolution you must adopt it in all sincerity on its merits, not for my sake but certainly for the sake of the millions who are in distress and expect your help. The servant must think only of his master, and the millions of afflicted people are our masters today.

Of course the resolution must not be supposed to imply that we may not criticize the Government where, in our opinion, its policy is wrong or measures inadequate.

Finally, not as president[2] but as an old fellow-worker and

[1] *Vide* "Interview to Middle-class Deputation, Motihari", pp. 283-4.

[2] Gandhiji was elected president of the Bihar Central Relief Committee, Rajendra Prasad having resigned.

servant, I would request you, if possible, not to raise discussion on this resolution.

The Bombay Chronicle, 24-3-1934

306. LETTER TO GANGAMA

PATNA,
March 20, 1934

DEAR GANGAMA,

Thanks for your Rs. 5 note for Bihar. No apology needed for what you call a little . . .[1] from your heart.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SHRIMATHY GANGAMA
C/o SHRI B. B. MURNAD
COORG

Gandhiji's papers received from outside Agencies, File No. 1. Courtesy: National Archives of India

307. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, PATNA[2]

March 20, 1934

Gandhiji said he had no doubt in his mind that they must regard the calamity as in the nature of a gift from God and as punishment for their sins. It would be true to say that these cataclysms visited as a result of their own actions and they would be wise if they took the right lessons to be drawn from the disaster to their heart. Which action of theirs had brought on their heads the dire calamity he would not specify but he wished them to remember that the people in this country constituted one large human family so that the evil acts of any section profoundly acted and reacted on the whole. The eyes not only of India but of the world were for the moment focussed on Bihar and contribution to the relief funds had poured in from far and near. Many people had sent small sums and he had received from a sympathizer a shilling but it was of far greater value as it represented all that

[1] A word here is illegible.

[2] Newspaper reports stated that this was the largest meeting ever seen in Patna. About thirty to fifty thousand people attended the meeting. Other speakers were M. M. Malaviya and Maulana Azad.

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the sender had. It was not unlikely, he felt, that the collections might reach a crore of rupees.

This response, however, made their responsibility greater and more onerous. The more support they had from the country and outside, the greater became their responsibility and the greater the challenge to their own sense of duty. He therefore wished them to consider what their duty was in the crisis they were in. Their first duty was to see to it that proper account was kept of every cowrie contributed to their funds and, what is more, they should see to it that every cowrie so contributed reached the hands of the suffering people for whom it was meant. It was their duty to work in a spirit of service and to beware lest a single pie was wasted. Secondly, proceeded Mahatmaji, those who had escaped damage or had suffered less must do their duty by those who had suffered more. Bihar must not depend entirely on outside help. Those who had suffered must have all the aid they were entitled to but large parts of the province had either not suffered at all or very partially. Those present that evening could not pretend that they had all suffered so badly as not to be able to contribute their mite to the relief of the suffering people. It was incumbent on each one of them to consider their duty and their means in that light before God as witness. He appealed to them not as a stranger hailing from Bombay. He was of Bihar or, more correctly speaking, of Champaran. Champaran was the first to recognize him on his return to his country from South Africa. He owed the same duty to Bihar as to Gujarat. For him there were no geographical demarcations in India. In appealing to them to do their duty he addressed them as one of them. He was aware that Patna had suffered severely. Eighty-four men had lost their lives and many times more had been injured. Yet they had on the whole escaped lightly as compared to the other devastated parts and it behoved all of them to search their hearts and consider what was obligatory on them to do for their suffering brethren.

In the third place Gandhiji asked them to consider if untouchability should not go even now. God had made no distinctions between the *savarna* or the *avarna*, between the Hindu and the Mussalman, in respect of the sweep of the havoc. For Hindus there was no crime more hideous than that of untouchability. If they did not give up this age-old sin, blot out all distinctions between the high and the low, and thereby purify themselves, he for one had no doubt that worse disaster was in store for them in the future. The sin of untouchability had corroded their entire social system. It was the spirit and the mentality behind this curse of untouchability that was responsible for the countless divisions that divided them and separated them into so many warring groups. To root out this sense of high and low and universalize the principle of human brotherhood was their solemn duty in the crisis that confronted them. If they did that they would have truly learnt from the earthquake.

Lastly, Gandhiji warned the suffering people against demoralizing themselves by begging in this hour of their destitution. Those who were helpless could not but depend on gratuitous relief. In their case it would not be begging just as a true sannyasi did not beg in the real sense of the term, for he gave back in other ways what he took by asking. But those who were able to work must earn the relief they sought by working for it. Let each suffering individual earn his relief by working for it. In proportion to the work they put forth in lieu of what they received, they would vindicate the dignity of human labour and enhance their reputation in the eyes of the country and the world.

The Searchlight, 23-3-1934

308. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

PATNA,
March 20/21, 1934

BA,

I have still not received your letter this time. I am writing this on Tuesday after morning prayer. I am in Patna. By my side is Satisbabu, spinning on the *takli*. There is Rajendrababu's sister. Prabhavati too. Om and Kisan are preparing to go to bed. Swami also is sitting near me. Mirabehn has gone to get the milk ready. Malaviyaji, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. Mahmud, etc., are here just now. There was a meeting of all of them on Sunday. At that meeting a new committee was appointed for relief work in Bihar. Jamnalalji also is a member of it. The work is progressing well. I visited Motihari and other places. Even big mansions have been reduced to heaps of brick and mortar. Everywhere in the streets we saw heaps of bricks and ruins of buildings. The fields are covered with sand ejected with water from the bowels of the earth. Till this sand is removed, no crops can grow, and removing it is no easy work. For it is not only one or two *bighas* that are so covered. Thousands of *bighas* have been covered and in some places the layers are six inches thick or even thicker. The people's misery, therefore, is beyond measure. But even then life is so dear that people, dizzy with the thought of having escaped death, can forget their hardships and keep smiling faces. They have no food in their homes and no clothes to wear, but they do not seem to worry much about that. Such is the scene here. What can we do to help them? Those who are working in the midst of the people may

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serve them humbly and unostentatiously. They may plead with the idle to start working, and teach sensualists self-control by their own example. They may teach people *Ramadhun* and turn them Godward. There are such silent workers, too, at many places. God's ways are beyond our understanding. He erased the difference between birth and death in a matter of two minutes. Who was born and who is dead? Whether human beings are born or die, His play goes on. Why then rejoice and grieve? The Lord's name is the only truth. He who is aware of Him and serves Him, that is, His creation, as well as he may, lives. Those who do not do this are as good as dead, though living. Well, having started to write a letter I have given you this week's discourse. There may be a few words which you may not understand. But Dahibehn or Shanta or Lalita, one of them will surely be able to understand them. If, however, there is any word which none of you can understand, ask me its meaning.

After writing the above yesterday, I could not go on further. I have resumed the letter today, Wednesday, in the morning (8.45). I shall soon be called to a meeting. There was another letter from Madhavdas. His health has improved so much that he sees no need now to go to Porbandar. He will remain in Bombay and start some business. Devdas and Lakshmi are quite happy. Rajaji has still not gone to Delhi. Most probably he will come here and meet me before going there.

Blessings to you all from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Bane Patro, pp. 19-20

309. TELEGRAM TO AMTUSSALAAM

PATNA,
March 21, 1934

AMTUSSALAAM
GANDHI ASHRAM
TIRUCHENGODU

STAY. DO AS RAJAJI SAYS. LOVE.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 615

310. LETTER TO SAM HIGGINBOTTOM

PATNA,
March 21, 1934

DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter has given me great joy. I take you at your word. Come, see the afflicted area and tell us:

(1) how best and cheaply we can clean our choked wells;
(2) how we can house the homeless;
(3) how drain water-logged areas;
(4) how remove the sand which covers our fair fields.

These are but samples of the work in front of us. Of course the Government and the people are working in unison. But you know my regard for your expert knowledge. Even if you do not show us anything new, I personally will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have seen the area. If you come please let the Central Relief Office, Patna, know in time. Someone will meet you at the station and arrange a tour programme of five days after your reaching here.

I leave tomorrow morning with Rajendrababu to visit balance of the area yet unseen by me. But you may come independently of me. You will cross me at some point. I return to Patna on 4th proximo evening and leave for Purnea and thence for Assam on 7th proximo.

My regards to you and Mrs. Higginbottom.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

PROF. SAM HIGGINBOTTOM
AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE
ALLAHABAD, U.P.

From a photostat: G.N. 8936

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311. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

March 21, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I suppose I shouldn't expect any letter from you just now. It is 9 o'clock now on Wednesday morning. A meeting of the Bihar Committee is going on in the adjoining room. I may be called any time. If I don't write just now, I can't finish this letter today. Everything seems to be going well. You must have read the resolutions in the papers. Maulana, Malaviyaji and Bidhan were present. I have put Jamnalalji exclusively on this work. If I didn't do that, I myself would have to stay on here. Personally I wish to complete as much of the Harijan tour as I can. Raja is ill. He has got an attack of asthma. He will go to Delhi in the beginning of April. Lakshmi will not feel easy in mind without him. Since the meeting of the Spinners' Association is to be held here, he will go to Delhi *via* this place. I will leave here on the 7th and go to Assam. I shall be there for about two weeks. From there I will come back to this place and, after spending a few days here, proceed to Utkal. I will again return here. The programme after that has not been fixed. But I still wish to give a few days to every province.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 87

312. SPEECH AT THE MEETING OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE RELIEF SOCIETIES, PATNA

March 21, 1934

Gandhiji addressed them at length, emphasizing at the outset the absolute necessity of all societies working in co-operation in deciding upon a plan of action, in consultation with the Central Relief Committee. He deprecated strongly any distinction of class, sect or religion being introduced or maintained in the matter of relief. Gandhiji insisted that the construction of huts and semi-permanent houses should not be undertaken on any haphazard

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plan. They should be prepared to accept the advice of Government experts and should refrain from building houses on condemned lands. It was really a very difficult question and the advice of experts must be scrupulously followed. In Motihari and Muzaffarpur, he would advise people not to build on those sites which had been declared unsafe and would ask them to wait until the monsoon was over. He appealed to them to alleviate suffering, even where the sufferer was unwilling to ask for help. Relief should reach the old, the destitute and the lame at their places and the ant and elephant should not be judged by the same measure of relief. Workers should not be guided by any other test but that of pure sufferings.

The Hindu, 24-3-1934

313. LETTER TO RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR

PATNA,
March 22, 1934

DEAR SISTER,

I thank you for your cheque for 38-7-0 and your letter. I am writing to Dr. Royden[1]. Of course the contribution is handsome from her poor congregation.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
JULLUNDUR CITY
PUNJAB

From a photostat: G.N. 6318. Also C.W. 3509. Courtesy: Rajkumari Amrit Kaur

314. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

March 22, 1934

BHAI THAKKAR BAPA,

I got your letters. I sent a wire to you yesterday. I started working at 2 this morning, and that is why I am able to take up this letter at 3. There was no other way. I wanted to write to you yesterday but could not find the time for it.

I will give you the 5th and 6th. I hope Ghanshyamdas will be able to come.

[1] Dr. Maude Royden of the Guild House Church, London

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I must go to Purnea in connection with the Bihar tour. Rajendrababu has fixed a programme according to which the visit to Purnea would be postponed for the present and I would spend one day there on my way to Assam. You can go to Assam a day earlier. We may start together from here and I would get down at Purnea, spend Monday there and, leaving the place on Tuesday, reach Gauhati on Wednesday. My plan is that after finishing the Assam trip we should return to Bihar, spend a week here, during which we should complete the Harijan tour in Chhota Nagpur, and then go to Orissa. From there we should return to Bihar again. After spending a few days here, we should draw up another programme. This is how my mind is working. We should give some time to every province. By doing so we shall be able to do something at least, if not much. We shall be able to meet the local workers. But we can plan all this only when we meet.

I will start from here on the 27th to go to the North, and return on the 4th. You can come here on the 4th if you wish. Ramnarayan complains that he has not heard from you. He is pressing me to tour Rajputana.

Lakshmidas Shrikant has asked for help for the Bhil Seva Mandal. What reply can we give to him? We shall discuss the matter when you come here. Please note down all such points in your diary. Otherwise we might forget about them.

Please send the two hundred rupees to Chidambaram.

BAPU

[PS.]

We must pay the railway fare to Bijapur. We can't spend a single pie from the Harijan Fund. If we spend any money from it, we would be stealing it from the Fund. I am returning the letter concerning Assam as also the one concerning Chidambaram.

[PPS.]

Lakshman Shastri's letter is enclosed. I think we should give him the help which he has asked for. If you also feel that way, send him what you think right for that purpose. Bring the letter with you and note down the point in your diary.[1]

Vamanrao's letter is enclosed.

Please read the portion which I have scored out. I scored it out because, when sealing the letter, I remembered that I had already written to you about that matter.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1135

[1] This is the paragraph scored out, but was to be read.

315. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

PATNA,
March 22, 1934

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

You may certainly go to Wardha. It is no use coming here. I am going to Assam in a few days. I shall write to you a Wardha. Sharma should be there by now. You have only to build up your health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 298

316. TALK WITH ASHRAM INMATES[1]

PATNA,
March 22, 1934

I have called you all here today particularly to tell you something about not courting imprisonment. Many of you may be having many questions and doubts on that point to be solved.

Only those people should now court imprisonment who feel independently that they would not be at peace without going to jail. And those who go to prison must be sure that they are leaving everything behind. I have felt from the beginning that this would go on for long. Now my belief is confirmed that it is bound to be a prolonged affair. Hence, only those who are willing to die and get buried in jail should go there. Otherwise they should start earning. This point should be well understood. I had a letter from Godse[2]. He wrote saying that Narandas had, stopped, the money he had been sending to his mother and asked, instead, why she needed so much money. He wanted to know why he should be questioned on this point. He found it very humiliating.

[1] The following inmates of the Ashram were present: Jamnalal Bajaj, Lakshmidas Asar, Kedarnath Kulkarni, Swami Anandanand, Narayan Moreshwar Khare, Valji Govindji Desai, Harivadan, Chimanlal Bhatt, Raojibhai Nathabhai Patel, Maganbhai P. Desai, Ramachandra J. Soman, Madhav Savant, Himmatlal Khira and Prithuraj L. Asar.

[2] Ganpat Vasudeo Godse, an ashram inmate

I myself did not think so. But I wrote to him: "You can never benefit by doing something which you feel is humiliating". Self-respect is an imaginary thing, but for a person living in the world of imagination that alone is the real thing. Man rises and falls in the world of imagination. When one feels that one has been humiliated, one's soul is, as it were, crushed. And so it is only here that one can rise and fall. It is one's ladder. Once one has ascended or descended it, the ladder collapses by itself. That is why I wrote to him:

"Your duty lies in finding some occupation suited to you and making a living. For that purpose, enter the market and know your worth. You are a capable man. You would find some work. Your expectation would not be fulfilled if you want me to look out for work for you. You may get Rs. 20 or 30 at the most. You must completely give up the idea of going to jail. I shall not blame you for it. That is the path Devdas and Ramdas have taken. You too must follow their example and achieve success."

JAMNALALJI: But it involves the question of breaking a vow. What about it?

GANDHIJI: Without understanding the full implications people decide impulsively to join the struggle and court imprisonment. It is not as if the struggle would go on for ten or twenty years! I do not insist that one who has taken the vow under such an impression should honour the vow. For he has not taken it in full knowledge. If such persons do not go to jail, they will not go down in my estimate. A man has to decide for himself the importance of a vow. If he faces a situation which he had not dreamt of at the time he took the vow, how can I hold him bound by it?

But do not be under the impression that the people who are out today, earning money and living a life of indulgence will for ever remain in that condition and that their turn will not come. Their opportunity will surely come and then they will plunge into it of their own accord. After all, how long can one indulge in worldly pleasures? Say for one, two or at the most next five years. Ultimately one is bound to flee, saying 'Oh, what is it I am doing'. Mrityunjaya met me only yesterday. He said his feeling was increasing day by day that he was slipping away from me. I however said to him, "The very fact that you have such a feeling shows that you are coming closer to me. In a few years your father, I and everybody will be dead and you and others will succeed us. Today I feel as if I had lost the three of you: Devdas, Govind [Malaviya] and you." I do not say that what you have been doing is the right thing. But I do not

blame you even in my thoughts. For were it not so you would become conceited. I am sure that ultimately you are going to take the plunge by yourselves. And only then would your taking the plunge do you credit. Who else have I except persons like you? Surely, I am not going to produce new workers. Those who are in touch with me and have faith in me are carrying on the struggle with my attitudes and ideas in view. They will carry on the struggle independently when I am gone. Today I do not find them acting spontaneously. They have to depend ultimately on my judgment at some point or the other.

Today I wish to prevent you from doing what you do not on your own feel inclined to do. That is why those who say they want to go to jail, those who even show a certain amount of enthusiasm, should not even think of going to jail. Yes, anyone who has in addition to enthusiasm, such zeal and faith and passion, who feels that he would go mad if he did not go to jail should certainly go to jail and remain sane. You may find this condition strict, but it is not so. Only the rupee which fetches sixteen annas is a real rupee. If a rupee worth fourteen annas mixes with it, the value of the real rupee also declines. Therefore, anyone who has the slightest doubt about himself or is slack about observing the rules of satyagraha, should give up the idea of going to jail. That is why I am beginning to feel that I am sufficient by myself.

Satyagraha is a complete dharma. I have acquired that science from family relationships. As I see it more and more, I see with the heart what I formerly saw with the mind. Satyagraha is a beautiful word. A satyagrahi does not claim to do more than hold fast to Truth. Satyagraha is a matter of religion. And if that is so, it should be sufficient even if one person resorts to it. But satyagraha is so much mixed up with *asatyagraha*[1] that it does not make an impact. Satyagraha cannot be a matter of politics as far as you are concerned. It can only be a matter of religion. The true face of religion is revealed only when there is despair everywhere. But what appeals to me may not be your religion. Only what appeals to you can be your religion. Anyone who is permeated by satyagraha filled with religious emotion would melt the hearts of people even in jail. If we are thus made, the closer we come to the British, the more we would be able to persuade them. This is self-evident.

[1] Opposite of satyagraha

Kevalram is pure-hearted but he has not yet overcome his desire for indulgence. He had not yet fully recovered from illness and suddenly felt that he should positively go to prison. But his friends told him that if he went to jail in his state of health, he should know that he would die in jail, and, in that case, his going to jail would amount to suicide. They asked him to consult me and so he came to me. He said he had not come to ask me whether he should or should not go to jail. But would it be suicide if he died there? I said: "Not at all!" Living or dying is in the hands of God. If one went to prison with the intention of dying, it would be suicide. Whoever goes to prison should do it intending to live. As for me I would say even from my death-bed that I am alive and I do not wish to die. If anyone says that he wishes to go to jail but adds that it is only so long as Bapu wants it, it has no meaning. What matters is what one feels from within. This is not the time to go to jail just because Bapu says so. Anyone who has the slightest doubt, who has still something to ask me, whose faith depends on my faith should not go to jail. I have no intention of sending those people to jail who feel that they should do it for the welfare of the country. For such persons may not be able to stand satyagraha or bring any credit to it. I am covering such persons for the time being. Such people should not go to jail on my responsibility for the present. Let them also not go to prison thinking that they cannot stay out so long as Sardar is in prison. Nor should they think that because they are the colleagues of Jugatram it would be improper for them to stay out while he is in prison. It is enough if I alone uphold this kind of friendly sentiment. I represent all of them. All of you must be kept out even for the release of Sardar and others. Welfare of the country is certainly included in the welfare of the world, and individual welfare is included in the welfare of the country. On the other hand, individual welfare should include the welfare of the world. I start with myself. Individual welfare is no welfare at all. If you start with your own self, you would never make a mistake anywhere. Let people who understand this go to jail. Satyagraha has not really entered our hearts so that we would always say that we recognized only the welfare of the country. We desire to achieve the general welfare through the welfare of an individual.

SWAMI: Should not a striving satyagrahi endeavour to be a more perfect satyagrahi by going to jail?

BAPU: I do not wish to suggest that the endeavour should consist only in going to jail. He will even mount the gallows when the time comes. I would expect total sacrifice from such persons. But those satyagrahis who feel that they would go mad if they remained out may as well go to jail.

SWAMI: It is known from experience that the courage and faith of a striving satyagrahi are strengthened by going to prison. It does not happen in the case of every one. But how can we stop the few who have had this experience from going to jail?

BAPU: I am not stopping such people. There are two kinds of people: those who can do introspection only when in jail, and others for whom the test they have already undergone is sufficient. People of the first type go to jail of their own free will for the sake of spiritual uplift, whereas the second type of people have no such independent will. When they have reached their limit, one cannot insist on their going to jail. A satyagrahi would strengthen his faith in satyagraha by going to jail only if he has spiritual confidence. The question of course arises as to what you should do after I have gone to prison. I had publicly stated that no one should follow me. Sardar followed the instruction to the letter and I saw salvation only in that. An English newspaper commented that when Gandhi was arrested not even a dog barked. I consider it a compliment. Had it been just a question of making dogs bark or of raising a din, Sardar alone and many others would have been able to do that to a certain extent. Still, they realized the situation and swallowed the bitter pill. The result was that people did not volunteer to go to prison. But it was a good thing that happened. I do not know what the situation would be when I go to jail again this time. I would be going to jail after four months. Some adjustment may have to be made if something happens at that time. For instance, there may be another such earthquake right at that moment, or the Viceroy may call me for negotiations on the 2nd of August. This is just a possibility. And I am merely talking to you of a hypothetical situation, that some such development may lead to my reconsidering courting imprisonment. It is not possible to stay out any more on the ground of the Harijan work. I can do that work even if I am in prison. Then supposing I am gone to jail; your duty would occur to you when the time comes.

SWAMI: If you go to jail now after doing Harijan work for a year, it is probably not necessary to fight for the old permission for the work. You

even stated once that you felt that whatever was necessary had been done. Is this not right?

BAPU: No. If I did say anything like that it must have been in my sleep. Even this time I am going to ask for permission to continue Harijan work and the Government will have to grant the permission. Having brought the work to this point, it cannot be abandoned. Today untouchability has become weak and limp. So much material is now ready as a result of my tours that I must continue to work from prison in order to give a final burial to untouchability. So it is unthinkable that the work should come to a halt and the campaign should become slack by my disappearance from the Hindu world.

Questioned what should be done in the event of his having to fast to secure permission for working in jail, Gandhiji said:

Even if I am released, the fast would continue, for it would be an unconditional fast unto death. I would no doubt meet you if I am released. And I would continue to say something or the other during the period I should be alive. And you would be a witness to it. And at that moment, if I am in the right, I would be repeating only Truth as the *Gita* enjoins. This would show you the way. If not, you would follow the dictates of your own hearts. You would get together and interpret my words. But I would not be present at the time.

In reply to a question from Jamnalal, Gandhiji said:

If I am in prison and my fast is continued, I would say that your task would be to go from house to house, explain things to the people and do whatever you think proper.

Pointing out the difference between 1922 and 1934, he said:

From the political point of view and in view of a blunder like Chauri Chaura it was necessary in 1922 that we should refrain from fighting. It would have been a mistake to fight when we were not prepared. Today only the spiritual view-point is left. If satyagraha is carried on from a spiritual point of view, it will be pure and if it is carried on with purity, you can rest assured that it will become widespread. Even a single pure-hearted satyagrahi would be sufficient for this purpose. A satyagrahi should observe complete discipline in jail. If he does not, his purity will suffer and satyagraha will decline in value.

When asked what a person should do who believed in civil disobedience as the only appropriate political programme, as it was the only effective policy, he said:

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This is citing the example of Jawaharlal. But I am not talking about that point of view just now. However, I would ask even such persons to stay out. Just as I was the only representative at the R.T.C., it is enough if I am the only one in the present political programme. It would be fully accomplished thereby.

Q. Why, in that case, should the Congress adhere to the satyagraha programme?

Yes, it should, because without it the Congress would be wiped out of existence. Externally, the Congress has no organization at all today. It is in a state of anarchy. Hence, this is the only way if the light of the Congress is to continue to shine. Those who have no faith in C. D., may do any other work for the national uplift, but not in the name of the Congress. They may do it as individual Congressmen.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9130

317. HARIJAN TOUR AND BIHAR

It was a matter of sorrow to me to interrupt the Harijan tour. It had to be, because it was a clear duty to answer the call from Shri Rajendra Prasad, who had postponed it as long as he could. Whilst anti-untouchability work is undoubtedly greater and its message of a permanent character, like all chronic diseases it can dispense with personal attention in the face of an acute case, which that of Bihar is. He who is called by Rajendrababu, the physician in charge, has to answer the call when made or not at all. When, therefore, the call came, I had to suspend the tour. But I want to assure anti-untouchability workers in the provinces not visited that I hope to resume the tour as soon as circumstances will permit and that Rajendrababu feels about untouchability no less keenly than I do. He will disengage me at the earliest possible moment. I hope to take Utkal and Assam first, and of these two that will have preference which for climatic reasons demands it. Let the workers beware!

Harijan, 23-3-1934

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318. IMPLICATIONS OF ANTI-UNTOUCHABILITY

A Hubli correspondent asks the following questions:

> Is untouchability natural or artificial? Does it not depend upon the moral and intellectual development, mode of life, etc., of the people composing the society? Can you give a picture of a society where untouchability is completely removed?

In my opinion, untouchability is a wholly artificial product. It has no connection with moral or intellectual development of people, for the simple reason that in Hindu society there are to be seen men described as untouchable who are in every way equal in moral and intellectual development to the highest among caste Hindus and yet who are treated as untouchables. My picture of a society free from untouchability is one in which no one will consider himself superior to another. It is obvious that in a society so composed there will be no unseemly rivalry or quarrelling.

The correspondent next asks:

> Are inter-dining and intermarriage necessary for the removal of untouchability?

My answer is no and yes. No, because it is no part of the programme of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. Generally, too, marrying and dining are matters of individual concern. No one has a right to ask another to choose a girl for wife or to dine with anybody against his will. But my answer is at the same time yes, because if a person refuses to take food touched by another person on the ground of untouchability or inferiority, he is observing untouchability. In other words, untouchability cannot constitute any ground for restraint on inter-dining or intermarriage.

The correspondent next asks:

> Can an imperfect person be a competent authority for introducing changes in the religious observances or customs?

Imperfection is a relative term. All mortals are more or less imperfect. But an imperfect person may not be so imperfect regarding a particular change as to be incompetent to make it. A person, however imperfect otherwise, may have fairly fixed notions about the use of intoxicating drugs and liquors. He has then every right to propose and bring about changes in the drink

habits of people, although they may be based on religious grounds.

Harijan, 23-3-1934

319. A LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

PATNA,
March 23, 1934

MY DEAR ANAND,

I hope you have got the telegram I sent to Jamshed Mehta. There was no work for you here. I could not therefore send for you. Write to me regularly how you and Vidya are doing.

Love to you both.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

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

320. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

[*March 23, 1934*][1]

CHI. LILAVATI,

I got your letter. What shall I write to you? How can it be that you don't get my letters? You should not harass Prema in that manner. You may try to copy her self-sacrifice and her hard work. If she wants any personal service from you, by all means render it. But how can you insist on giving such service if she doesn't want it? Now that Narandas is there, follow his advice. Get well anyhow and become steady in mind.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9328. Also C.W. 6603. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

[1] From the G.N. Register

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321. LETTER TO NARASINHARAO B. DIVATIA

PATNA,
March 23, 1934

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

It is my misfortune that I have to write only letters of condolence to you.

I have just received a letter from Gokulbhai from which I learn that your daughter's son, Premal, has passed away and left you to a lonely existence. Poor boy, how was he to know that you could not be lonely? Anybody who has a living faith in God, who can call him lonely? Gokulbhai writes that both of you comfort those who come to comfort you. I was filled with joy and pride to read it. May your faith in God increase. Premal himself has passed to a blessed state. Perhaps you remember that I met him once in the blue bungalow.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]
Narasinharaoni Rojnishi, p. 58

322. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI A. MEHTA

March 23, 1934

BHAISHRI BHAGWANJI,

I have always welcomed your letter. Your frank words always please me.

You have mixed up two or three issues.

My own experience of Prabhashankar has been different from yours. But I needn't dwell on that, since my experience doesn't count.

I agree with your views about Wills. According to the rule that one can be certain only of that which is in one's hands, I think it best for parents to make in their own lifetime any arrangements that they wish. But in this case I must consider the situation as it exists. From a moral point of view, I look upon the document

drawn up by Doctor as a Will. Everybody who wants to accept a legacy should also observe its conditions. One of the two sisters is in such a condition that it would have been the duty of the brothers to support her even if there had been no Will. Ratilal himself is not capable of looking after himself. Hence, if my voice could have any effect, I would see that his sister, who is more incapable of looking after herself than Ratilal is of looking after himself, got some share. Who knows, such a noble act may bring greater benefit to Ratilal. In any case it cannot harm his interests. Whether or not the sister gets a regular share, my sense of duty to the departed friend and to his family, and especially to Ratilal and Champa with whom I have maintained a special relation, will urge me to insist that the sisters should get a proportionate share each from Ratilal's share, even if he pays it in instalments. You are not right when you generalize from Narbheram's case. I am sure you know the saying in English "Hard cases make bad law." I hope you also know that Narbheram does not accept your charge as true.

The resort to civil marriage in the case of Devdas and Lakshmi was to satisfy Rajaji. All of us wanted a religious ceremony. But there was no difference between civil marriage and religious ceremony as we understood its significance. According to the meaning which we attach to religious ceremony, its purpose was served by civil marriage. According to me the Hindu law requires many reforms.

I think I have now replied to all your questions. I am doing what I can about Bihar. I think you have sent a handsome amount.

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5821. Also C.W. 3044. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

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323. MESSAGE TO THE PRESS

PATNA,
March 23, 1934

In the course of a special message to *Amrita Bazar Patrika*,[1] Gandhiji lays down the following rules for the guidance of the relief workers:

(1) Overlapping should be scrupulously avoided.
(2) Not an anna should be spent for advertisement or to produce any spectacular effect.
(3) There should be no unseemly rivalry between relief organizations, whether Government or popular. There should be rivalry in doing silent timely service.
(4) Every organization should know what others are doing.
(5) Expenses of management should be minimized as much as possible, consistently with efficiency and accurate account-keeping.
(6) All distinctions of high and low should be altogether abolished.
(7) Those in receipt of relief should be induced to do some productive work.
(8) Relief centres should be kept in perfect sanitary condition.
(9) All volunteers should know how to render first aid and teach the villagers the rules of elementary sanitation.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 24-3-1934

324. INTERVIEW TO UNITED PRESS[2]

PATNA,
March 23, 1934

I flatly deny having favoured Council-entry.

The Hindustan Times, 24-3-1934

[1] *The Hindu* says that it was a special message for *The Searchlight*.

[2] Gandhiji made the statement in connection with a report published in some Madras and Bombay papers that Mahatma Gandhi favoured Council-entry.

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325. LETTER TO TOTARAM SANADHYA

March 24 [*1934*][1]

BHAI TOTARAMJI,

I received your letter. You may certainly go to Wardha but you can come here on your way if you feel it is necessary. We met at Wardha during this month.[2] There is no reason to worry about Hariprasad.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2527

326. SPEECH AT DANAPORE

[*March 24, 1934*][3]

This is my second visit to Danapore. In your address you have remarked that on account of the havoc caused by the recent earthquake the Harijan uplift movement has been thrown into the background. This is all right. Whatever I told you during the course of my speech at Patna, I will again say that almost everybody in this world has suffered and even then the public will soon forget this great disaster caused by it. As we have completely forgotten the previous earthquakes in the history of this old world and consider them as historical incidents, we will hold the same view about this earthquake also after due course of time. But so long as untouchability exists, we are reminded of our miseries. Some people consider untouchability as their religion and if it disappears it would be some sort of calamity to them. But if you look at it dispassionately it cannot be defended. Those also who call themselves sanatanists understand that untouchability is indefensible, and I think it is the staunchest class among sanatanists who

[1] The document having been overwritten by someone, the year and contents are not clear.

[2] Gandhiji probably meant that he had met Hariprasad during his halt at Wardha *en route* to Allahabad.

[3] From Chandulal Dalal's *Gandhijini Dinwari*

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hold this view. After this earthquake we ought to be more humble, as death is inevitable. Therefore those who feel sorry for this disaster may become humbler. God has warned us in this manner and if we do not pay heed to this warning some greater disaster is in store for us. Shastras lay down that complete destruction will overtake the whole creation some time. In the light of all these divine lessons we ought to become more humble and do away with this sin of untouchability.

Those affected by the earthquake are more than a crore but there are others in this province who have escaped this disaster, and who have lost nothing. Therefore they should subscribe as generously as people from outside the province have done. In fact it is your duty as neighbours to subscribe to the relief funds.

Yesterday we were discussing the budget of the Relief Committee. The whole sum amounted to forty lakhs and yet certain things were left out. The total collection up to date is just about 20 lakhs. The distressed must get help from the people and you must give your proper share by subscribing generously. Another thing I would draw your attention to is that workers are to be brought from outside. In my opinion that is not the proper course. Biharis must supply enough number of workers. Only if it is impossible shall we call outside workers to assist us.

Making an earnest appeal to the Bihar students, Mahatmaji said:

I have to say a few words to the students also. They have not come forward as they ought to do. This has really grieved me. If you can show cause why students are unable to come forward I shall understand it. But in fact there is little cause why they should not come. In my Harijan tour I had many opportunities to come into contact with students. They have expressed their intention to give their spare time to whatever humanitarian [work] may be shown to them. The student community is everywhere alike. Therefore, I hope that they will even now come forward and give their names to Rajendrababu. There are students from Calcutta who have come here after leaving their own work simply to help us in this disaster.

Now as regards the relief problem. It is our determination to help those who have been struck hard but you may remember that we are not out to make beggars of them. Those who will work will get help in return. This is all that I have to say. The purse which has been given to me I think does not contain subscription from all those who are present here. Therefore I

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would appeal to them to pay their share also. I may make it clear that half of the entire money collected on the spot and given to me in the shape of a purse will go to the Harijan movement and half of it for Bihar Relief.[1]

The Indian Nation, 28-3-1934

327. LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI

March 25, 1934

MY DEAR MALKANI,

I have just finished studying your memorandum[2] on the two Bills. You are prolix. The note is not revised. The argument is weak in places. You have not before your mind's eye the audience whom you are addressing. The Speaker's rulings have no validity in law or before the knowing public. We have to convince the opponent—our friend the sanatanist. If I was one, you would not convince me. But that is neither here nor there. What you want is some lead to our Sanghs. In this I have anticipated you. If that is not enough you must tell me.

Your note may help Munshi[3]. But it is not a brief. A brief would contain a chronology of events and no argument.

I hope you got my programme.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 905

[1] At the end of the meeting, in response to Gandhiji's appeal Rs. 252 was collected and the address, which was auctioned, fetched Rs. 401.

[2] Not available

[3] K. M. Munshi

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328. LETTER TO DUDHIBEHN V. DESAI

PATNA,
March 26, 1934

CHI. DUDHIBEHN,

After careful thinking and for more reasons than one, I have come to the conclusion that it is best that Valji should tour with me at present, that it is his dharma to do so. I know that you and the children will feel the separation from him. But you should derive joy from such separation. If Valji did not keep good health with me, I would not let him accompany me. He certainly keeps good health. And he is also useful to me. You need not, therefore, think more about him. The present programme is up to the end of July. After that, God will lead us as He wills. I hope that you and the children will take the same view as I do and remain happy.

I hope the weather there has now improved.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7465. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

329. LETTER TO VIMALCHANDRA V. DESAI

PATNA,
March 26, 1934

CHI. NANU,

All of you should hold a meeting and pass a unanimous resolution saying that Valji should continue to tour with me at present, and send the resolution to me. I have an excellent reason for asking you to pass such a resolution, namely, that he keeps fine health on this tour. A further advantage will be that, after seeing everything, he will teach you many new things.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 5738. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

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330. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

PATNA,
March 26, 1934

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I got the letters from you both. Give up all hopes about Shanti. If Sushila steadily improves her efficiency, she will be able to shoulder more responsibility. Satisbabu's wife does not know English, but she shoulders the whole burden of Khadi Pratishthan and its Prakashan Mandir and has released Satisbabu for Harijan work. The truth of the matter is that both of them think only of service.

I understand what you say regarding West[1]. I think his services have been so valuable that, even if he has come to feel aversion now towards us, we should not forget all that he has done in the past. However, you may act as you like. I don't want you to do anything which does not appeal to your heart. I don't wish to write more today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4817

331. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

March 26, 1934

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I have sent you a wire today, and am waiting for a reply. I hope you were able to complete your fast[2] successfully. A seven-day fast should not be hard for anybody. It can do nothing but good. But one must know how to end it. Food must be light and should be increased gradually. One must pass stools regularly. Let me know what effect the fast has had on your body and mind.

[1] A. H. West
[2] Undertaken after his release from jail

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Please don't expect frequent letters from me these days. I can with great difficulty write any. The letters which my companions may write are all that are possible. The companions are constantly changing, and that is another reason why I can't dictate many letters. Though I know your keen desire for letters from me, I am not able to satisfy it.

I don't wish to ask you to come over—it wouldn't be proper for me to do that. But if you can't restrain your desire to come, then do come. I have written to Narandas and Vasumati, and said the same to them. I wrote the same thing to Gangabehn too. She didn't come. But you need not follow anybody's example. Follow the promptings of your own heart. One may not obey one's nature for committing a sin, but it will not be a sin to come to see me.

Chimanlal[1] had written to me about your request for money. Since you had made the request, I have asked him to send you the sum. What remains does not belong to any one person; it belongs to all of us. If it was in your charge and if I was in jail, would you not have used it according to your discretion? It is only by accident that I am outside. My being outside makes no difference to our intention at the time of taking the decision to sacrifice the Ashram. It was indeed a difficult one to act upon: "Nobody should draw any money from the Ashram funds; everybody should return to jail as soon as he is released and should do without money even in jail." But this has remained so only in theory. Thanks to my coming out of jail, the thing broke down still further. But the fact remains that that was the intention. All of us should adhere to it to the best of our ability. It will be enough if we bear this in mind. No other check on you is necessary. Please let me know if you see any error in this reasoning.

Miss Harrison has joined us. Pyarelal came with her. Miss Lester also has been with me. I am going out again tomorrow to visit the affected areas. Don't read too much meaning in Miss Harrison's coming. She has come only to acquaint herself with the present situation.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5517

[1] Chimanlal Shah, then manager of the Ashram

332. LETTER TO RAMABEHN JOSHI

March 26, 1934

CHI. RAMA,

I got your letters. If you have not taken your decision to go to jail as a matter of dharma, you should revise it. We have discussed the issue at great length here. As a result of the discussions, some have changed their minds. A summary of the discussions[1] will probably be sent to everybody. If you two wish, you may wait till you have read it. Apart from this, however, jail is our home. To be out of jail is to be homeless. But this is so only for those who regard going to jail as their dharma. To such persons, the hardships of jail life are a source of joy whereas comforts outside jail give pain. If you clearly understand this and the reasons behind it, you may by all means go to jail. If not, you ought not to go. Your not going will not displease me. I would love to write more, but I cannot do so for want of time. I hope Vimu is all right. Dhiru must have gone to Bhavnagar.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5517

333. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

PATNA,
March 27, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

Your letter is before me. Do not try to do too many things at a time. If you will serve Harijans, then do not think of the meningitis patients. They will be nursed otherwise. Whatever is needed to qualify you for your task, you will certainly do. You must not fear me. I am not going to drive you out unless

[1] *Vide* "Talk with Ashram Inmates", pp. 229-305.

you drive yourself out. You have need to fear yourself rather than any other person. I am well.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Why do you not write in Gujarati any more?[1]

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

334. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CHAPRA[2]

March 27, 1934

Today a terrible calamity has overwhelmed us all alike—Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and the rest, the so-called high-born and the low-born, without favour or distinction. If even this terrible blow does not enable us to purge ourselves of 'pride of place and blood', to obliterate all arbitrary, man-made distinctions between man and man, then I would only say that there is none so ill-fated as we. The conviction is growing upon me day after day that human intellect is incapable of fully understanding God's ways. God in His wisdom has circumscribed man's vision, and rightly too, for, otherwise man's conceit would know no bounds. But whilst I believe that God's ways cannot be comprehended fully by man, I have firm faith that not a leaf falls without His will, and not a leaf falls but it subserves His purpose. If only we had enough humility, we would have no hesitation in accepting the recent earthquake as a just retribution for our sins. This is not to say that we can with certainty attribute a particular calamity to a particular human action. Very often we are unconscious of our worst sins. All that I mean to say is that every visitation of Nature does and should mean to us Nature's call to introspection, repentance and self-purification. Today, more than ever, our hearts need a thorough cleansing and I would go so far as to say that even the recent earthquake would not be too great a price to pay, if it enabled India to cast out the canker of untouchability.

Harijan, 6-4-1934

[1] This sentence is in Gujarati.

[2] Extracted from Pyarelal Nayyar's "Weekly Letter". About thirty thousand people attended the meeting. Gandhiji spoke in Hindi.

335. SPEECH AT MEETING OF RELIEF WORKERS, CHAPRA[1]

March 27, 1934

Gandhiji said he had offered his respectful co-operation to the authorities on the present occasion. He explained that there was no other way of saving the masses from the overwhelming calamity that had befallen them. The issue before them was not of co-operation *versus* non-co-operation or Congress *versus* Government, but simply of how best to serve the suffering masses in the face of an unparalleled calamity. What was really needed was food, clothing, shelter and above all water. Mr. Gandhi warned the residents against feeling sore because they found that adequate relief was not forthcoming or justice was not done in individual cases. They should cease to think in personal terms and learn to think impersonally in terms of collective good. They should not forget that the extent of the calamity was so great that Government or any other agency, however well inclined, could not afford complete relief. He would therefore reiterate to them what he had previously said that the healing balm that could cure Nature's wound like the present one must come not from without but from within themselves. That saving sovereign balm was human sympathy and human love, which would enable them to forget their misfortune in a glow of mutual co-operation and service.

The Hindu, 29-3-1934

336. LETTER TO SIR GEORGE SCHUSTER[2]

PATNA,
March 28, 1934

DEAR SIR GEORGE,

Nothing, in the wreckage of Irwin-Gandhi contract, has pained me so much as the wreckage of the free salt for the poor. A friend reminds me that the notifications about it have never been withdrawn. Is this true? You know the history of the adoption of that clause. It was inserted on purely humanitarian grounds. Can salt be salved? Can it be removed from the purview of civil resistance and ordinances? I had no difficulty in tendering co-operation in combating the Bihar disaster. There

[1] Almost identical versions were also published in *The Indian Nation*, 30-3-1934, and *The Bombay Chronicle*, 30-3-1934.

[2] Finance Member of the Viceregal Council

was something to tender in that matter. In the matter of the poor man's salt I can but invite co-operation. Can you help me? No, not me, the poor man?[1]

Yours sincerely,

From a copy: C.W. 9706. Courtesy: Andhra Pradesh Government. Also Home Department, Political, File No. 89/34. Courtesy: National Archives of India and *Harijan*, 30-11-1934

337. SPEECH AT SONEPUR[2]

March 28, 1934

I know what this part of Bihar has gone through. The sufferings of the people have drawn the attention and sympathy of the whole world. In spite of the liberal response to the Viceregal appeal and that of Babu Rajendra Prasad, it will be impossible to make good the tremendous losses suffered by North Bihar. But even if they were made good, it would be a very poor result of Nature's terrible warning, if nothing more substantial were to come out of it. The donors of the two funds and the numerous other societies have perhaps satisfied their consciences by sending in their donations. Will the recipients be satisfied with merely receiving their share of the timely gifts? What is your reaction to the Divine wrath? If you and I do not learn the moral lesson which the calamity teaches us, then, that neglect will be worse than the calamity itself. Yesterday, as the motor was passing along the Gandak embankment, I received a note from the Doms of a village close by, telling me that they were suffering terribly from want of water, as the villagers would not allow them to take water from the common well. I drew the attention of the Headman to the note and he promised to put the thing right, if it was found that the Doms' complaint was justified. God's wrath was felt equally by the rich and the poor, the Hindu and the Mussalman, the caste

[1] Officials saw in this letter "another attempt by Mr. Gandhi to establish relations with Government", a policy which they thought they had "got very definitely to discourage". Schuster accordingly wrote to Gandhiji on April 6, saying there was no change in "the Government's decision to give concessions about the collection and manufacture of salt to local residents" but that there was such abuse of the concession in some areas "that it became necessary to withdraw it." For further correspondence on the subject, *vide* Vol. LVIII.

[2] Extracted from Pyarelal Nayyar's "Weekly Letter". Gandhiji delivered this speech at Sonepur station standing in the doorway of the train.

man and the outcaste. Shall we not learn God's terrible impartiality that it is criminal to consider any human being untouchable or lower than ourselves? If a single Dom or any other human being is denied the use of village wells, surely, the lesson of the fifteenth of January will have been lost upon us. I want to test you this very minute. I know you are all poor, earning your bread by the sweat of your brow, but I know that there is in this vast crowd none so poor as not to be able to afford a pice. I want every one of you to contribute your coppers as a sign that you have repented of the sin of untouchability, that you do not consider anyone lower than yourselves and that in your own persons you are determined to abolish all distinctions of high and low. I do not want any of you to give me anything except on the condition I have made.[1]

Harijan, 6-4-1934

338. SPEECH AT HAJIPUR[2]

March 28, 1934

I have been visiting the quake-affected areas. This is for the second time that I have come to Hajipur after the terrible catastrophe. The houses have been seriously damaged and people have been beset by untold miseries. It is indeed very gratifying to see that the Government is giving relief to the affected persons. Attempts are also being made for giving relief from other agencies. The people have been involved in trouble no doubt, but all of us should face them with courage. Do not be professional beggars. Relief is intended for needy persons. So help should be given only to those who are badly in need of it. Healthy persons should earn their wages instead of begging. Up till now, as I learn, the Bihar Central Relief Committee has been able to collect about twenty-five lacs of rupees while thirty-two lacs of rupees have been deposited with the Viceroy's Earthquake Relief Fund. The volunteers and workers of the relief agencies should give a correct estimate of the losses. Exaggerated reports should not be given.

We are committing sin. Throw off the shackles of untouchability. Our body is impure. We should try to be pure. No-

[1] Immediately after the speech was over, the audience began to put silver and copper coins in Gandhiji's hands. This continued till the train started to move.

[2] This was delivered at the station where Gandhiji and party made a brief halt on their way to Muzaffarpur.

body should be looked down upon, since all are creatures of God. I am a Bihari, since I have lived for many months in Bihar. The Biharis should do away with untouchability. It is folly to consider oneself to be exalted in rank or dignity. We should have pity for all human beings.

I have learnt from the Chapra Collectorate that about two thousand wells are badly needed in Saran District. I think the most important problem is that of water supply. Nobody can live without water. I would therefore lay special stress on the necessity of wells in the affected areas. Wells should be sunk so that people may drink water without any distinction of caste or creed.

Finally, I appeal to the audience for giving their contributions to the Harijan fund. Any amount, however trifling it may be, will be welcome. If people will not give contributions, I will think that they are not ready to support the cause of Harijans. The people at Sonepur gave some contributions. I have been favourably impressed with the people for being quiet all along and I thank you all for the patient hearing you gave me. But I would yet request you to be quiet and avoid demonstrations.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1-4-1934

339. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

MUZAFFARPUR,
March 29, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

Please don't get angry with me. I am writing this letter at 2.45 a.m. I had set the alarm for 3 a.m. It went off before 12 and I got up. I cleaned my teeth and sat down to write. After a while my eyes fell on the clock and I saw that it was only twelve. So much work had accumulated that I didn't have the courage to go back to sleep, and so I decided to finish as much as I could. I have almost finished the articles for *Harijan* and am writing this letter to you. After finishing this I will write a letter to Ba. I will send you her letter the next time. I have yet to get a copy made.

You made me wait a long time for your last letter. I hope you will write regularly now. Miss Harrison is a strong-willed woman, and so is Miss Lester. The former is maturer. Her sincerity and humility are boundless. Miss Lester is slightly ill and

has stayed on in Patna. Miss Harrison has come along with me. We are in Muzaffarpur just now. In the morning we shall leave for Belsand. Some Ashram workers are camping there. Pyarelal is with me. He will remain with me for a few days only. I shall see. Valji and Himmatlal are attending on Miss Lester. We were in Chapra yesterday. We stayed there with Dr. Mahmud[1]. We find everywhere houses which have been completely destroyed. Dr. Mahmud is doing good relief work in co-operation with the Collector. I met the head of the Relief Department. What you were able to do (at the time of the Gujarat floods) is not possible here at all. Even so, the work will be done well. Whatever money is given will reach the right people.

Jamnalal will remain in Bihar for the present. Lakshmidas has practically recovered. He also will remain here and look after the manufacture of khadi. Jamnalal will fix up the others, too, in suitable work. Bhulabhai came and saw me. He had gone to Gaya in connection with some case. From there he came to see me. He could discuss a few things only.

It seems Mani is being tested fairly severely (in the Belgaum jail). That is as it should be. God will protect her.

Ba will be released in May.

I shall be able to go to Gujarat only in July. Chandrashankar will come on the 3rd or the 4th. Don't worry about me or about the developments outside. Our faith in God is not merely an intellectual pastime. He really exists. Rather, He alone exists. We think of Him before taking any step. We should, therefore, let Him lead us as He wills. I hope I am not assuming too much in thus including you also.

Have you got any company?[2]

I will not write more now.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 88-9

[1] Dr. Syed Mahmud

[2] The addressee's jail companion Dr. Chandulal Desai had been released.

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340. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

March 29, 1934

BA,

It is 3.30 in the morning, and Thursday. I got your letter only yesterday evening. We are in Muzaffarpur today. Panditji, Swami and Kripalani are here. Madhavdas also is here. I shall meet Bal at 11. I am going to visit the place where Maganbhai, Raojibhai, Soman and others are working. I will ask Raojibhai to write to you. I will try to give you all the news that you want from me. But if anything is left out, ask me again. Prabhavati accompanies me these days wherever I go. Kunvarji is in Bombay. Rami also has gone there. Manu is better now. Madhavdas also is better. Vasumati has gone to Wardha. Chhaganlal and Rama have gone to Dwarka. Chhaganlal fasted for seven days just for self-purification. The fast ended on Monday. He is all right. Dudhibehn and Junior Kusum are in Bhavnagar. Kusum Desai has gone on a visit to Santiniketan. Her problem is not yet wholly solved. She is in search of suitable work. There was a letter from Manilal and Sushila. They are quite well. Chandrashankar will be returning in four days now. In Ahmedabad children get headaches, lose power of thinking, get fever and die. It is on the decline now. The disease is caused by going to cinemas, etc. Bad air is the chief cause. Yes, they have started a hospital in the Vidyapith building. I do not know where Kanti will go or stay after his release. I am going to write to him. Anandi and the other children are with Anasuyabehn and are quite happy. Anandi had mild fever. She is better now. Lakshmidas also is better. He is in Patna. Parvati visited Pragji. The latter is quite well. Devdas and Lakshmi are still in Delhi. Rajagopalachari will go there in a few days' time. Manibehn seems to be doing fairly well. I have had no letter from her. Nagini has gone to America and Amala is quite happy at Sabarmati. Janakibehn, Madalasa and others are in Wardha. Raojibhai's Vidya is in Wardha. She has grown up and wishes to marry. They are in search of a suitable young man for her. Lakshmibehn Khare is looking after the work at Wardha. The number of girls has gone up very much. It has exceeded fifty. Dwarkanathji also is there. Brijkrishna is in Delhi. He is better now. Pyarelal is with me.

The lady who was helping me in England is with me just now. It has not been decided what to do about the person who has come with her. It will be decided now. For the present she is here. Padmaja is all right. Mrs. Naidu did come to see me at Hyderabad. Panditji was not present on the Ramanavami day. The *bhajan* "*Jaya Rama Rama*" was sung by Somanji. We shall be leaving Bihar on the 10th to go to Assam. I will spend ten days in Assam and then return to Bihar. From there I will go to Orissa. I will reach that province in May. Yesterday I met Rajendrababu's wife and Vidyavati. I am not sending a discourse this time. It is nearing prayer time now.

Blessings to you all from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Bane Patro, pp. 21-2

341. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

March 29, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

I have been trying to write to you in reply to your letters but of late I have had no time.

I shall not drive you away when your year is over. Why should I do so? Can you not see that when I call you an idiot, I do so out of affection. And why should you worry how I describe you? You ought to restrain yourself. Can you not see that it is impossible for all who love me to be physically with me? But all can be with me through my work. You are doing my work. You should find satisfaction in that. When God wills it we shall meet.

I have told you that you need not think of nursing meningitis patients.

My weight is 108 and b.p. 160/120.

Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

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342. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BHARTHUA CHAUR[1]

March 29, 1934

Bapu, replying, mentioned Dr. Soft and Satyadevaji as workers who had worked strenuously for draining out the Chaur that was destroying the villages and 48 thousand *bighas* of land which the inhabitants possessed. Money could not help in removing the decaying inhabitants to other areas. Government and Rajendrababu were trying to find an outlet for draining out the water which would save lives and property worth lacs but they did not know what engineers, who were making contour survey, would advise; nothing possible would be left undone. Rajendrababu had decided to move the Committee for spending funds for this work.

If with all this, success is not ours, God only knows what is best. During rains there will be floods and houses will collapse, lives may be lost. So something must be done without delay. Your distress is some years old. The earthquake has multiplied it greatly. Have courage and faith. The matter is in good and capable hands. Remove the curse of untouchability. Love Harijans. Remove the distinction between high and low, touchable and untouchable. Why treat Doms as outcastes when they do work like your mothers in childhood.

To women Bapu said:

Ply the charkha, *takli*, and spin to drive away poverty, idleness and misery of misfortune.

The Searchlight, 1-4-1934

343. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, SITAMARHI[2]

[*March 29, 1934*][3]

Is it not shocking to regard the touch of a Mussalman or a Christian as unclean,[4] even though he may be truthful, godfear-

[1] The meeting, which was held on the banks of the lake, was attended by 15,000 people. An address of welcome was presented to Gandhiji.

[2] Extracted from Pyarelal Nayyar's "Weekly Letter"

[3] Gandhiji was in Sitamarhi on this date.

[4] A Muslim relief worker had brought to the notice of Gandhiji the difficulty he was facing because of the custom prevalent among the Hindus of considering food or water touched by any non-Hindu as polluted.

ing, pure, brave and self-sacrificing as any? God has created different faiths just as he has the votaries thereof. How can I even secretly harbour the thought that my neighbour's faith is inferior to mine and wish that he should give up his faith and embrace mine? As a true and loyal friend, I can only wish and pray that he may live and grow perfect in his own faith. In God's house there are many mansions and they are all equally holy. All the great religions of the world inculcate the equality and brotherhood of mankind and the virtue of toleration. The 'touch-me-not'ism that disfigures the present-day Hinduism is a morbid growth. It only betrays a woodenness of the mind, a blind self-conceit. It is abhorrent alike to the spirit of religion and morality. The real untouchables were the impure thoughts that lurked in the mind: the lying, the covetousness and the deceit which marred our daily dealings. It was these whose contact was contaminating and ought to be shunned.

Harijan, 20-4-1934

344. WANTED A MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST IN DAILY LIFE

I have no hesitation whatsoever in publishing this talk[1] by Miss Lester with missionaries. She handed it to me apologetically, asking me whether I would publish it as a supplement to *Harijan*, so that she could have a few copies for distribution among her friends, and, I suppose, at the same time give a few coppers in an enterprise devoted solely to the Harijan cause. When she put this talk among my papers with the introductory remark I have referred to, I had decided that I would either print it in the body of the paper or not at all. Let not the non-Christian readers be afraid of "a manifestation of Christ" in daily life. Whatever it may mean to Miss Lester, the word Christ is a common name, an attribute not to be attached merely to one single historical person. Each one, therefore, according to his taste may think of his own beloved teacher and guide, or, better, of the only infallible teacher and guide—Truth—and call it Christ. Let him read the conversation in the light of my interpretation and I promise the reader that he will profit by the reading. Many persons have written like Miss Lester before now. The value of her conversation lies in the fact

[1] Only extracts are reproduced here.

that she endeavours every moment of her life to practise what she professes and preaches in her writing.

. . . Language is the means by which human beings misunderstand one another. Words are inadequate as vehicles for the conveyance of spiritual truth. . . .

Neither can men be argued into Christianity.

What was it that converted the adulteress, who a few minutes before had been doggedly facing her judges, despising them but hardening herself to accept her fate at their hands? . . .

Her conversion was the result of Jesus' way of looking at things. His way of looking at people, at sinners. . . .

Is it likely that this infectious thing, this knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ can be communicated academically ?

By all means let us train the mind; let us dig deeper and ever deeper into all branches of knowledge, science and philosophy; let us bend our energies to exploring the whole realm of truth. But let us always remember how easily knowledge can be perverted to base uses. What mankind needs is to know how to live, what is the perennial source of joy, the peace that the world can't give and can't take away. . . .

Jesus propounded His ideas in maxims such as the Beatitudes. Then He would re-clothe the same idea in a tale, knowing that thus it would stick in our minds better. But even thus, well-taught doctrines would not have moulded men's lives, made and remade institutions and become the way of health and joy for millions, if He had not also embodied it in life, in His own life.

Following the usual rough and ready method of punishing those who have harmed us, we do not pay overmuch attention to Jesus' clearly enunciated maxim "Love your enemies." But we are haunted by the memory of His attitude towards His executioners and His words: "Father, they don't understand. Forgive them."

"He that would be great, let him be the servant of all." In clear enough words He proclaimed this rather startling doctrine. Throughout the centuries, its meaning has been distorted and explained away successfully enough. But its power to make us increasingly uncomfortable and at length to thrust us out from the narrowness of our privileged, selfish lives lies in the picture that lovers of Christ have enshrined in their minds, the scene where He took a bowl of water, knelt before each of His men—workmen some of them—and performed for them the servants' work of washing the feet. . . .

The Ashram set up by Verrier Elwin among Gonds has a special significance. The inmates live and work with the people, relying on their

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service alone whereby to commend to them the person and the power of Jesus Christ. . . .

I know nothing that brings me closer to reality, closer to God, than to be among a crowd of my neighbours in Bow at the end of a party, which perhaps they have organized for themselves instead of going round the corner to the Rose and Crown public house. . . .

Compromises have so dulled the sensibilities of Christians that young people often find little or nothing to challenge them in the religion presented to them. Their tendency is to turn either to money-making, sport or the barren habit of criticizing — none of them very creative activities.

The world cannot go on very long as it is now. A precarious balance is being sustained, certainly, but over an abyss. War can only be averted if peace lovers adopt as much vigour and earnestness as is shown by armament firms. We, Christians, can only overcome what is regarded as communist materialism, if our efforts to set up an equitable social order entail as much service and sacrifice as party members have to render as a matter of course in Russia.

As the love that incites us to serve our fellows is a part of the love we feel towards God, how can we shrink from suffering?

When God in man was manifest
He bowed beneath the rod;
The felon's death, the lonely quest
Was good enough for God.

Perhaps it is good enough for any of us . . . to have the honour of living in a poor district, where people have that toleration that comes from facing day after day the stark-naked realities of life, death and hunger; where astounding generosity is scarcely noticed because it is so natural . . . where Christ is daily manifested through suffering, love and service.

Harijan, 30-3-1934

345. THE TEMPLE-ENTRY BILL

The Hon. Secretary, Harijan Sevak Sangh, Bombay Provincial Board, has addressed the Secretary to the Government of India, Legislative Department, New Delhi, as follows:

I have the honour to communicate hereunder the views of the Bombay Provincial Board of the Harijan Sevak Sangh on the Temple-entry Disabilities Removal Bill, which has been circulated for public opinion under the orders of the Legislative Assembly.

CWMG VII

At the outset I have the honour to observe that my Board are entirely in sympathy with the aims and objects of the Bill and are of opinion that it should be passed into law at the earliest opportunity. It is our firm belief that legislation of the type contemplated in the Bill is essential, if Government and Legislature desire to implement the pledges which have been held out, on more occasions than one, that all possible steps will be taken to remove the disabilities under which Harijans labour at present.

One of the main objections that has been taken against the proposed legislation is that it involves an element of compulsion and that it is proposed that either Government or the Legislature should not compel any individual or individuals or a religious organization to act in a manner which is opposed to so-called religious customs and usages. It is pertinent here to examine what these customs are and how they have developed in Hindu society.

At some time beyond living memory, a custom grew up of treating certain sections of the Hindu community as the excluded classes, and in the development of that custom certain rights as Hindus were denied to the members of such excluded classes. Objection was taken if they entered the temples on the ground that they were unclean and their touch or mere shadow would pollute the devout Hindus who were visiting the temples for *darshan*. Gradually, the members of the excluded classes were thus completely debarred from entering the temples. This has, in the course of time, come to be recognized as custom and usage, and this having obtained legal sanction, the Hindu community is obliged, whatever its present views may be, to exclude the untouchables from the temples.

The real position, therefore, is that compulsion is already there in the shape of the recognition given by British Courts of Justice to the custom and usage by which members of the excluded classes have been treated as untouchables and denied the rights of temple-entry. In Madras, such custom and usage has been specifically recognized by the Madras Religious Endowments Act II of 1927, Section 40 of which accords full legal sanction to it.

With the change of times and circumstances and with ideas developing from day to day, several customs and usages have undergone material changes. In some cases, the Government, relying on the opinion of leading Hindus, have thought fit to legislate against well-established and well-recognized customs and usages in face of the opposition of a majority of Hindus, with a view to bring the state of Hindu society in line with modern ideas. In other cases, the opinion of the majority of Hindus has either thrown custom overboard, where the sanction of law was not necessary for such action, or got the Government to pass legislation to set aside such custom.

CWMG - LVII

Apart from the strictly legal and technical attitude, to argue, therefore, that the Bill involves an element of compulsion, without considering what that compulsion consists of and how such compulsion is for the removal of a greater compulsion which already exists, would not be correct. The Trustees and beneficiaries are now by law compelled to exclude the Harijans from *darshan* at Hindu temples. If the prevalent opinion amongst the Hindus of today is that this element of compulsion should be done away with and it be left open to the Hindus to decide for themselves as to how far the excluded classes should be allowed to be treated as members of the Hindu community and to enjoy the rights or privileges of *darshan*, a state of circumstances must be brought into existence which would leave the door open for necessary action in that behalf. It does not necessarily follow that, on the passing of the Bill, a rush will be made at all the temples by the excluded classes to assert their rights of *darshan*. The disqualification being removed, it will then be a matter for adjustment between Hindus and the members of the excluded classes to adjust affairs without friction and without bringing themselves under the provisions of the criminal law of the land. The view that the passing of the Bill would upset all principles and tenets of the Hindu religion would be erroneous. In fact, even after the passing of the Bill, the excluded classes will not be able to have *darshan* at the temples without the goodwill and the tacit consent of the Hindus. That the entry of the excluded classes into the temples for *darshan* is not so abhorrent to the mind of the Hindus is apparent from the fact that on certain days of the year some very important temples observing the most orthodox and rigid rules are thrown open to all classes of Hindus, including the excluded classes. At all events, going to a temple for *darshan* is entirely voluntary. In certain circumstances and on certain occasions, even members of the so-called high-class Hindus are prohibited entry into certain parts of the temples. In certain cases, such Hindus themselves observing certain rules refrain from going to temple, believing themselves to be in a state in which their attendance at the temples would pollute the temples as well as those attending there for *darshan*. The degree of compulsion, therefore, so far as this Bill is concerned, is infinitesimal as compared to the existing compulsion, which has already been imposed by reason of the recognition granted to custom and usage which had grown under circumstances which no longer exist.

The difficulty as regards the removal of custom and usage is all the greater, because in most of the cases there are no specific Trusts. Ordinarily, the Trustees would have the power to exercise their discretion, as prudent men of the world, in considering who should be admitted and to what right. But here the sanction obtained by custom and

usage comes in the way. New Trusts cannot be declared. There are no specific Trusts and reliance is placed on custom and usage to shut out the discretion of the Trustees or even the beneficiaries, meaning the Hindus. With the passing of the Bill, the result will be that the power to exercise such discretion is restored to the Trustees and, where necessary, to the beneficiaries, who can by an express vote of majority decide how far the classes of beneficiaries should be extended and, that, too, without in any way interfering with the existing rights, so that it comes to this—that the compulsion and the consequent disability from which those in control of temples are at present suffering is sought to be removed and the door thrown open and the power of discretion restored to them to act according to the circumstances and according to the wishes of those immediately concerned. It does not, as is apprehended in some quarters, direct the Trustees to commit breaches of Trust. In fact, the whole difficulty is created by the absence of specific Trusts. It only creates a situation where the Trustees, as prudent men and with the sanction of the majority, can extend the privilege of *darshan*, etc., to the members of the excluded classes on such terms and under circumstances which may be acceptable to Hindus.

Under these circumstances, the element of compulsion, if any, involved in the Bill is really and substantively to eliminate the greater degree of compulsion which is at present extant.

The second objection is (as to) whether the Bill seeks to interfere with any person's religious practice or conscience. My Board hold the view that, having regard to the fact that the entry of members of the excluded classes on certain days of festival during the year in the most orthodox Hindu temples is not objected to by the Hindus and is not considered as interference with the religious practice or conscience of a high-class Hindu, the extending of that privilege to members of the excluded classes on other days in the year cannot, in substance, amount to any interference with the religious practice or conscience of a high-caste Hindu. Apart from this, every Hindu in going to temples submits to various customary restrictions and interference, and no pious Hindu complains, as his sole aim and object in attending the temple on any particular occasion is to have *darshan* and perform puja and that aim and object is not in any way interfered with by the permissive legislation now sought to be put on the Statute-Book. The statutory recognition of the existing custom and usage in this respect serves, however, as a solid obstacle or bar against any modification of the existing state of things, and this is what makes legislation necessary, not with a view to hit or counter the religious practice or conscience of Hindus but to give those in authority over Hindu temples a right to give the members of the excluded classes their due status as Hindus and thereby prevent a cleavage in the community.

CWMG - LVII

In effect, therefore, it merely amounts to a variation in the practice of worship hitherto observed, but such variation cannot be regarded as interference with the inherent or vested right of persons. In fact, the right is one which, in the ordinary course, would have been modified in the larger interests of Hindu society or in the interests of certain classes but for the legal sanction accorded to custom and usage. Interference, therefore, as used, does not amount to or mean an objectionable tampering with the vested rights of any person or persons, but is a mere statement of fact that, in the existing conditions as compared to what is proposed to be done, there would be a variation which may technically be called interference.

Experience shows that, in spite of the willingness of the Trustees as well as the worshippers of a particular Hindu temple, it is well-nigh impossible for a public Hindu temple to throw its doors open to Harijans, in view of the English Law of Trusts and the known decisions of the High Courts in India. It is for this reason that my Board hold that the recognition of the custom and usage by the High Courts of India and the Privy Council makes legislation absolutely necessary, as the effect of the decisions of these Tribunals cannot be overcome in any other manner. The legislation now sought to be enacted is permissive, and with the provisions of criminal law now in force, it cannot be actively enforced without the goodwill of those vitally concerned, namely, the caste Hindus.

The foregoing views are expressed purely from a legal point of view. The question of throwing open a temple to excluded classes is one of great public and practical importance. If a substantial majority of Hindus at a particular centre are in favour of admitting the excluded classes to the local public temples, the element of compulsion mentioned above need not stand in the way of the proposed legislation, as such element of compulsion would be found in the conduct of all human affairs.

But the compulsion involved in the Bill is, as above indicated, of a type which may be described as *vox populi*, *vox Dei*, and to ask a body of people to act according to the opinion of the majority of that body cannot truly or partly be said to be compulsion. The effect of the Bill is actually to *remove* the compulsion resting on the Trustees to act according to a custom or usage, even if it has received judicial recognition, if such custom or usage does not find favour with the majority of the people any longer. The law, as it stands at present, may be utilized as an engine of oppression even by a single caste-Hindu worshipper at a temple to impose his will, not only on the Trustees of that temple, but on all the other worshippers at that temple who may be willing to allow a Harijan to worship at that temple. The real effect of the Bill is to deprive a caste Hindu of the engine of oppression which judicial deci-

sions have provided him with. To put it in another form, it will deprive the caste Hindu of the power given to him by judicial decisions to compel the Harijans to submit for all time to the disabilities imposed on him. Though the proposed legislation involves compulsion in theory, in practice, if the proposed Bill becomes law, it will give liberty to the worshippers at a temple to conduct their worship in accordance with the prevailing views and wishes of the majority.

On the grounds set forth above, my Board are emphatically of opinion that not only are the aims and objects of the proposed measure unexceptionable, but the method by which it seeks to achieve them are such as to cause the minimum extent of inconvenience, hardship or social disturbances.

They, therefore, request that the Legislative Assembly will enact legislation on the lines proposed at an early date in the interest of the Hindu community as a whole, apart from the duty that Government and Legislature themselves owe to the depressed classes.

I disclose no secret when I inform the reader that this representation has been drawn up by an eminent lawyer of Bombay. It is an able and dispassionate examination of the legal position. But like all documents drawn up purely from the legal standpoint, this suffers from the usual limitations.

It was open to the Board to combine with the legal, the moral and religious argument. For, the representation is addressed not to a court of law but to a Government and through it, to a Legislative Assembly, both of which are bound to take note, as they have done, of extra-legal matters. These often become decisive factors with bodies that are not hidebound by legal procedure and other legal limitations.

Thus, in my opinion, the Board might have embodied in their document their composition and their capacity to voice Hindu public opinion. It might have told the Assembly that the Bill was necessary, both in fulfilment of the Yeravda Pact and of the broad policy of the Government in respect of Harijans.

The Bombay lead can be well followed by the other provincial boards. They may examine the question with particular reference to their provinces, taking care always to understate rather than overstate the evidence as to Hindu public opinion.

The question might be asked why during the Harijan tour I did not myself take the vote of the public on the question of the proposed legislation. It presented itself to me in the beginning stages of the tour, and I came to the conclusion that, if I took the vote, it was highly likely that the people would give

their votes because I was asking for it. I should not mind receiving co-operation of people in simple faith, where faith could be legitimately exercised. In this instance, faith had no play. People had to decide on a highly technical issue in which knowledge of parliamentary procedure and function would be presumed. I had no time nor inclination to give that kind of training to the vast mass of mankind that appeared at meetings. And if I had attempted any such thing, I would have strayed far away from my mission, which I had claimed to be purely spiritual. Then, if I had begun to take votes on the propriety or otherwise of temple-entry legislation, there would have been danger of my being engaged in a hot controversy with sanatanists. This was the last thing in the world that I would do. I, therefore, deliberately refrained from putting the question of legislation to the vote of my audiences.

Whenever, therefore, I spoke on the question, I contented myself with giving my opinion that it was the duty of every Hindu reformer to press for legislation, if the pledge given at Bombay in 1932 was to be redeemed. But if the vote of the *savarna* Hindus in general was not to be taken, what was to be done? I came to the conclusion that those only could properly have any opinion on the question who were conversant with parliamentary procedure and functions. They could appreciate how, under certain circumstances, for the very preservation of religious neutrality and freedom of conscience, on which sanatanists very properly insist, legislation might be imperatively necessary. Such bodies were, first of all, lawyers' associations and, then, societies of Shastris, Harijan Sevak Boards and other representative bodies who could claim to have a say in such matters. I hope, therefore, that all associations who are interested in the removal of untouchability and who have a right to be heard will make their opinion known to the public and the authorities concerned.

But I have no desire to force legislation upon an unwilling public. Nevertheless, it cannot be educated nor its opinion ascertained, without reasoned public discussion and legitimate canvassing. If in the end it is found that enlightened caste-Hindu opinion is against legislation, I, for one, would not desire to see it carried by a mixed majority vote. All that I contend is that Hindus who have faith in temples have the right and owe it as a duty to enforce their opinion, wherever an overwhelming majority wants to open public Hindu temples to Harijans. And if there is a legal hindrance, as lawyers say there is, it can only be, and therefore should be, removed by law.

Harijan, 30-3-1934

346. SPEECH AT WORKERS' MEETING, SITAMARHI

March 30, 1934

Gandhiji said that he wanted to tell them that they should mind the work before them. If they wanted *seva* they should forget politics. For a while they should forget the name of the Congress which had got work to do and not to earn name. The waving of flags or raising of cries did not bring name or fame. Work alone could give prestige and prestige had got to be maintained. Government, he said, had got to help people in distress.

But we cannot compel Government to do so. Neither should we stand in the way of help. The hungry will eat and the thirsty will drink from whatever hands they get it. Let them receive help from all. We must co-operate with Government in our work of relief. It is our dharma to see that things are given and taken. We have to clean and dig as many wells as we can immediately, but the number of workers is small.

The population here is large and everybody has not got sufficient work on his hands. We have to take workers from the ranks. Thousands of workers from outside can do nothing. Work in the wells is full of danger and involves labour. Workers must be local. If they want wages or pay, we have to give them. If this work is neglected by anybody, even Rajendrababu, who is my fellow-worker, it is no good. If we are unable to do this, we cannot ask people to contribute to our funds. Money will flow in only if Bihar is efficient in duty. He who does not command confidence and respect cannot get anything, not even a cowrie. Rajendrababu's reputation is established in the country and every part of India has sent money to him, for they have full confidence in him. Rajendrababu has got a fine band of workers which ensures the right use of the people's money. So they pay. You have got to prepare more and more workers. Prepare the figures of wells damaged and we shall settle how many we can restore or give. It will be very painful if even one man suffers and remains thirsty through our neglect. People can go on for some time without food, but want of drinking water kills soon. I have experience of the Boer War, where people drank any water they could get hold of. I have seen the water of the Bharthua Chaur. It is poisonous. I was trying to go over the water in a boat, so dirty and poisonous it was. How could people drink that? The

question of medical relief is also now before them. Outside doctors cannot avail. You have to organize medical relief locally. Get together workers, work efficiently in co-operation with other societies, associations and the Administration. Consult local Government officers. They can help greatly if they take up work openly like what they are doing in Chapra, where there is co-operation between the District Magistrate and our workers and all are working together and very well.

The Searchlight, 4-4-1934

347. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, SITAMARHI

[*March 30, 1934*][1]

This is a terrible earthquake, perhaps, the most extensive in its destruction of any known to us in history. We must strive to overcome the devastation. But if we merely build up our fallen houses, dig out our blocked up wells, and clean our sanded fields, we shall not have done enough, if we do not learn and benefit by the moral (spiritual) lesson of the earthquake. It will be of no use even if we repair all the material damage and even if we get all the crores of rupees needed. Matter is nothing; spirit is all that lasts. The bodies of Sita-Rama, Radha-Krishna have all gone long ago. Nobody knows now even what they were like, but their spirit remains even now. We, in Bihar, have got to build up out of this disaster not merely material structures but a spiritual structure which will live through the centuries to come.

We have to realize how God made no distinction in his destruction between the high and the low, between the Hindu and the Muslim and so on and in the work of reparation we too must forget all distinctions. We must build up a unity and brotherhood amongst ourselves, which will purify and strengthen us. We must also remember that the whole world is looking at us and is watching to see what we shall do, and how we shall use the money collected from all over the world. Shall we eat it up like beggars without trying to help ourselves? No, we must not let this sacred land of Sita become a beggar-land, but we must work to earn money collected and must help one another. I know, the old sin of untouchability has been deep-rooted in Bihar. But it has now got to go for ever, if we are to be able to say that we have learnt the lesson of the earthquake.

[1] Gandhiji was in Sitamarhi on 29 and 30-3-1934.

Proceeding, he said that he was now going to ask them to give him a pice or even a cowrie and he would accept that pice or cowrie as a token of the removal of untouchability from their hearts and then he could find that untouchability was leaving Bihar.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 5-4-1934

348. LETTER TO DR. M. A. ANSARI

[Before *March 31, 1934*][1]

My emphatic opinion is that the paralysis of the intelligentsia must be removed. However much, therefore, I may differ as to the Council-entry programme, I would welcome a party of Congressmen pursuing that programme rather than [that they] should be made sullen, discontented and utterly inactive. I still retain the view that the Congress cannot, without committing suicide, give up the Poona resolution[2], but, if the majority of the Congressmen do not feel like carrying on this, I would welcome a meeting of the A.I.C.C. at which it should express its opinion and withdraw the Poona resolution. I am sure that the country would agree with their courageous behaviour.

The Hindustan Times, 5-4-1934

349. TELEGRAM TO NARANDAS GANDHI

DARBHANGA,
March 31, 1934

NARANDAS GANDHI
OPPOSITE MIDDLE SCHOOL
RAJKOT

WIRE CONDITION NOSE BASU MADHUBANI.

BAPU

From a microfilm M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8396. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Dr. Ansari, at a conference of Congress leaders held on March 31, while referring to Gandhiji's views on Council-entry mentioned a letter he had received from Gandhiji. Presumably this is the letter.

[2] *Vide* Vol. LV, pp. 262 and 265-6.

CWMG LIVII

350. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

As at Patna,
March 31, 1934

CHI. MARY,

I was wondering why you had not written earlier. I was agreeably surprised when Narmada agreed to put herself under your charge. I know that it would have been her making if she could have held on. But it was too great a change for her. Without any company, without a knowledge of English and finding herself in a hut instead of a palatial house, she will collapse. But I quite agree with you that you have unexpectedly an opportunity of being all by yourself. I have no doubt that you will make the best use possible of it. I am glad to find that Duncan is getting on.

I have undoubtedly thought often of living with Harijans. But it is no easy matter without injuring the cause. To live with them is certainly not a troublesome thing, but it is a matter of joy. But living with them would shut out the sanatanists. And my purpose today is to work on the latter rather than the former, because my mission just now is to call caste Hindus to repentance. I have therefore left the matter in the hands of local men. In a place in C.P. I was able thus to stay in a Harijan boarding [house]. I think that the velocity with which the Hindus are responding to the call for repentance is satisfactory. The progress will be still greater when caste Hindus have realized the enormity of the sin of untouchability.

The tamarind water you mention is quite all right. It does not give you any rheumatism. In order to counteract any such effect it might possibly have I would suggest your adding 10 grains of soda to every drink of tamarind water. I hope that you are keeping good health.

I am just now touring the affected areas. Some of the destructions wrought by Nature defy description. For instance I cannot give you an adequate picture of a house whose walls have sunk actually three feet deep in the ground. There are cracks everywhere in its massive walls which could not be less than 18 in. in width. Most of the fair lands are covered with two or three feet of sand where it was impossible to get any sand at all before

the earthquake. How far will the twenty lakhs of the Committee and the 30 lakhs of the Viceroy take the people? The damage is so enormous.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6022. Also C.W. 3351. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

351. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

March 30/31, 1934

CHI. NARANDAS,

I didn't get any letter from you from Wardha. I received the first one from Rajkot yesterday evening. I am writing this letter before the morning prayer.

The calamity in Bihar is too awful for words. I feel like asking you to come over, but I have been exercising control over myself. This does not mean that I don't want you to come. If you wish to come or have anything special to discuss, you may certainly come. I have merely left the decision to you.

I was surprised to read about your nose trouble. You should draw in cold water through the nostrils. Take complete rest in bed and get the head massaged with oil. Put a mud pack on the head at noon and drink as much milk and eat as much fruit as you can. For fruits, you may eat oranges, fresh grapes or raisins, and also pomegranates, if good ones are available. There is a good variety from Kathiawar. I expect to receive at Madhubani a reply to my wire.

The idea of bringing the children to Rajkot seems good. However, if Jamnadas does not keep good health and Purushottam's condition is no better, nor Jamna very strong, it doesn't seem proper to keep the boys and girls there. If the plan is carried out, it means that I will have to keep you in Rajkot. If the children cannot be kept in Ahmedabad, why cannot they be kept at Wardha? Is language the reason?

A churning is going on in my heart at present.[1] But I have come to no conclusion so far. I shall know in a day or two what the result is.

[1] About whether the civil disobedience should be withdrawn

March 31, 1934

I was interrupted yesterday after I had written so far. I am now writing this while preparations for leaving are under way.

It is God's kindness that Father and Mother are well. Is Jamnadas resolved not to take rest? Neither Chimanlal, nor anybody else for that matter, should interfere with Titus's work. When we have handed over a thing to somebody to manage, we may give only as much help as he may ask for. To take interest in what we have given away is like sacrificing oneself for the sake of the dead. You have still not given me your opinion about whom we should appoint as the new trustees of the dairy. I have thought of Ambalalbhai, Shankerlal, Ranchhodbhai and Parikshitlal. Shankerlal knows the Ashram rules and observes them to the best of his ability. Chimanlal has suggested the addition of Pannalal's name. If, however, Pannalal's is included, he will have to give sufficient time to the dairy. Will he do so?

Regarding Lilavati, it is as you say.

I can't write more now. My respectful greetings to Father and Mother.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8395. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

352. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, DARBHANGA [1]

March 31, 1934

Gandhiji said that he had seen sands on lands that used to smile with plenty; he had seen wells destroyed or filled with sand and rivers dried up. None, however hard-hearted he might be, can remain unmoved at the sight that he saw. Not to speak of the palaces of the Maharajadhiraj, which were smashed to pieces, even the poor man's dwellings had been reduced to heaps of ruins. What could he do? What could the whole world do? The situation presented a hard problem. They could get some relief; they could get money but the real thing needed was sympathy. Monetary help was only a token of such sympathy. Their duty at this juncture was clear. They should strive for internal purity.[2]

Gandhiji made a fervent appeal for the abolition of the bar sinister, as a measure of self-purification and reform. Referring to the allegorical

[1] Extracted from Pyarelal Nayyar's "Weekly Letter"
[2] This paragraph has been taken from *The Searchlight.*

story of the elephant and the alligator, he reminded the audience that the visitations of Nature were the inevitable—however long delayed they may be—consequence of our sins and were intended to rouse us from our spiritual slumber. The elephant and the alligator, the legend goes, were in their previous birth brothers. But, instead of loving each other like brothers, they hated each other and so were condemned to be born as natural enemies. Still they refused to reform. One day, when the elephant visited the lake, the alligator seized his leg and tried to drag him under water. The deadly struggle lasted for "a thousand aeons". Finally, when the elephant found his strength failing and only the tip of his trunk remained above the surface of the water, he called upon God and God came to his rescue. His delusion left him and he again loved his brother, both of them being restored to their human form through God's grace.

Nature utters its warning to us in a voice of thunder. It flashes it before our eyes in letters of flame. But seeing, we see not, and hearing, we do not understand.

He warned the people that, if they failed to pay heed to Nature's signals, Nature would exact her due with compound interest.

Harijan, 20-4-1934, and *The Searchlight*, 4-4-1934

353. TALK TO RELIEF WORKERS, DARBHANGA

March 31, 1934

Gandhiji referring to the problem of middle-class relief, said that he was not unaware of their distress. He did not want them to be neglected. He only wanted the right thing to be done in the right way and in the right order. The question of urban house reconstruction and re-establishing petty crafts, avocations that had been crippled, was a stupendous task, involving expenditure of crores. Only an agency like Government with adequate resources could properly take it up. But the question of water supply in the villages for the time being must wholly engage the attention of the Relief Committee. That alone might take away 20 lakhs of the Committee. He warned them against penny-wise policy in matters of necessary expenditure. They must quickly disburse the funds and complete the programme of well reconstruction before the commencement of the rains. They could then be in a position, with that achievement to their credit, to approach the public for further funds for other work. In the mean time the middle class must not despond but should co-operate with the Relief Committee in the preparation of statistical survey of the extent of disorganization and damage done, the estimate of relief required and a list of deserving incumbents. The Committee could then with their data go to Government and with its help take concerted

measures for relief of the middle class. Above all, they should remember that clear thinking, careful planning and energetic and quick execution alone would save the situation. The policy of carelessness, hesitation or doubt would spell disaster.

The Searchlight, 4-4-1934

354. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MADHUBANI[1]

March 31, 1934

Gandhiji expressed his deep sense of distress at the disaster and the havoc visible on all sides. It looked as if some powerful enemy had bombed towns, villages, palaces and mud houses but no bombs could shatter the firm surface of the earth like what he saw now. Houses had been swallowed up by yawning chasms. It was terrible. He observed:

As I viewed the picture of ruin spread out before me at Rajnagar, I felt overwhelmed and crushed by the weight of human misery. But then I remembered Kunti's prayer, 'O Lord, send me misery and misfortune always, lest I forget Thee!' It may not be given to us to have Kunti's Himalayan faith to utter that prayer. But may we not at least learn from it the lesson of using our calamities as a means of self-purification and turning the mind Godward ?[2]

Continuing, he said he felt the irony of the situation when man attached himself heart and soul to such ephemeral objects as had been destroyed in a few moments. He could very well understand why *rishis* and *munis* advocated renunciation and rejected all attachment, all ease and luxury. The episode of Gajendra Moksha came vividly to him now. It was like the whole elephant being immersed in water drawn in by the Graha, only the tip of the trunk remaining out and enabling the struggling Gaj to invoke the aid of Lord Vishnu by presenting lotus held in that remaining portion of the trunk. They, the sufferers, had likewise to invoke the Lord, to become humble, to look inward so that hope may dawn. . . .[3]

Look, there the black-flagwallas are come and they are waving black umbrellas too. Well, let them come and have their say, if they like. I have got to speak in their presence about

[1] The meeting was attended by more than 25,000 people. A summary of the speech was also given in Pyarelal Nayyar's "Weekly Letter", *Harijan*, 21-4-1934.

[2] This paragraph is taken from *Harijan*, 20-4-1934.

[3] At this stage some black flags were demonstrated at the meeting.

removal of *chhuachoot* (untouchability). The demon of untouchability has got to be driven away.

Gandhiji categorically reiterated his view on untouchability, which he characterized as contrary to the teachings of the Shastras and abhorrent to the spirit of sanatana dharma, which was the most catholic and tolerant of all religions in the world. He asked:

Is it not ridiculous to regard a Dom as untouchable, when for performing the same function we honour and worship our mother?

While Gandhiji's speech was in progress, the intruders disappeared as mysteriously as they had come.[1]

The Searchlight, 6-4-1934

355. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

As at Patna,
3.45 a.m. April 1, 1934

MY DEAR CHILD,

I had your long letter after keeping me waiting for a long time. There is not in your letter enough search for truth—that is, the hidden purpose of God. When we know that God Himself is the mystery of mysteries, why should anything that He does perplex us? If He acted as we would have Him do or if He acted exactly like us, we would not be His creatures and He our Creator. The impenetrable darkness that surrounds us is not a curse but a blessing. He has given us power to see the steps in front of us and it would be enough if Heavenly Light reveals that step to us. We can then sing with Newman, 'One step enough for me.' And we may be sure from our past experience that the next step will always be in view. In other words, the impenetrable darkness is nothing so impenetrable as we may imagine. But it seems impenetrable when in our impatience we want to look beyond that one step. And since God is love, we can say definitely that even the physical catastrophes that He sends now and then must be a blessing in disguise and they can be so only to those who regard them as a warning for introspection and self-purification.

I understand what you say about the children. I am glad that you are in Kodaikanal with the children. You will let me know when Menon gets something. Agatha Harrison is with me. It is rather a trying time for her, not being used to the Indian

[1] This and the preceding two paragraphs are from *Harijan*, 20-4-1934.

life. But she is standing it bravely because she wants to learn everything that she can in the shortest time possible. Muriel Lester, I left at Patna. She was not doing well. I return to Patna on the 4th April to leave it on the 7th for Assam. I return again to Bihar about the 25th, pass about a week and then go to Orissa once more returning to Bihar. You will continue to use the Wardha address.

Love to you and kisses to the children to whom I may not write today.

BAPU

MRS. ESTHER MENON
BOURNE END
KODAIKANAL

From a photostat: No. 128. Courtesy: National Archives of India. Also *My Dear Child*, pp. 104-5

356. LETTER TO CHARU PROBHA SEN GUPTA

AS AT PATNA,
April 1, 1934

DEAR CHARU PROBHA,

I have your letter.

Why should you lose faith ? We do not always get things to happen as we want them to. But we can always look at them with detachment. What we have to do is to do our allotted task from day to day and find joy in the doing of it. There is no other way to peace.

I do not know when the visit to Bengal will come off. Presently I shall be going to Assam and in the first week of May commence the tour in Orissa. I do not yet know when I reach Puri.

You must write again and tell me more definitely what worries you.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 8703. Also C.W. 1489. Courtesy: A. K. Sen

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357. LETTER TO ABHAYDEV SHARMA

April 1, 1934

BHAI ABHAY,

I congratulate you on your being relieved from the Gurukul. I somehow had a feeling that to appoint you Acharya of the Gurukul might be harmful both to the Gurukul and to you. But it was your dharma to stay on there as long as the Sabha was not willing to relieve you. Now your relations with the Sabha and the Gurukul will be on a pure spiritual level, as they ought to be.

Unless there are other reasons for it you should not be hasty in courting imprisonment on account of the inner conflict I am going through. You should await my decision.

I knew nothing about the gut used in carding. I had believed Maganlal was our surety in the matter. Anyway, I shall now enquire. And this is of course true that I had made no special effort in this direction. Animals are not slaughtered for the guts. We use the gut in the same way as innumerable people use shoes made from the hide of slaughtered animals in spite of their devotion to cow-protection. When gut is taken from naturally dead animals we shall use that gut. But for the time being, I do not see any harm in using the gut that is available. So far I have not found any string which can satisfactorily replace catgut. You should keep an open mind on the subject of gut and go on using it considering that it is indispensable.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Please write to Patna.

From Hindi: C.W. 9710

358. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

[*Monday, April 2, 1934*][1]

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

I am writing this at 3.30 on Monday morning from a small village. I had seen the letter about you addressed to Jamnalalji. Your duty is to go and stay in the Ashram. But just now it is almost impossible for you to do so. There is no necessity for you just now to seek imprisonment. I am stopping others too. Write so to Krishna Nair. I am thinking hard. More you will learn later.

It is a good course for you to take up some work of service and your expenses to be borne by your brothers. I see dharma in their continuing to pay you a small sum regularly as long as they are earning even a little. It is also right for the family to spare one brother for the service of the country. Business will be beyond you. In a way service too is business. But all this should be taken up only after you have fully recovered.

You should make up your mind to follow the course I have suggested and be tranquil. You should also, without stirring from your seat, study the *Gita* and the *Ramayana*.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I am keeping well. I shall leave Patna on the 7th for Assam.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2410

359. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS[2]

April 2, 1934

QUESTION: Is it not the duty of every Congressman and particularly an inmate of the Ashram to participate in the individual satyagraha?

ANSWER: Not at all, if they do not feel it from within.

[1] The original bears April 4, 1934 as the date of receipt.

[2] The questions, submitted to Gandhiji in writing by Chimanlal Bhatt, arose from his meeting with Gandhiji on March 22. Gandhiji wrote down the answers. *Vide* "Talk with Ashram Inmates", pp. 299-305.

Q. Won't you like those workers to take part in civil disobedience who have dropped out from the movement for some reason or other but are always inclined to associate themselves with it?

A. I would like them to do so if they have understood the full significance of the religion of satyagraha, and they follow the path even at the cost of their life.

Q. Would you accept like Pt. Jawaharlal that the country stands to benefit by resorting to civil disobedience for winning political independence?

A. I would certainly accept it if the civil disobedience is pure.

Q. Is it not desirable that those who have been resorting to satyagraha against the Government with a political motive rather than as a matter of dharma should continue to participate in the civil disobedience movement with the same attitude?

A. I really doubt it.

Q. When on my return from here I meet Kalyanjibhai, Keshavbhai, Khushalbhai, Chunibhai and other workers of the Bardoli Sangh—would it be proper if I convey to them as a gist of my conversation with you on March 22, 1934 that they should join the struggle not for the sake of prestige, not for the sake of following any one of their colleagues but only if they have faith in satyagraha as a weapon and if they fully know the advantages and disadvantages of joining such a struggle?

A. It would be proper.

These replies reflect my mental state on that day. Right now there is conflict in my mind and it remains to be seen what comes out of it.

From Gujarati: C.W. 9131

360. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

SAHARSA,
April 2, 1934

This statement owes its inspiration to a personal chat with the inmates and associates of the Satyagraha Ashram who had just come out of prison and whom at Rajendrababu's instance I had sent to Bihar. More especially it is due to a revealing information I got in the course of conversation about a valued companion of long standing who was found reluctant to perform the full

[1] This was released to the Press on April 7; *vide* "Statement to the Press", p. 361.

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prison task and preferring his private studies to the allotted task. This was undoubtedly contrary to the rules of satyagraha. More than the imperfection of the friend, whom I love more than ever, it brought home to me my own imperfection. The friend said he had thought that I was aware of his weakness. I was blind. Blindness in a leader is unpardonable. I saw at once that I must for the time being remain the sole representative of civil resistance in action.

During the informal conference week at Poona in July last I had stated that while many individual civil resisters would be welcome, even one was sufficient to keep alive the message of satyagraha. Now after much searching of the heart I have arrived at the conclusion that in the present circumstances only one, and that myself and no other, should for the time being bear the responsibility of civil resistance if it is to succeed as a means of achieving *purna* swaraj.

I feel that the masses have not received the full message of satyagraha owing to its adulteration in the process of transmission. It has become clear to me that spiritual instruments suffer in their potency when their use is taught through non-spiritual media. Spiritual messages are self-propagating. The reaction of the masses throughout the Harijan tour has been the latest forcible illustration of what I mean. The splendid response of the masses has been spontaneous. The workers themselves were amazed at the attention and the fervour of vast masses whom they had never reached.

Satyagraha is a purely spiritual weapon. It may be used for what may appear to be mundane ends and through men and women who do not understand its spirituality provided the director knows that the weapon is spiritual. Everyone cannot use surgical instruments. Many may use them if there is an expert behind them directing their use. I claim to be a satyagraha expert in the making. I have need to be far more careful than the expert surgeon who is complete master of his science. I am still a humble searcher. The very nature of the science of satyagraha precludes the student from seeing more than the step immediately in front of him.

The introspection prompted by the conversation with the Ashram inmates has led me to the conclusion that I must advise all Congressmen to suspend civil resistance for swaraj as distinguished from specific grievances. They should leave it to me alone. It should be resumed by others in my lifetime only under my direction unless one arises claiming to know the science better than I do and inspires confidence. I give this opinion as the author

and initiator of satyagraha. Henceforth, therefore, all who have been impelled to civil resistance for swaraj under my advice directly given or indirectly inferred will please desist from civil resistance. I am quite convinced that this is the best course in the interests of India's fight for freedom.

I am in dead earnest about this greatest of weapons at the disposal of mankind. It is claimed for satyagraha that it is a complete substitute for violence or war. It is designed, therefore, to reach the hearts both of the so-called "terrorists" and the rulers who seek to root out the "terrorists" by emasculating a whole nation. But the indifferent civil resistance of many, grand as it has been in its results, has not touched the hearts of either the "terrorists" or the rulers as a class. Unadulterated satyagraha must touch the hearts of both. To test the truth of the proposition, satyagraha needs to be confined to one qualified person at a time. The trial has never been made. It must be made now.

Let me caution the reader against mistaking satyagraha for mere civil resistance. It covers much more than civil resistance. It means relentless search for truth and the power that such a search gives to the searcher. The search can only be pursued by strictly non-violent means.

What are the civil resisters, thus freed, to do? If they are to be ready for the call whenever it comes, they must learn the art and the beauty of self-denial and voluntary poverty. They must engage themselves in nation-building activities, the spread of khaddar through personal hand-spinning and hand-weaving, the spread of communal unity of hearts by irreproachable personal conduct towards one another in every walk of life, the banishing of untouchability in every shape or form in one's own person, the spread of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks and drugs by personal contact with individual addicts and generally by cultivating personal purity. These are services which provide maintenance on a poor man's scale. Those for whom the poor man's scale is not feasible should find a place in small unorganized industries of national importance which give a better wage. Let it be understood that civil resistance is for those who know and perform the duty of voluntary obedience to law and authority.

It is hardly necessary to say that in issuing this statement I am in no way usurping the function of the Congress. Mine is mere advice to those who look to me for guidance in matters of satyagraha.

From a copy: C.W. 9137

361. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MONGHYR[1]

[*April 3, 1934*][2]

After so many lives were lost and so many houses destroyed, God has roused us from our slumber. All the religions say that when sin accumulates upon the earth, a total cataclysm follows. Untouchability is a great sin. Are we prepared to get rid of it or not is the great question. Someone has said that that sin is not confined only to the fifteen millions of Biharis.[3]

Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose that the Biharis were specially marked by nature for its attention because they are more wicked than the rest.[4] Misfortune is not a proof of an individual's wickedness. All the same, there is an indissoluble connection between natural calamities and man's sin. You cannot have an interruption of the moral law in one part without producing a reaction in the entire system. When one limb is afflicted, through it the entire body is punished. Every calamity should, therefore, lead to a thorough cleansing of individual as well as social life.

What sin have the Muslims committed? Shall I tell you their sin? Their sin is that they have kept up the relationship with us in spite of the fact that we observe untouchability. Can it be a divine law that some persons are born untouchables and remain so for generations? Even men do not have such a law. It does not exist anywhere in this world. The plight of Negroes in America is very bad. They are untouchables but they are not considered to have been born so. Treating them as untouchables is not considered a dharma. There are a vast number of people who treat Negroes as untouchables but such behaviour is not considered a part of religion. It is not that Bihar has incurred this punishment because it is more wicked. Bihar is a part of India. It is a part of the world. God alone knows His ways. We only know that God is full of compassion, love and kindness, so the punishment he metes out must have been based on justice. It is beyond my power to com-

[1] Extracted from Pyarelal's "Weekly Letter". A short version of the speech was also published in English in *Harijan*, 20-4-1934.

[2] From Chandulal Dalal's *Gandhijini Dinvari*

[3] The following paragraph has been taken from *Harijan*, 20-4-1934.

[4] In Monghyr, two thousand houses had been razed to the ground and ten thousand people had been killed in the earthquake.

prehend how. It is beyond the power of anyone. We should consider the calamity as an outcome of our sins—not your sins but mine. Everyone should consider Bihar's calamity as his own and should feel as sad for those who died there as he might have felt at the death of his own relatives. One would be called a human being only if he did that and only then could he claim to know God. We should try to wash off our sins—individual and social—while this tragedy is fresh in our minds. The Earthquake Relief Committee won't tell you how to do that. I have been a reformer from my childhood. I began that work with children and women. It is therefore not my dharma to ply you with sweet words and then leave you. So wake up if you have not woken up—and ask of God the strength to wash off your sins. The world is watching what the Biharis do in this hour of calamity. You must pass the test. May God give you the strength to grasp what I have said and to accept and implement what is worth accepting and implementing.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 29-4-1934 and *Harijan*, 20-4-1934

362. LETTER TO DR. M. A. ANSARI[1]

April 5, 1934

DEAR DR. ANSARI,

It was good of you, Bhulabhai and Dr. Bidhan Roy to come all the way to Patna to discuss the resolutions arrived at recently at an informal meeting[2] of some Congressmen and ascertain my opinion on them. I have no hesitation in welcoming the revival of the Swarajya Party and the decision of the meeting to take part in the forthcoming elections to the Assembly, which you tell

[1] The letter was released to the Press with the following statement by Dr. Ansari, Dr. B. C. Roy and Bhulabhai Desai: "We arrived at Patna on the morning of the 4th instant and were able to confer with Mahatma Gandhi as regards the conclusions arrived at by the Delhi Conference. Notwithstanding the strain he had gone through, considering the importance of the matter he discussed with us for over three hours the various aspects of the revival of the Swarajya Party. The matter was again discussed today with Mahatmaji in the morning and in the afternoon, and the result of discussions is now embodied in the following letter addressed by Mahatmaji to Dr. Ansari. . . ."

[2] The meeting, which was held in Delhi on March 31, 1934, was attended by Madan Mohan Malaviya, Dr. B. C. Roy, Khaliquzzaman, G. B. Pant and other Congress leaders. The meeting decided to form a Swarajya Party and take part in the elections for the Central Assembly.

me is about to be dissolved. My views on the utility of legislatures in the present state are well known. They remain on the whole what they were in 1920, but I feel that it is not only right, but it is the duty of every Congressman, who for some reason or other does not want to or cannot take part in the Poona programme and who has faith in entry into the legislatures to seek entry and form combinations in order to prosecute the programme which he or they believe to be in the interest of the country. Consistently with my view above mentioned, I shall be at the disposal of the Party at all times and render such assistance as it is in my power to give.[1]

Yours sincerely,

The Hindustan Times, 6-4-1934

363. NOTES

How Do You Pray?

God has blessed me with numerous friends belonging to different faiths. Some of these are anxious to help me in the movement against untouchability. The question is assuming a concrete form and requires a definite answer. My own position is very clear and precise. I need the co-operation of the whole world in this purity movement of gigantic internal reform. I have asked for the prayers of the whole world. But some non-Hindus want to translate their prayer into action, and that they would do, if they could, in co-operation with me. I would love to have it in the closest manner possible. But there is a limitation. Suppose I hand a Harijan child to a Christian or a Muslim friend or institution. What will they do? Will they bring it up as a Hindu or in their own faith? For me all the principal religions are equal in the sense that they are all true. They are supplying a felt want in the spiritual progress of humanity. Hence I have had no difficulty in bringing up Muslim, Parsi and Christian children under my care in their own faith. Indeed, I had to study some literature for their sake when their parents wanted me to teach them particular forms of worship according to special books. The easiest way to find out a man's position is perhaps through his prayer. I suggest the following two forms:

[1] For Pyarelal's note on Gandhiji's views on the subject, *vide* Appendix III.

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I

O God! give all Thy creation wisdom, so that each may worship and follow Thee according to his light and grow in his own faith.

II

O God! give Thy creation wisdom, so that each may worship and follow Thee even as I try to do.

It is clear that the first form is all-inclusive and that, therefore, a person or institution that will subscribe to it can conscientiously bring up Hindu wards as Hindus, Muslim as Muslims, etc., whereas one subscribing to the second form can conscientiously take in only those who belong to his denomination, unless he takes others with the declared intention of converting them to his own denomination.

Will friends who read these lines and care write to me for my information which prayer they subscribe to and offer every day?

Harijan, 6-4-1934

364. AN ADI-DRAVIDA'S DIFFICULTIES

A correspondent writes:

(1) Are you really interested in the welfare of Harijans or are you actuated by any ulterior motive so as to show an increase in the population of Hindus?

(2) If you really think that untouchables form a part and parcel of Hindus, will you kindly throw light on the following *shlokas* of *Manusmriti* considered holy by the Hindus:

"If any *Panchama* carries on any trade which a respectable man conducts, and then grows rich, he should be deprived of his wealth and driven out of the country." (*Manusmriti*, x. 96)

"Whosoever that affords tuition to a Shudra, will enter Hell along with him (Shudra). Any Shudra endeavouring to impart religious instruction to a Brahmin should be inflicted with the punishment of hot oil being poured into his mouth and ears." (XIV. 89).

"Any Shudra found talking with a loud voice should be branded with red hot iron bars. Any Shudra occupying an equal seat with a Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya should be burnt with a red hot iron." (VIII. 276, VIII. 271)

Hindus are commanded to observe this book as holy and act according to the injunctions contained therein. If you consider this as unholy, why should you not declare it as such and instead issue a new decree of your own called "Gandhismriti"?

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(3) Even Arya Samajists are removing this untouchability, and their novel procedure in carrying out this task is to perform the ritual of *shuddhi* and then to admit the individual into the fold. If the untouchable is really a Hindu, how does this necessity arise? Do you agree with them in this respect?

The correspondent claims to be an Adi-Dravida and, therefore, he has every right to suspect my motive. The best answer, therefore, I can return to his first question is that he should await my death for forming a final judgment. Meanwhile, if he is prepared to accept my word, I would assure him that I set no value upon an increase in the number of Hindus so called. False professors of a creed not only do no service to it but may kill it. The only motive, therefore, that guides me in working for the Harijan cause is to see Hinduism purified of the curse of untouchability. And if, in so becoming, it is represented only by one Hindu, I would have no repentance but real joy that it was not dead.

The correspondent's second question is very pertinent, only he would not have put that question to me if he had been a constant reader of *Harijan* and had, therefore, known my definition of Shastras. I hold *Manusmriti* as part of the Shastras. But that does not mean that I swear by every verse that is printed in the book described as *Manusmriti*. There are so many contradictions in the printed volume that, if you accept one part, you are bound to reject those parts that are wholly inconsistent with it. I hold *Manusmriti* as a religious book because of the lofty teachings contained in it. The verses quoted by the correspondent are flatly contradictory to the spirit of its main theme. The correspondent should know that nobody is in possession of the original text. In fact, there is no evidence to prove that a *rishi* named Manu ever lived. Somehow or other, the genius of Hinduism has made the writers or the givers of the grandest truths efface themselves. Therefore I have suggested to seekers after Truth the only safe rule for their guidance in studying Shastras, namely, that they should reject whatever is contrary to truth and ahimsa, the true foundations of all religions.

The correspondent's third question should rightly be addressed to Arya Samajists. It is news to me that Harijans are required by the Arya Samajists to perform the ritual of *shuddhi* before being admitted to the Arya Samaj. But I have seen the *shuddhi* ceremony performed in order to strengthen the Harijans in the due fulfilment of the vow that they take as to abstention from beef, carrion-eating, drinking intoxicating liquors, etc. The correspondent quite rightly says that, if an untouchable is really a Hindu, no *shuddhi*

is required of him. If any is required, it is required of the caste Hindu who has committed the sin of believing in untouchability.

Harijan, 6-4-1934

365. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

PATNA,
April 6, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

It is about 2.30 a.m. just now. The National Week commences today. This has now become the usual time when I get up. I take a nap during the day. I had your wire inquiring after my health and I replied to it. Ansari saw me. He examined me. The gist of his report was that there was nothing particularly wrong. Everybody of course advises me to take rest. You may be sure that I take as much rest as I can. But the result is in God's hands.

Ansari, Dr. Bidhan and Bhulabhai have now met me. I have told them in writing that it is the duty of those who have faith in the Councils to enter them. They may, however, do so in their individual capacity and not in the name of the Congress. I think it will not do any good to restrain them. Ansari will go to England in May—for his health and for the Nawab Saheb. Bhulabhai will take charge of the whole work.

I hope you will approve of the step which I have taken after much thinking. I didn't think it advisable that individuals should offer civil disobedience on their own responsibility and, therefore, I have told co-workers that they also should suspend it. I alone may offer it and I will invite others to do the same when I think it right. If anybody is drawn by my example to court arrest, he will not be regarded to have offered civil disobedience on his own and senior co-workers cannot be prevented from doing that. You will see a statement by me on this subject in two or three days. If you don't understand my step, please don't worry. I am sure that you will approve of it on further reflection.

I have read Vithalbhai's will. Everything seems to be in order. My own attitude is that, if Bose gets the money, we shouldn't mind. Who is your companion ? This is enough for today.

I am asking Swami to write more.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 90-1

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366. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

April 6, 1934

BA,

Today is Friday. I have not received your letter yet. It is about 3 in the morning. I had fully replied to your previous letter. You must have received Raojibhai's letter. Vasumati has come here. I have not had any talk with her till now. Hemprabhadevi also has come here to discuss with me matters about khadi. Rukhi came here yesterday evening for her eyes. They are watering all the time. I had a letter from Madhavdas. He says that he is completely all right now. There was a letter from Manu. She is all right. I hope you did not worry in the least about me. I am all right. I am being regularly examined by Dr. Ansari. He was here only yesterday. He fears nothing. He does advise me to take rest, of course. I take as much as I can. Ultimately everything depends on God's will. I have now decided to stop all others from going to jail. I alone should offer satyagraha. Hence, when all of you are released you will not have to offer satyagraha again for the present. You should go on doing khadi work, etc. I will not write more today. You do remember, I hope, that today is a day of fasting. I am starting for Assam tomorrow. Bal will accompany me. Prithuraj also will of course be there.

Blessings to all from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Bane Patro, p. 22

367. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI PATEL

[About *April 6, 1934*][1]

CHI. DAHYABHAI,

I had your letter, but owing to other preoccupations could not reply sooner. For the time being it is better to visit Manibehn every time. When you do, tell her that not a day passes when I

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Vallabhbhai Patel", p. 356.

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do not think of her. But I am not worried, for I have full faith in her power of endurance and firmness.

When you meet Father, tell him that I have written to him every week without fail.

I have read Uncle's[1] will. There is sure to be difficulty in getting a probate for it in Bombay. But I am of opinion that we should not do anything in the matter at all and we should let go anything that passes into Subhas Bose's hands. I believe he will use it for only public purposes.

Let me have news of Baba's health. I am fine.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI DAHYABHAI VALLABHBHAI PATEL
RAMNIVAS PARIKH STREET, BOMBAY 4

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 157

368. INTERVIEW TO "THE HINDU"

PATNA,
April 6, 1934

Although I have been credited with a very vivid imagination and although, having known fair Bihar intimately, I had a good mental picture of the havoc caused by the earthquake, the reality went far beyond the imaginary picture I had formed from descriptions received from Rajendrababu.

Although Rajendrababu is a word-painter, he had failed to convey an adequate impression of the ruin that has overtaken Bihar.

I have now covered almost all areas of destruction barring Purnea. Practically everywhere, owing to the scarcity of water, there is a real danger of famine.

The rich fields covered with sand, rows upon rows of houses in towns and villages utterly destroyed, water and sand shooting up through stone of cement floors, walls and pillars waist-deep, palaces a heap of bricks, solitary walls or pillars standing as a mournful reminder of the glory that was, improvised huts every moment in danger of catching fire, old sites not capable of being

[1] Vithalbhai Patel

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built upon for fear of a subsidence during rains, cattle starving for want of fodder and some dying for want of water, add to this the very real danger of floods reaching areas hitherto untouched by them.

The middle classes have been perhaps the hardest hit. Some of them have lost their all and are reduced to beggary. Those, therefore, who are least able to bear the burden have been the hardest hit.

The combined efforts of the Bihar Central Relief Committee assisted by other organizations will fail to give anything like full relief to these middle-class men.

Nearly twenty lakhs subscribed to the Central Relief and nearly forty lakhs subscribed to the Viceroy's Fund are utterly inadequate for the minimum requirements. I hope therefore that the public will realize the immensity of the task before the Government and the people and will not in any way relax their efforts to send their donations as liberally as they can to the Central Relief Committee.

I am unable to say how many lakhs will be required to ensure just sufficient supply of water for thirsty men and cattle, let alone the supply of food, medical necessaries and house accommodation, temporary or semi-permanent.

The reclamation of devastated fields has not been altogether overlooked. The Government are engaged in conducting a survey of the devastated area. They have issued elaborate instructions to the peasantry to show how they can renovate their fields for the approaching monsoons.

The latest estimate made by the Government of the area under earthquake sands is over 500,000 acres. The average cost of reclaiming one acre is, at the lowest estimate, calculated at twenty per acre. That means one crore. What relief it would be possible to give the owners of these fields is more than I can say at present. But I think I have given what is undoubtedly an underestimate of the needs one and a half crores of people living in the affected area require. Needless to say all these are not all equally affected. Some have escaped direct loss altogether. But none has escaped the indirect effect of the devastation.

CORRESPONDENT: Why, you have presented such a doleful picture of the Bihar situation and asked for more money, that I should be less than human were I to treat this as an exclusive interview. Should I do so, I shall be denying Bihar all available sources of help.

GANDHIJI: What are you driving at?

CORRESPONDENT: I propose to share this interview with all newspaper men for obvious reasons.

The Hindu, 7-4-1934

369. OBSERVATIONS AT MEETING OF BIHAR ANTI-UNTOUCHABILITY BOARD

April 5/6, 1934

Asked regarding the ways to secure entry for Harijans into temples of all-India importance, such as the Vaidyanath Temple at Deoghar and Vishnupur Temple at Gaya, Gandhiji emphasized the importance of winning the heart of caste Hindus by peaceful propaganda without coercion or compulsion of any kind whatsoever. In that way he thought untouchability was bound to disappear in course of time.

Regarding the desirability of persuading Harijans to enter Hindu temples, Gandhiji thought that caste Hindus should throw open the temples, but it was for the Harijans to enter or not. They should create in them a desire to lead pure lives and merely entering the temples will not lead to purity of life.

Asked regarding touchability in the matter of food and water, Gandhiji said that water and food did not necessarily become polluted by touch and it was only impure hands that caused pollution.

Asked whether secondary education alone was desirable for Harijans or whether it should be supplemented by vocational or industrial education, Gandhiji said that all kinds of education should be provided for the Harijans and arrangements should be made for vocational training.

The Bombay Chronicle, 9-4-1934

370. LETTER TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

April 7, 1934

BHAI SAHEB,[1]

I had a long chat with Dr. Mahmood. He is most anxious to work for and to achieve communal unity. I have given it as my opinion that there is no escape from the communal award if we are to secure Mussalman co-operation and if we are to secure any advantage for the nation. The other alternative is retention of the status quo. Then the question of award does not

[1] The superscription is in Hindi.

arise at all. There seems to me to be no *via media*. There are difficulties in our way in every case. But I do think that we have to take up a decisive attitude one way or the other.

Yours,
MOHANDAS[1]

From a photostat: G.N. 5070

371. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

April 7, 1934

This statement[2] was drafted by me on my day of silence at Saharsa, that is Easter Monday, 2nd inst. I passed it on to Rajendrababu and then it was circulated among the friends who were present. The original draft has undergone considerable revision. It is also abridged. But in essence it remains the same as it was on Monday. I regret that I have not been able to show it to all friends and colleagues with whom I would have been delighted to share it. But as I had no doubt whatsoever about the soundness of my decision and as I knew that the civil resistance of some friends was imminent, I was not prepared to take the risk of delaying publication by waiting for the opinion of friends. The decision and every word of the statement are in answer to intense introspection, searching of the heart and waiting upon God. The decision carries with it reflection upon no single individual. It is a humble admission of my own limitations and a due sense of the tremendous responsibility that I have carried on my shoulders all these long years.

From a copy: C.W. 9137

[1] The subscription is in Hindi.
[2] *Vide* pp. 348-50.

CWMG LVII

372. *INTERVIEW TO THE "HINDU"*

PATNA,
April 7, 1934

CORRESPONDENT: Your statement is all too brief for the general reader and is likely to be mistaken by some as a desertion on your part of your fellow prisoners.

GANDHIJI: I knew that I laid myself open to such a charge when I deliberately decided to omit all references to them, for my decision had nothing to do with securing a release of the prisoners. Civil resisters do not march to the prison in order to get out of it the next day. They will come out in their own good time.

My only aim in coming to this decision was to purge the movement of any possibility of internal decay. Such a possibility must always be there when an imperfect man handles imperfect instruments. I therefore felt that the time had come for me to reduce the possibility of decay to the minimum. That could only be secured if civil resistance was confined to one person only, that one being the most versed in the science.

In my opinion the decision will make the movement stronger than before and capable of being easily handled both by the people and by the Government.

Hence the possibility of an early discharge of prisoners is really greater now than before, especially if the Government believe in the sincerity of my decision.

Replying to the question why, having confined civil resistance to himself, he should not go to the whole hog and suspend it altogether, Gandhiji declared:

That is undoubtedly a very proper question. All I can say in answer is that, as the author of satyagraha and as a staunch believer in its efficacy, I may not suspend it in my own person except under circumstances which will discredit the movement itself, as for instance violence by satyagrahis themselves.

Asked how far his decision was prompted by the Delhi decisions, the Mahatma replied:

Not in the slightest degree. It was taken definitely on Easter Monday at Saharsa. I had no knowledge that the Delhi Conference had finished its deliberations and that it had come to a definite conclusion. I came to know on Tuesday that the Conference had concluded its deliberations. What is more, the decision had come to me vaguely some days before it was finally taken when I knew nothing of the Delhi proposals. Therefore, in point of time and fact, my decision to confine civil resistance only to me had no connection whatsoever with the Delhi Conference resolutions. Long before the Delhi Conference took a concrete form I had said in conversations and in letters to friends that it was the duty of Congressmen who believed in Council-entry, and could not or would not offer civil resistance, to form a party and prosecute the Council-entry programme. Thus and only thus, in my opinion, could the situation be clarified and the paralysis of Congressmen removed. Indeed, even when the Poona Conference was meeting I suggested to Messrs Asaf Ali and Satyamurti that if they believed in the Council programme they should follow it and canvass public opinion in its favour.

The decision about civil resistance is only based on ethical grounds and, so far as I know, has no connection whatsoever with external circumstances. I can also tell you that, in the statement as it was drafted on Easter Monday, there was a paragraph regarding Council-entry for those who would not take up the constructive activities mentioned in my statement. I removed that paragraph because I had, before the statement was given to the Press, seen the Delhi friends and given them the letter which is already before the public.

The Hindu, 8-4-1934

373. INTERVIEW TO "THE HINDU"

PATNA,
April 7, 1934

Asked what would be the extent of his co-operation with the Swaraj Party, Gandhiji said:

Consistently with my views on Council-entry I will render them all the assistance I can.

Asked if he would assist them in securing election, Gandhiji stated:

I will certainly not interfere in an election, but the electors will be guided, so far as my opinion counts with them, by the

knowledge that I would like them to vote for Swarajist candidates if they are otherwise qualified.

Asked as to what extent it will be the duty of Congressmen as a body to help in the elections, Gandhiji said:

Those Congressmen who believe in Council-entry will certainly consider it their duty to take part in the elections.

Q. What will be the position of men like Babu Rajendra Prasad, who do not believe in Council-entry, but whose assistance will be necessary for success at the election?

A. If Rajendrababu does not believe in Council-entry he will not seek election, but there will be nothing to prevent him from advising those Congressmen who may desire to enter the Assembly and guide them.

Asked how far his assistance would be available to the Party, Gandhiji replied:

Whenever they seek assistance and I can legitimately give them, it will be always at their disposal—so long as I am out.

Asked if he would assist the Party in drawing up the Constitution and programme, Gandhiji replied:

If I can spare time and can usefully advise them, I shall certainly do so. But this must not on any account be interpreted as an invitation to come to me for advice on all occasions. For one thing, I shall have no time left to me for shouldering such a burden.

The Hindu, 8-4-1934

374. TELEGRAM TO NARANDAS GANDHI

ABARIA,
April 9, 1934

NARANDAS GANDHI
NEW PARA
RAJKOT

IF NOSE STILL BLEEDING GO BOMBAY CONSULT JIVARAJ MEHTA.

BAPU

From a microfilm: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8397. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

375. LETTER TO B. R. AMBEDKAR

AS AT PATNA,
April 9, 1934

DEAR DR. AMBEDKAR,

Pray excuse me for the delay in replying to your letter of 29-3-1934. It was not possible to reply earlier owing to incessant travelling.

Whilst I should fall in with your scheme if it was accepted by the provinces, I could not shoulder the burden of pressing the other provinces to reopen the Pact in respect of the number of seats allotted in their cases.

I have been trying to do what I can to placate Bengal, but so far without success. If the Harijan population in Bengal is as was believed at the time of the Pact they have nothing to complain of. If as a matter of fact it is much less than the figure on whose basis the number was fixed, I should think there would be no objection on your part to an amendment bringing the number to the figure required.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 7949. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

376. LETTER TO J. S. HOYLAND

April 9, 1934

DEAR HOYLAND,

I have been having your notes of affection with due regularity. These I do not acknowledge to save time and money. The postage is a considerable item. At the end of the month I find that it is more than enough to conduct a village school for Harijans or any others. It is enough to provide 1,000 meals for the famine-stricken areas of India.

I am glad you have come to terms with Allen & Unwin about the translations[1]. I hope you are not calling them my translations. They are your adaptations from my translations.

[1] Of the *Ashram Bhajanavali*. An adaptation by J. S. Hoyland was brought out by George Allen & Unwin in 1934 under the title *Songs from Prison*.

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Agatha and Muriel passed many useful days with me. I expect to meet them again.

My love to all those who join the silent prayer meetings.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 4511. Courtesy: Woodbrooke College, Birmingham and Mrs. Jessie Hoyland

377. LETTER TO PREMI JAIRAMDAS

BIHAR CENTRAL RELIEF COMMITTEE,
EXHIBITION ROAD,
PATNA,
[*April 9, 1934*][1]

MY DEAR PREMI,

What food is Father taking? He ought to take plenty of fruit fresh and dried and leafy vegetables plain-boiled and he will get rid of piles. How has he taken my new decision? Do you like it? The Sind tour will not come off before June. Hope Dr. Choithram is better. Hyderabad won't have more than a day, I fear. I go to Assam tomorrow and return on 24th to Patna.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI PREMIBEHN JAIRAMDAS
PREM BHAVAN
HYDERABAD
SIND

From the original: C.W. 9245. Courtesy: Jairamdas Doulatram

[1] From the postmark

CWMG - LVII

378. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

April 9, 1934

MY DEAR KUMARAPPA,

I read Dr. Jesudasan's letter only yesterday. He should certainly describe to American audiences the condition of Bihar and appeal for help. You will please send him the literature we have published.

From the Doctor's letter it is clear, I suppose, that he cannot subscribe to the 1st prayer[1] I showed you and that therefore he could not conscientiously bring up a Hindu boy under his charge as a Hindu. I wonder if you are reading *Harijan* regularly. I sent the two prayers to *Harijan* with comments for publication. I would like Dr. Jesudasan to deal with the note in *Harijan* not for publication but for my private information.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI KUMARAPPA
CENTRAL RELIEF CAMP
EXHIBITION ROAD
PATNA

From a photostat: G.N. 10104 and 10105

379. LETTER TO CHARU PROBHA SEN GUPTA

AS AT PATNA,
April 9, 1934

MY DEAR CHARU PROBHA,

Nonsense, you must not give way to despair like this. Sadhus will only put one interpretation on the *Gita*. It is an interpretation born of laziness of mind. You should read the 3rd chapter of the *Gita* again and again. There Krishna says, "I do not stop working for one single moment. If I did, the whole world would perish." He says again, "No one stops work for a moment, only everyone but the knowing one works helpless-

[1] *Vide* "Notes", pp. 353-4.

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ly.'' Let us work knowingly and voluntarily, not for self but for the whole of humanity and we shall surely see God face to face. Our humanity is India. We may not serve her so as to injure others and [then] it becomes service of God. We must learn to see God in such service. This is the yoga of the *Gita* and no other.

Don't you write doleful letters to me. Just begin the service that easily comes to you and you will soon expand and find joy.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 8704. Also C.W. 1490. Courtesy: A. K. Sen

380. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

April 9, 1934

CHI. NARANDAS,

Today is silence day. But by some chance we are required to spend two hours in a train. I am, therefore, writing this while waiting at a station.

I have sent you a wire regarding the bleeding from your nose. I hope you have acted upon it. The climate of Bombay is beneficial for such a condition. That of Rajkot, on the other hand, is hot and dry. Also the doctors in Bombay are better.

In view of my decision regarding civil disobedience, you must come and see me once. If you come, we can discuss plans for the future. I have many ideas, but they will require a long time to put in writing and even then I cannot explain them properly.

After I have come to some decision regarding all the arrangements to be made, I will write them down.

I hope you have been able to understand the necessity and propriety from a spiritual point of view, of the latest decision. If you have not been able to understand it, I shall have to explain it. As for myself, the decision has filled me with bliss.

A letter for Vijaya is enclosed. You will also find enclosed a copy of my programme, in case Chandrashankar has not already sent one.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8398. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

CWMG - LVII

381. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI A. MEHTA

April 9, 1934

BHAISHRI BHAGWANJI,

I have your letter. If you permit me, I intend to send your letter to Narbheram. If you permit, let me have Narbheram's address.

If you think Ratilal is mad, what value can be attached to any letter he may write? Either Prabhashankar as Champa's guardian or Champa herself should decide the matter.

After coming to know Ratilal, I had told Prabhashankar before the marriage that he should break off the engagement. I had even obtained Revashankarbhai's consent for this being done. But Bhai Prabhashankar and his sister and mother insisted on the marriage taking place. I consented to and helped in the money being deposited in Champa's name.

You seem to think that Maganlal is at fault. I don't. Maganlal agreed to the property being kept in the joint names of all. But how can the fact of the change effected by the brothers by agreement among themselves be cited as a ground for refusing to give the sisters the money set apart for them, unless they agree to it? If Maganlal pays by instalments, let the other two brothers also pay by instalments. Even if Chhaganlal refuses to pay, why should Champa, who is, and ought to be, eager to do justice, hesitate to do that to the sisters ? And Champa means Prabhashankar. I feel most for Jayakunvar, who is reduced to a miserable state.

In case I tour Kathiawar for Harijan work, I shall be content with whatever Rajkot gives me.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5822. Also C.W. 3045. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

382. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

April 9, 1934

BHAISHRI MUNSHI,

I received your letter. I have had a discussion with Bhulabhai. He will bear the burden. If good and dedicated men are available, I am sure it will be possible to achieve something. I have prepared a draft according to my lights. I can't think of any alternative. You must have seen the draft. You will have to take interest in this matter.

There was no option but to make this experiment. The clouds will now clear up. Had that resolution not been passed, the confusion would have continued. Even if the ship founders, the experiment will have served its purpose. But the ship is not likely to be wrecked, for the Congress will always have a Council party. If so, let them enter the Councils. I have given up even mental opposition to it. I have drawn whatever lesson I could from my opposition. I don't regret it. It was necessary at that time. Today such opposition seems foolish.

I hope you have approved of my decision regarding civil disobedience. You at any rate should not find it difficult to understand its significance. But let me know if you had any difficulty.

Please take care of your health and get well.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

The Assam tour starts tomorrow. If you write to the Patna address, the letter will reach me.

From Gujarati: C.W. 7536. Courtesy: K. M. Munshi

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383. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

PURNEA,
April 9, 1934

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

I got your letter. Cling to your duty with unswerving faith without thinking of the fruit of your work.

I, too, could not understand the sentence which you have quoted from my letter[1] regarding Manibehn. Either a word has been left out by me, or you have not been able to decipher the sentence correctly. May be I scribbled something while dozing. It does happen sometimes that I am extremely tired and sleepy when writing letters. If you send me the letter and if the sentence can have any meaning, I will explain it. Since you have understood what you should do, the rest does not matter.

The change in the hours of going to bed and rising was unavoidable.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 368. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P. Pandya

384. LETTER TO DRAUPADI SHARMA

April 9, 1934

CHI. DRAUPADI[2],

Your coming to the Ashram is very much to my liking. The programme you have now prepared for learning things seems to be good. I hope that you will all maintain good health in Wardha. You must make an earnest effort to understand the Ashram life. Get acquainted with all the women in the Ashram and help them in whatever way you can. I have built many hopes on bringing you to the Ashram.

Do write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsha*, between pp. 58-9

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Bhagwanji P. Pandya", p. 281.
[2] Wife of Hiralal Sharma

385. LETTER TO HIRALAL SHARMA

April 9, 1934

BHAI SHARMA,

I have your two letters. How shall I write a long letter? Where is the time for it?

Give the enclosed letter[1] to Draupadi Devi. The boy and the girl will receive true education from the self-control of the two of you. They will get enough education by living with you. It does not imply that they should not get such education as they can in the Ashram. But that should supplement your efforts.

You must treat the sick you find in the Ashram. I want to utilize your skill fully. Your work will increase as you gain the confidence of the people there.

You both have to learn all the processes of the charkha. My book on nature cure has been received at the Ashram. You may, if you want to, make use of any treatment prescribed therein.

It will be good to send for Krishna.

Let us see how the events shape in August. If convenient I shall summon you to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsha*, between pp. 58-9

386. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

April 9, 1934

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

I had your letters but where was the time to reply? Now that you have reached the Doctor you should no longer be in much need of my letters. You must have seen my statement[2]. There is no question of your going to jail now. For the time being your staying in the Ashram seems best. Later we shall see.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 299

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.
[2] *Vide* pp. 348-50.

CWMG - LVII

387. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, PURNEA

April 9, 1934

Mahatmaji replied[1] in suitable terms expressing heart-felt sympathy with the sufferers in their dire calamity. He said:

God alone can set things right.

To the Municipal Chairman he said that he had as much access to Government as the Central Committee and so the Municipality should approach the Government direct and assured that the Central Relief Committee would do all it can. As regards opening a branch of the Bihar Central Relief Committee he said that it was a matter which should be talked over with Babu Rajendra Prasad and he would certainly do the needful. The subsidence of land was a matter of great danger. The situation must be accurately ascertained and the Government was in the best position to do so with the aid of experts.

You should be forewarned against the dangers of flood and all preparations must be made beforehand to meet the situation in Purnea as elsewhere in other districts. The next rains are sure to bring about a terrible situation and it is the duty of the Government, the Central Relief Committee and the people to make adequate provision to save people from disaster. As to helping people in the present distress, Government and the Central Relief Committee will do all they can but it will not be much. People themselves should gird up their loins and, with faith in God, should work on and fight the calamity that has befallen them. They are sure to succeed. Calamities are a warning against prevalence of sinfulness and people have to purge themselves of their sins, individual and social. This occasion has been furnished for scrutiny of our sins and not for finding fault with others. Untouchability must go.

The Searchlight, 13-4-1934

[1] To the address of welcome presented to him

388. EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO DR. B. C. ROY

[On or before *April 10, 1934*][1]

Besides Assam I have to visit Chotanagpore, Orissa, the United Provinces, the Punjab, Sind, Rajputana, Maharashtra, Bombay and Gujarat apart from Bengal and all these are to be visited by the end of July next.

The Bombay Chronicle, 12-4-1934

389. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

ON WAY TO ASSAM,
April 10, 1934

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

Two letters from you are lying before me. I have read them again. I am writing this in a train which is taking me to Assam. The train has halted at Parvatipur station. The people are shouting outside. (Here I became busy with the collection) My carriage is the last and that makes it difficult to write. Moreover, it has started raining.

You must have read in the papers that you need not go to jail just now. Nor need Rama. This decision I have taken after much thinking and anguish of mind. But I have no doubt that the decision is right and was absolutely necessary. There is bound to be criticism, and even harsh criticism. Let there be. It is a big question now what you, Rama and the other inmates of the Ashram should do. I have asked Narandas to come over. We can meet in Orissa. Alternatively, I am also trying to go to Bombay. It would be good if you also come at that time. Or you may write and let me have your views from there. In any case we don't wish to build another Ashram along the same lines as the old one. The struggle is going on still. It has not stopped merely because I am the only one left to carry it on. Nor has it slackened. It has assumed a new and purer form. If you read my statement, everything will be as clear to you as daylight.

[1] From the reference to Gandhiji's tour of Assam; *vide* the following item.

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For Rama and Vimu I still think that Wardha is the best place. But we should not force them to go there. It is best that they follow their own inclination.

I hope you have regained strength now. There are many other things I can write about, but how can I spare time to do so? Swami writes to you. I hope he gives you plenty of news. Rajendrababu has requisitioned Pyarelal.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5518

390. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, RUPSI[1]

April 11, 1934

I am glad to be again in Assam after a very long period. This time my mission is in connection with the Harijan movement. Untouchability is a great blot on Hinduism, and if we do not efface it in time, we shall ourselves be effaced from the face of the earth. I congratulate you for your purse and address, for both are a promise of your determination to root out untouchability in your daily lives. It is said that there is no considerable untouchability in Assam and Bengal. But I do not think that statement squares with facts. We are guilty of untouchability as soon as we make distinctions between man and man and have grades of high and low. Surely there are distinctions enough in Assam. And those against whom distinctions are drawn feel them just as keenly as any in the other parts of India. Then you look down upon Doms. Bhangis and Chamars, who come here from other provinces, as lowest among the low. And it is a common thing for almost all castes to consider themselves superior to some other castes and to treat Mussalmans, Christians and others as untouchables in some way or other. Removal of untouchability implies that we shall get rid of all this high-and-lowness and accord equal treatment to all human beings as children of one and the same God, and thus have a real brotherhood of man. I have no hesitation in saying that there is no warrant in our Shastras for the untouchability that I have described to you and that we are practising more or less all over India. I ask your blessings and co-operation in this one of the noblest of all causes.

Harijan, 27-4-1934

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter"

391. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, RANGIYA[1]

April 12, 1934

I should not as a rule have liked to speak after the morning prayer. But as the mission that has brought me to Assam is for me of a deeply religious character, I have no hesitation in combining the meeting with the prayer. But before I speak on the mission, I should like to ask you all who have gathered here in such large numbers to take to the practice of rising early in the morning and commencing the day with prayer and finishing the day with prayer before retiring. Do it with the members of your family, if you cannot get your neighbours to join, and if you cannot get the members of your family to do so, do it alone. If you will cultivate the practice, you will find for yourselves what a peace-giving thing a prayer from the heart is, and you will find that it will steady you. And a day begun under such happy auspices will invariably end well. One of the verses we sang this morning paraphrased means this: "O God, I desire no earthly riches, nor heaven, not even salvation. I desire the alleviation of the sufferings of all Thy creatures." This is not a verse of modern coinage. It is an ancient orthodox prayer. Do you think that you can truthfully utter that prayer from day to day and yet treat crores of fellow-beings as untouchables, whose very life is crushed out of them and who are treated as less than domestic cattle? You have, therefore, to choose between untouchability and the prayer which is enjoined upon every good Hindu. I suggest that you choose the prayer and banish untouchability from your hearts. Regard untouchability as a heinous sin. But whilst it is sinful to regard a single human being as an untouchable, I can introduce you to some untouchables whom you have to shun at any cost, and these are the evil thoughts which make us do all sorts of evil things from day to day. They need to be banished. And then in Assam, more than in any other part of India, you have the opium curse, a true untouchable. The opium habit dulls the intellect and promotes laziness. I do not believe that it does any good whatever. If, therefore, you will take my advice, I would ask you every day to pray that God may give you strength to

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter". Gandhiji passed Rangiya in the morning on his way from Barpeta to Tejpur.

remove the untouchability of human beings from your breasts and give you the wisdom to regard every evil thought as an untouchable and to give you strength to exorcize it. If you are an opium addict, ask God's help to give up the habit.

Harijan, 27-4-1934

392. NOTES

Let Reception Committees Beware

In pursuance of a circular letter addressed by Thakkar Bapa to the Provincial Harijan Sevak Sanghs, we have been receiving memoranda of expenses from the respective places visited by me during the Harijan tour in connection with the reception given to me in each place. In a memorandum from Khandwa, where a purse of over Rs. 3,000 was presented, I find nearly Rs. 40 shown as the charges for printing the address presented to me and a certain sum for dresses for volunteers. There are other items about which I say nothing, although they appear to me extravagant. But to think that the expenses of the addresses, uniform for volunteers and the like should be debited against the purse makes the reception not only farcical but demoralizing. If a reception has to be given, money for printed or illuminated addresses should be collected separately as such, and that after the purse has been collected. A costly reception should never mar a Harijan tour. It is wholly unnecessary. Some kind of a demonstration, I suppose, is inevitable and necessary. But when it is spontaneous, it ought not to cost a single pice, or if it must, every pice should be separately collected and in such a manner that it in no way affects the collection for the purse. Caskets are unbecoming, addresses are unnecessary. A brief report on their Harijan activities should take the place of the addresses and it should be written in a clear handwriting and handed to me to enable me to deal with it. This mention of the Khandwa expenses is not intended to cast any reflection upon the Reception Committee. Probably many of the Committees have done what the Khandwa Committee has done. They have evidently not realized the impropriety of making the Harijan purse pay for addresses and caskets presented to one who claims to be a true servant of Harijans.

All about a Lost Chain

The reader will appreciate the following account of the discovery of a lost chain, which ultimately came to the Harijan cause,

and that through the honesty of a Harijan. Sjt. R. M. Kumaraswami of Palladam, Tamil Nad, writes:

REVERED MAHATMAJI,

On your way to Coimbatore from Tirupur during your recent visit, a purse of Rs. 450 was given at Palladam. There my sister's daughter aged four wanted to give her gold chain to you. But my aunt did not like to give the chain. So she took it and kept it with her. When you arrived at Palladam, somehow my aunt lost the chain in the crowd. I told her that the loss was a fine for her refusing the child's wish.

After two weeks we got the clue about the chain. A Harijan boy about 10 years old was fortunate enough to get that lost chain. He was from a neighbouring village. After a fortnight, when we approached the boy's father who was in possession of the chain, he at first denied any knowledge of it. He was under a false fear of his being taken to task. When I explained to him what the object of your tour was and also that there was absolutely nothing wrong in possessing lost property found by his son, he gladly took us into his confidence and willingly returned the chain. I gave him Rs. 25 as a present, which he accepted with gratitude, and he has promised to give up his evil habit of drinking. He is considered to be one of the sincere and trustworthy men among the Harijans here.

All the members of my family wish to send you this chain according to the child's wish. I also wish, if you would kindly permit, to have the proceeds of the chain earmarked for Harijan work at Palladam. I will consider this a good beginning for doing Harijan uplift work in these parts.

I have assured my correspondent that the proceeds of the chain will be earmarked as he wishes.[1] He is, of course, wrong in thinking that lost property belongs to the finder. It belongs to the state, if the owner cannot be traced. I congratulate the Harijan who restored the chain to the owner, the four-year-old girl for her determination and her relatives on their ultimately respecting the little donor's wish. Let her, however, know that she is not the first girl of her age to have parted with her chain for the Harijan cause.

Their Plight

Sjt. P. Majmudar writes:

For want of work, or more truly speaking, because of untouchability, which debars them from avenues of employment open to the

[1] This letter is not traceable.

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rest, Harijans were reported to be living on the undigested grains picked out from droppings of cattle. I had the pain of recently witnessing such a disgusting scene in Gujarat. I was visiting a village in Bhal district. In the Bhangi quarter, I saw everywhere cattle dung spread for drying. On enquiry into the cause of this, the Harijans residing in the quarters told me that they had so little employment that they had to maintain themselves on grains picked out from cattle dung collected by them. After the dung was dried, they separated the undigested, half-chewed grains from the dung, washed them, dried them and ground them into powder which they eat in the form of chapatis.

I have not seen nor heard of such a practice amongst *savarna* Hindus anywhere. It is impossible to question the evidence given by Sjt. P. Majmudar of what he has seen through his own eyes. Let caste Hindus understand what untouchability is doing to a portion of Hindu humanity.

Harijan, 13-4-1934

393. A REFORMER'S DIFFICULTY

A correspondent writes:

In the course of your drive against untouchability you make some remarks which seem to be inconsistent with your previous writings in the columns of *Young India*. For instance, you wrote some years ago that the rule about restraint of inter-dining was intended for the evolution of the soul but was no part of varnadharma. Now, if you grant the necessity or the advisability of restraint upon inter-dining for the evolution of the soul, how can you say, as you have nowadays been saying, that for anyone to object to dine with an 'untouchable' on the ground of untouchability is a sin? I agree with you that restraint upon inter-dining is no part of varnadharma; but I do not understand why inter-dining retards the evolution of the soul.

Here there is a double confusion. In the first instance, restraint upon inter-dining on the ground of untouchability is wholly different from the restraint based on the ground of the evolution of the soul. The first restraint excludes a whole class whose very existence is challenged, the second excludes nobody on the ground of his birth in a particular class, but it may exclude those individuals who are addicted to particular habits. Thus, restraint on the ground of untouchability will persist without reference to the person's habits, while that on the ground of evolution of the soul will abate immediately the person excluded sheds his objec-

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tionable habits. There is, therefore, no inconsistency between the *Young India* writing referred to and my present position. Secondly, even if my opinion as expressed in *Young India* is indefensible, the correspondent's doubt is solved by my showing, as I have shown, that my condemnation of objection to interdining on the ground of untouchability has nothing to do with the restraint referred to in *Young India*, of which I have approved.

The correspondent further asks how I reconcile my attitude with the peremptory restrictions laid down in Vaishnavite literature. The question is pertinent. I must, however, confess my inability to reconcile the two positions. Though I take pride in belonging to the Vaishnavite faith, my pride does not require my adherence to all the ceremonial observances prescribed in Vaishnavite literature. I cling to the Vaishnavite faith because it inculcates universal love and, therefore, brotherhood; it lays the greatest emphasis on meticulous observance of truth and non-violence and insists on unselfish devotion to God. In Hindu literature, religious and secular, the unadulterated condemnation of narrowness, intolerance and bigotry by Vaishnavite saints and other writers is not to be beaten by any other writing. I need not be disturbed, therefore, by ceremonial observances which are manifestly contrary to the spirit of Vaishnavism.

The correspondent concludes:

> We cannot resolve our doubts ourselves. We yield to your better judgment. But when we follow your teaching, we run the risk of being boycotted even by those who are near and dear to us. What is to be done under such circumstances?

This is a difficult question to answer and can only be determined by each one according to his or her individual ability to suffer. Those who feel that untouchability is an evil cannot practise it in any shape or form. In a matter of such grave importance, I should expect every reformer to have the courage of his or her convictions and the ability to brave all the social persecution that they may have to suffer. Such has been the lot of reformers all the world over.

Harijan, 13-4-1934

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394. THE WRONG WAY

A friend who is interested in the Harijan cause sends me a collection of clippings from sanatanist writings which attribute to me all kinds of opinions and some of which even contain quotations from my writings mutilated in order to prejudice the masses against me. He asks me to reply to this indictment. It is not new to me. Some of the counts in it I have answered from time to time. Those who are prejudiced will not listen to any defence I may offer. Those who are friendly are unaffected by charges, especially when they are wild as those in question undoubtedly are. But, between the critics who will not be convinced and supporters who will not be seduced, there is always a middle class that would be swayed one way or the other. The friend who has sent me the clippings probably belongs to that middle class. His letter, therefore, is such as to demand a reply in these columns. Some of the clippings are as follows:

1. "The *Mahabharata* is a mass of rubbish from beginning to end."
2. "I do not regard Shri Krishna as an 'avatar' (incarnation) but as an ordinary man."
3. "I do not believe in morals. I am a breaker of idols."
4. "The Dharma of Hindus is devilish, the Shastras are godless and *rishis* and *munis* are devils."

The inverted commas are in the original sanatanist writings. There is no reference to *Young India* or *Navajivan* writings at the end of any of the quotations. I have not the files of *Young India* or *Navajivan* with me. I have, therefore, to rely upon memory.

What I have said of the *Mahabharata* before and what I believe of it today is that it is like a rich diamond mine from which the deeper you dig the more diamonds you find.

What I have said of Krishna and what I believe of him today is that he is one of the many avatars.

I have never said that Hindu temples are brothels, but I have said and repeat now that some of them are like brothels. I could never say 'I do not believe in morals', for with me religion and morality are convertible terms, as can be evidenced by all my writings.

I am, indeed, a breaker of idols, if I am also a worshipper of them. I do not bow my head to false gods.

Quotation 4 is a blasphemy I am incapable of uttering. If I had believed the dharma of the Hindus to be devilish, I should have said good-bye to it long ago.

Sanatana Dharma can gain nothing by distortions or reckless writing in the pages of publications brought out by those who call themselves sanatanists.

Harijan, 13-4-1934

395. SOME AMENDMENTS[1]

The following three amendments have been received from the head office of the Harijan Sevak Sangh.

I

A rider clause may be added to Rule (5), para 2:—To fulfil this desire, the 25% quota and 50% quota of the principal cities appropriated by the Central Board will also be devoted to direct welfare work only. A sum of Rs. 25,000 now donated by Mr. Birla shall be earmarked for meeting the establishment and travelling charges of the Central Board and office. The Central Board will make special efforts to take separate collections for paying its share of administrative and propaganda expenses incurred by Provincial Boards now and hereafter.[2]

II

The following be substituted for Rule (9): (9) In view of the difficulty of raising additional funds in the provinces soon after the tour, the Provincial Secretary, as also District Secretaries, should cease to be officemen, but should become necessary parts of the welfare schemes. The charges of the provincial staff needed for supervising schemes in the districts will thus be met from the 75% quota and taken from the districts in proportion to their budgets. This rule, however, will operate only for one year from the date when new financial relations arising out of the Purse Fund are established.

III

The following be added as Rule (10):

Welfare schemes must be submitted by Provincial Boards within two months after the expiry of the tour in their respective provinces.

[1] For the text of the Draft Rules to which these are amendments, *vide* "Opinion Invited", pp. 238-9.

[2] The reference is to the special desire of Gandhiji that not a single rupee out of the Purse Fund should be spent on administration and propaganda but that it should be utilized for the execution of schemes for Harijan welfare work.

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Failing this, the grants under the old arrangement will be stopped. Grants under the new arrangement will be paid only after the welfare scheme submitted by the province is approved of by the Central Board.

These amendments should be carefully considered by all concerned, especially Provincial Boards, and their comments sent to the head office without delay. It will be observed that the rider to Rule (5), para 2, carried out to greater perfection the original intention that donations received for Harijan service should be as far as possible devoted solely to welfare work. And this object can be easily fulfilled, if Provincial Boards will heartily co-operate and realize that the most expeditious way of driving out untouchability is to be prepared for, and render, silent, selfless service to Harijans. Such work serves a threefold purpose. Requiring, as it does, purity among the workers, it constitutes the best propaganda amongst the sanatanists. No amount of intellectual argument will ever convince those in whom a false religious belief is deeply seated. But the purity and gentleness of the reformer will undoubtedly do so. Secondly, selfless work amongst Harijans will not only enable the reformers to overcome some, if not all, of the bad customs and habits that are to be seen among them but will also strengthen their faith in Hinduism, which they have hitherto known only as a means of their degradation. Thirdly, the high standard of character required of those who render personal service to Harijans cannot but be a matter of inward joy to the workers.

The second and third amendments do not deserve any comment, except this—that the third has evidently been found necessary because of the negligence on the part of Boards of the Provinces in sending up their schemes of constructive work. I am fully aware that, strange as it may seem, to produce a good constructive scheme and equally good workers who would faithfully carry it out is far more difficult than to collect funds.

Harijan, 13-4-1934

396. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

April 13, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

Today is a day of fasting; we are on the deck of a ship sailing from Tezpur to Gauhati. On one side of me is Thakkar Bapa, on the other is Om and all around are sitting the rest of the party. In front is the lavatory. It is not very dirty. The rains have already set in here. There was a heavy downpour yesterday and so it is stuffy today. Deck journey, therefore, is bearable. It is nine in the morning now. We shall reach Gauhati at about twelve. Mirabehn will have arrived there. She had taken ill and so we had left her behind in Patna. My health is good. I allow myself sufficient rest. I don't overstrain the body. If one were to listen to all the advice that doctors give, one would never leave one's bed.

In the dispute between the workers and the mill-owners in Ahmedabad, in my view the latter are more at fault. They themselves admit this. The part which Kasturbhai[1] has played this time does him no credit. The mill-owners' resolution was so utterly absurd that I thought I must write something. I wrote to Kasturbhai and remonstrated with him gently. The resolution was nothing but a threat. But there was a risk of the system [of arbitration] built up through twelve years' labour breaking down. My letter had an effect. It may be said, rather, that differences arose among the mill-owners themselves. Chimanbhai[2] and Sakarlal[3], therefore, came to see me. Kasturbhai did not come as he was preparing to go to Geneva. I told them that wages could not be reduced without evidence to justify such a step; but that, if they were ready to link wages to profits and fix minimum wages, I would agree to whatever relief such an arrangement might give them. They liked this suggestion but told me that it would be difficult to persuade other mill-owners to implement it. That is true, of course. I will see now what can be done.

You must have read about my decision. I am eager to know your view. I have assumed that you will understand without explanation both decisions of mine. I have no doubt at all

[1], [2] & [3] Mill-owners of Ahmedabad

that both are correct. There will be no danger to satyagraha now, and the party favouring Council-entry will no longer be forced to remain inactive. Their inactivity was painful to them. Let them go ahead. If they maintain purity in their methods of work, they can do some useful work even in the legislature.

Devdas is taking rest in Delhi. Lakshmi is in the last stages of her pregnancy. Raja is in Delhi and will remain there till Lakshmi's delivery at any rate.

The senior leaders will certainly come and see me again. I am surprised to learn that you do not get *Harijan*. I am inquiring how this happens.

The trouble in your nostrils is certainly difficult to treat. But it must be cured though I don't know what should be done to cure it. Ultimately you yourself will have to think about it, for I have seen that in such cases even doctors feel helpless. Improvement takes place only if the patient himself discovers some method. I believe that *pranayama* and some of the *asanas* are bound to have an effect. Since in *pranayama* one inhales twice as much oxygen as in normal breathing, or even more, I believe that the extra oxygen which the affected part will get is bound to have an effect. If you try to do the whole process of *pranayama* and observe the effect, you will also realize that it has an intimate connection with the functioning of the nostrils. Hence *pranayama* must have some effect, good or bad, on them. But there is no possibility of a bad effect and so it can only be good. *Pranayama* must be done in a place where the air is pure. It would be desirable, therefore, to do it in an open plot of ground. I have never asked you where you sleep. But I assume that the doors of your room are kept open.

Dahyabhai had sent me Mani's letter. It was a brave one, though also painful. I have met Aminbhai. How long will he be there?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 91-3

397. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, GAUHATI[1]

April 13, 1934

Gandhiji said he could not congratulate Gauhati Municipality on the condition of the Harijan quarters, which were unfit for human habitation. It was no use saying that Harijans were dirty people. It was up to the Municipality to educate them out of their dirty habits. It was all very well for them to state that the famous Kamakhya temple as well as several others had been flung open to Harijans. But they must not rest content until they had broken down the barrier which now divides Harijans from the rest of the community and brought the former in a line with the latter. It was with this spiritual aim in view that at the age of 64, when he might well claim to rest from his labours, he was wandering from place to place in order to deliver his message. It was impossible for him to be at peace so long as the monster of untouchability prevailed in our holy land.

Harijan, 27-4-1934

398. TELEGRAM TO NARANDAS GANDHI

GAUHATI,
April 14, 1934

NARANDAS GANDHI
NEW PARA
RAJKOT

WIRE RECEIVED. IF POSSIBLE COME RANCHI THIRTIETH.

BAPU

From a microfilm: M.M.U./I. Also C.W. 8399. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter"

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399. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

April 14, 1934

DEAR SATISBABU,

Your letter.

You will on no account overdo things and overtax your energy. I have the evil habit of putting burdens on willing shoulders which they are often ill able to bear. I expect truth from you and truth demands that you give me notice when I expect too much from you.

You are wrong in thinking that my decision on C. D. is in any way a reflection on any single one of you. If it is a reflection it is on me. But I need not plead guilty. I am but a co-seeker with you all—*primus inter pares*. We have lost nothing by the past doings. We would have lost, if I had not had the courage to halt when I saw the clear necessity for it. There was no warrant for a fast. It would have been simple coercion if I had gone for it.

The Mayoral election is an indication. We must go through the fire. The Council-entry decision is sound. We must have a parliamentary party of Congressmen and perhaps part of the Congress machinery when the latter can function legally. Now that Congressmen will act as councilwallas, things will presently shape themselves. We must mount to truth through mistakes.

I shall watch your Bengal programme.

Hemprabha has written to me. No time to write to her separately. She will feel her way and do about khadi what she feels after weighing what I have said. No heroic measure is necessary. And we shall discuss the thing more fully when we meet.

I had Arun's note. I must not write to him separately. He must build up a strong body.

Love to you all.

From a copy: C.W. 7950b. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

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400. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU[1]

GAUHATI,
April 14, 1934

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I got up this morning at 12.15 in order to overtake arrears.

You have been ever in my mind. I hope you will be permitted to receive this letter. I would like a line from you to tell me how you are keeping and what you are doing.

You must have seen my two decisions. That they are almost simultaneous is a mere coincidence. The revival of the Swarajya Party is a right step. There is no doubt that we have in the Congress a body of men who believe in Council-entry and who will do nothing else if they cannot have that programme. Their ambition must be satisfied. The other decision about confining C. R. to myself so far as the goal is concerned is much the most important. It was inevitable. Having arrived at it, I can see the rightness of the decision for a thousand reasons. I have given the precipitating cause. But the decision was slowly coming to me. I do hope that you have not been upset by it. You were before my mind's eye the whole time the decision was taking shape. I concluded that, though it might produce a momentary shock, you would ultimately see the truth of it and be glad. I wonder!

We all often talk about you. We are a large party. I was with Mother and the members of the family for nearly two hours when I passed through Allahabad.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1934. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also C.W. 7950. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] He was in Alipore Central Jail at this time.

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401. LETTER TO SIR GEORGE SCHUSTER[1]

AS AT PATNA,
April 14, 1934

DEAR SIR GEORGE SCHUSTER,

I thank you for your letter of 6th April just received during my Harijan tour in Assam.

I am glad to learn that by reason of the re-starting of civil disobedience no change was made in the Government decision of 1931 about salt. Am I free to advise workers accordingly? Will you kindly let me know in which areas it was found necessary to withdraw the concession and how the concession can be restored?[2]

Yours sincerely,

From a copy: C.W. 9707. Courtesy: Andhra Pradesh Government. Also *Harijan*, 30-11-1934

402. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

April 14, 1934

MY DEAR C. R.,

I have many things to write but Father Time is a cruel parent. Here is a copy of correspondence between Sir George Schuster and me.

I do not see how the Swarajists are to be bound to our programme. We shall have to suggest these things. Our democracy will follow the ways of all the other democracies that are nurtured on Parliament traditions. A parliamentary party is as inevitable as a khaddar party or prohibition party. All parliamentarians won't be of the same hue in the Congress. It may be, indeed it is certain, there will be Congressmen fighting Congressmen on different policies. We shall have to do our part in shaping the policy of Congress parliamentarians.

This is written in the midst of disturbances.

Love.

From a copy: C.W. 7950a. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] *Vide* also "Letter to Sir George Schuster", pp. 319-20.

[2] Schuster, writing on April 22, enclosed a list of such areas, saying at the same time that villagers concerned could make applications for the restoration of the concession.

403. LETTER TO HIRALAL SHARMA

April 14, 1934

BHAI SHARMA,

I have your letter. I shall of course keep writing to Amtussalaam. But I am now relieved of anxiety for her. Prescribe for her the treatment you think best. The whole problem will be solved if she is cured.

Keep writing to me as to how you are getting on.

I did write a long letter to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

As regards diet Kuhne, Juste, Kellogg and Carrington are good but none of them is perfect. The conclusion I have arrived at is this:

(1) Juicy fruit is the most faultless diet.
(2) Milk products are most essential for energy. Fresh, unboiled milk is best.
(3) Too many articles of food should not be eaten in a day. Each article should be eaten separately.
(4) Among the cereals wheat is good.
(5) Rice is unnecessary.
(6) Pulses are unnecessary.

This much in brief.

BAPU

From the facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuke Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsha*, between pp. 60-1

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404. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

GAUHATI,
April 14, 1934

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

I have your letters. Now that Dr. Sharma is with you I am not worried on your account. No one among you is required now to court imprisonment. Once you have completely recovered we shall consider what course to follow. You must do what the Doctor says.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

The Doctor's daughter should be called to the Ashram.

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 301

405. WHY ONLY BIHAR?

A student writes.[1]

A science student has no right to disbelieve what is beyond his comprehension. A science student should be humble. Instead of brushing aside whatever he hears, he must give it some thought. There are very few things in this world which we are able to understand. Many things are beyond our understanding. That is exactly why the learned become more humble as they acquire more knowledge, for the knowledge of the learned man consists in realizing his immense ignorance. The deeper he goes, the more he realizes that he knows nothing. Moreover, most of what he knows is just surmise. I have no intention of running down science by writing this. Though infinitesimal, the knowledge we acquire has its uses. But compared to what remains to be acquired, what is already acquired is less than a drop in the ocean.

All life in this world originates from the same root. Hence all are fundamentally one. These include all things from vege-

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent, a science student, could not accept Gandhiji's view that untouchability was one of the causes of the Bihar earthquake.

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table life to human life. For one who understands, the misery of one living creature is the misery of all, and the happiness of one is the happiness of all. Hence it is sacrifice that has always contained and still contains true happiness. We see this rule working in a family. Everyone is unhappy if the father is unhappy. And everyone is affected by his sinful ways. Hence, if this student accepts the oneness of all living creatures, everyone would be included in the punishment of Bihar. Those who have not felt the earthquake have not remained untouched. If they do not directly experience, they should be considered ignorant to that extent. So, the science student would probably agree that there is not much sense in asking: "Why only Bihar?" Why only Bihar and no other province? Who are we to put this question to God? His ways are inscrutable. Hence, where reason cannot function, it is faith that works.

We can prove with the help of several illustrations that physical events are related to things spiritual. Physical things originate from the same source of energy as spiritual, and so there is no impassable gulf between physical and spiritual things. Rain is a physical phenomenon; it is no doubt related to human happiness and unhappiness; if so, how could it fail to be related to his good and bad deeds? We know of no period in world history when countless people have not related events like earthquakes to sinful deeds of man. Even today, religious-minded people everywhere believe in such a relationship.

It can never be known for which sins of ours such calamities overtake us. The golden rule is for each one of us to regard them as punishment for one's individual and social sins. It is pride and ignorance if one says, 'This happened because of your sins'; but it is humility, it is wisdom, if one says, 'It happened because of my sins.' I have never tried to convince those who do not consider untouchability a sin that the earthquake is the result[1] of it. They may well believe that it is the result of my sin. Imperfect man can never finally determine what is right and what is wrong in such matters. My job is over if I could convince the reader that the earthquake is the result of our sins. Then the people who regard untouchability as a great sin are bound to connect it with the earthquake and endeavour to expiate and wipe out the blot as soon as possible.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 15-4-1934

[1] The original has: "that the earthquake is the cause of the sin".

406. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, GOLAGHAT[1]

April 15, 1934

Gandhiji reiterated the conditions of Harijan service. He said what he particularly wanted of them was a concise and business-like report of Harijan service; addresses were unnecessary, and no expense should be incurred on that account. And if they must present an address, it should be written in a fine hand on good paper and given to him along with a translation into Hindi or English. If it was printed, the printing charges should be privately met and, in any case, should not be charged against the Harijan purse. To recover printing charges from the purse would be nothing short of theft or misappropriation. Conveyance and feeding charges, too, must not be deducted from the purse; if no one came forward to bear the cost of feeding him and his party, he would indent upon friends for it but never touch the Harijan funds. If it was necessary to make some propaganda through hand-bills, etc., workers should not spend upon it more than five per cent of the total collections. The collections should be handed over intact and bills presented to the General Secretary for the expenditure incurred, which should not go beyond the limit of five per cent. He was touring not to have receptions, but to do business on behalf of Harijans, to wake up the people, talk with workers and collect as much money as he could.

Harijan, 4-5-1934

407. LETTER TO SRI PRAKASA

April 16, 1934

MY DEAR SRI PRAKASA,

In coming to the decision, I have not judged a single follower or co-worker. I have judged myself, if I have judged at all. I am freer for the decision. It will do us all good if I remain true to myself. Satyagraha is a unique weapon. You have therefore no need to reproach yourself. But I do want you to be found ready when the time comes.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI SRI PRAKASA
SEVASHRAMA, BENARES CANTT.

Sri Prakasa Papers, File No. G-2. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also C.W. 7951. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter"

408. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

April 16, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

I have your letter. Mira has been keeping you in touch with things concerning me.

You may take the vows, if you feel the confidence. Your things will be disposed of. Why do you think I doubt you or that you are less than Mira? Mira has come in for rebukes and reproaches to which you are an utter stranger. But that is nothing. You should simply lose yourself in your work and you will find me truly.

Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

409. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

April 16, 1934

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I got your letters.

The amount for the earthquake relief must have been sent to Bihar.

I understand about Sorabji, and also about Bhawani Dayal. Solve your problems with patience and a detached mind. Sorabji will see reason some day. I don't understand about Kunvar Maharaj. But you must be guided by your own impression. I do not know him at all. We must take care that no one is attacked personally. Nothing should be done in anger.

You must have learnt about my decision from the cable. That will lighten your burden. But it means that I expect more from you now. Both of you must be ready when the tide comes again. After my death, it is only the handful of workers like you who will have to shoulder the burden.

Ba should now be released in about a month. Her letter is enclosed. The time for the two, Lakshmi's and Nimu's, deliveries is approaching.

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I stop here as I am pressed for time. I hope you receive my letters regularly. I tell others also that they should write to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4818

410. LETTER TO SHANTILAL J. MEHTA

April 16, 1934

CHI. SHANTI,

I have received your letter, the *hundi* and Rs.15. I am using all the amounts exclusively for Bihar.

Inform Mohanlal and Umiashankar.

If you live worthily in every way, your aspirations are bound to be fulfilled.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

411. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

JORHAT,
April 16, 1934

BHAI MUNSHI,

I have your letter. It has helped me. Your criticism of the definition is correct. You have shown how the certificates which I have been receiving for the draft are superficial. At present I am working in such a hurry that I get no time for second thoughts. The mistake which you have discovered should have been evident to me. I am returning the draft to you so that it may help you in further scrutiny, and I am also sending a copy of the revised draft. If you notice any mistake in that too, do point it out.

If Lilavati can devote herself blindly to small industries without thinking about other things, the venture may succeed, otherwise they will be going round and round like the bullock at the oil-press. The only difference will be that there is an observant oil-man following the blind bullock and so some oil is extracted. But in this case the oil-press of swadeshi will go on working and there will be no result at the end.

Mill-cloth, sugar mills, etc., are excluded from my definition, and khadi, jaggery, etc., are protected. We can, and should, manage only these. It is not a small field. Small industries would be crushed if mixed up with big ones. Some change in the definition occurred to me even as I was writing this. I have made it by adding an adjective, intended to exclude intoxicating substances. I do not know whether or not you smoke. My son Harilal does. One day when the matter came up for discussion, he said: "I smoke Madras cheroots, not foreign cigars." In spite of his generous encouragement, the Madras cheroot would be excluded from my definition. The cheroot will find its way out, as today it is doing.

I too entertain the fear which you do regarding Council-entry. I have other fears too. But I think that the thing has come to stay. The Congress will always have in it a party favouring it. I have come to believe that it would be impossible and improper to ignore it. I, therefore, have made up my mind to give all possible help in strengthening it. But this will not go well with civil disobedience. From prison, I can give little direct help. The strength which it may receive from the fact of my imprisonment itself will be another matter. My hopes are pinned on you and Bhulabhai. I do not know who else might go. I don't feel inclined to press anybody. Hence, Rajagopalachari, Rajendrababu, Jairamdas, etc., will probably stay out. I have not discussed the subject with anyone. As a result of my decision regarding civil disobedience, they are free for the time being to do as they like. Possibly Jawaharlal also may be tempted. If firm-minded, capable, selfless and devoted workers join, Council-entry may do some good. But most of such people would not be interested in the goings-on of legislatures. The democracy of my conception is a different thing altogether. It can be moulded outside, not inside the legislatures. The latter will take the right shape when such democracy has come into existence outside them. Today everywhere democracy waits on legislatures and nothing is done. I want to have legislatures that will follow the wishes of the people. I do not see at present the right atmosphere for such legislatures. I think that it is being created. Civil disobedience has succeeded in no small measure. I do not regret a single step taken in connection with it. Every step has been taken at the right time for it is my firm conviction that it was not I that took the decision every time but that it was *Satyanarayana*[1] who prompted my decisions. I let myself be led by Him.

[1] God in the form of Truth

Council-entry will remain a permanent feature of the Congress like civil disobedience and constructive work. It will not receive step-motherly treatment. But I do not know just now how far I shall be able to interest myself in it. Constructive work has already become part of civil disobedience. I can see my way clearly in that sphere. But it is the love of friends and circumstances that has dragged me into the Council-entry programme. I regard myself qualified for the first two. Not for this. Let us see what happens.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]
My address is still Patna.

From Gujarati: C.W. 7537. Courtesy: K. M. Munshi

412. LETTER TO RAOJIBHAI N. PATEL

JORHAT (ASSAM),
April 16, 1934

CHI. RAOJIBHAI,

I have just received your letter. There is nothing to say about the expenditure once we accept the necessity of your meeting Lalita, Balbhadra and Nathabhai. You are the sole judge of that necessity. The decisions of others in matters that concern us should be rejected if they do not appeal to our hearts, though they may to our reason. Chimanlal's criticism should be considered, but you need not be in the least upset by it. We should not do anything which may seem blameworthy to us. But how can we take into account if it seems so to others? This is indeed one of the meanings of the passage, "Better is death in the discharge of one's duty."[1] What appeals to oneself is one's dharma.

If you have some time, write a letter to Chimanlal to placate him or to humour him. Don't be shocked by the verb 'humour'.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9002

[1] *Bhagavad Gita*, III. 35

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413. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

JORHAT,
April 16, 1934

You seem to have understood most of the implications. I see that my decision has taken the load off many persons' heads. Were it not for that decision, they would have gone crazy, that is, broken down completely. Blind faith would not have helped them in the least. My decision is ethically the purest. It would perhaps be better still if the Congress were to expel me. But I have no wishes of my own. I shall let Him pull the string and make me dance as He wills and I shall be happy. You may come to Ranchi if you wish.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 144

414. LETTER TO R. SHANKARAN

JORHAT,
April 16, 1934

BHAI SHANKARAN,

I have your letter.

The fact is that the work of popularizing the national language must be carried on even in Bombay and Gujarat. And for this the teachers have to come from U.P. and Bihar. This is not a job for you.

The language in which we may converse with the villagers or write ordinary letters may be called workable Hindi.

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI R. SHANKARAN
HINDI PRACHAR SABHA
NAPOO HALL
MATUNGA
BOMBAY

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 9715

415. LETTER TO SANTOSH KUMAR BASU

[Before *April 17, 1934*]

DEAR SANTOSHBABU,

I congratulate you and your Corporation[1] upon the passing of the Harijan budget. But that is merely a beginning. To pass the budget is one thing, to actually spend the money is another. I hope that you will personally see to it that, however poor your purse may be, the Harijan will be a first charge on it. Please do not forget water taps in the *bastis*.

Yours sincerely,

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 17-4-1934

416. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

JORHAT,
April 17, 1934

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I got your letter. Have you regained full strength? You have not sent me your comments on my decision.[2] Do send them. You have done right in deciding to stay on where you are for the present. Study the problems of khadi and Harijan work. See what Ramjibhai and Jivanlal are doing. Give them whatever help you can. Also see how the children fare there. How are Dudhibehn and Kusum? If you add up all these things, you will have sufficient work for the present. I shall be in Bihar up to the 3rd. I shall reach there on the 24th. As you will understand, I cannot spare more time to write about other things.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5519

[1] The addressee was the Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation.
[2] Suspending satyagraha

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417. LETTER TO RAOJIBHAI M. PATEL

JORHAT,
April 17, 1934

CHI. RAOJIBHAI,

I wish success to the Patidar Yuvak Parishad and the Mahila Parishad. When Dr. Bhaskar is in charge, the Parishad cannot but be a glorious success. Let the Patidars know that I expect much from them. From the women I expect twice as much. Let them realize that this expectation is all the greater because of Sardar's absence.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9590

418. LETTER TO RAOJIBHAI N. PATEL

JORHAT,
April 17, 1934

CHI. RAOJIBHAI,

Please go through my statement again. You don't seem to have understood it fully. I have said that for the present no one should resort, without my consent, to civil disobedience as a means of achieving swaraj. There are many other causes for which people who know how to use this weapon may do so. Mass civil disobedience for swaraj creates difficulties. You may say that my capacity to lead such a movement is limited.

You must have received my letter[1]. Once you have fulfilled your obligations, work is waiting for you—either khadi or Harijan work. If you cannot choose between these two, I shall do it for you.

If you don't understand my statement even after reading it again, have patience. You will understand it by and by.

I got your letter only today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9591

[1] *Vide* p. 396.

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419. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

JORHAT,
April 17, 1934

. . .[1] The resentment that we see is temporary. It will subside. My decision is so good that nobody can find anything to say against it. Whether the Congress will let me offer satyagraha in its name is a different question. Without taking the decision which I have done, I would not have been able to demonstrate the real value of satyagraha. It is possible that I have still not been able to demonstrate it. That will be my deficiency, not that of satyagraha. We can see even today some of the good effects of the decision. But why need I explain all this to you? You seem to have understood its full significance.

[From Gujarati]
Bapuni Prasadi, p. 144

420. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

April 17, 1934

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

You have forgotten about going to jail, have you not? Remember that dharma does not consist in jail-going alone. Remaining out of it and calmly doing one's duties can also be a great dharma. This is your dharma at present. First of all remain there and get well. I like your living at Wardha also for the sake of Dr. Sharma.[2]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 300

[1] As in the source

[2] The addressee was undergoing nature-cure treatment under the guidance of Hiralal Sharma.

421. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

April 18, 1934

BA,

I got your letter, even though late. It is 3.15 just now. I have taken up your letter after cleaning my teeth. This place is called Jorhat. It is in Assam. Two days remain now for the tour here to end. After that I will spend a little more than a week in South Bihar and then I will go to Utkal, *i.e.*, Orissa. I see that I shall be in Bengal when you are released. If the date of your release has been fixed, let me know it. There was a letter from Manilal specially meant for you. He writes in it about your inquiring after everybody. I have replied saying that I send your original letters to Phœnix, and copies to Ramdas, Devdas and Sardar. I have already written to you about Kanti having been released. He is all right. Since there is to be no jail-going now, it will shortly be decided where he will stay. He will come and meet me somewhere. Jamnalalji is now expected in Bihar. Satisbabu is all right. He is in Calcutta. Raojibhai, Panditji, Parnerkar and others are all working together in Bihar. Madhavdas also is with them. Bal and Prithuraj are with me. Narandas's nostrils bleed and so he is still at Rajkot. Perhaps he may come and see me at Ranchi. Chhaganlal is in Bhavnagar. He has almost regained the weight which he had lost. He visited Bhansali. There is something the matter with Bhansali's legs. He cannot move them or walk. He has got his lips stitched up. He drinks flour mixed with water through a tube. He also drinks gram or *mung* flour mixed with water. He drops me a postcard now and then. Despite the pain, he remains cheerful. Rajendrababu keeps excellent health. Prabhavati and Jayaprakash are better now. My weight is 108. Mirabehn doesn't make speeches. Sometimes she goes to open khadi exhibitions. I myself am not able to attend such functions. While opening the exhibitions, she says a few words. You see them reported in newspapers. I rarely get time to read newspapers. Ramdas's mother-in-law and Navanit have gone to Wardha. The epidemic in Ahmedabad has spread to other places too. I had written to Allahabad regarding Shyamlal Nehru. Umabehn has borne the separation from her husband with fortitude. Her daughter wrote a long letter to me. You must

have received the slivers. Let me know when you want more. Where do you intend to break the semi-fast of the *Purushottam*[1] month? I hope you get enough milk and fruit. Ranchhodbhai and others are in Ahmedabad, of course. They did not go out anywhere. Chimanlal has been having fever, and so he has gone to Veraval. Sharda has accompanied him. Mithubehn stays on in Bombay. Kalyanji and Kunvarji also are there. I did write a letter of condolence to Kunvarji on the death of his wife. Chandrashankar had returned, but he fell ill again and so went back. I will write to Premlilabehn on your behalf. Kishorelal is still ill. He is at Deolali. Radha of course is there. Santok and Gomati also are there. Velanbehn is in Baroda. Om and Kisan go back to sleep after the morning prayer whenever they have no work. The constitutions of both need more sleep. I think this is enough for this time.

These days I am not able to send a discourse.

Blessings to all from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Bane Patro, pp. 22-4

422. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

JORHAT, ASSAM,
April 18, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

It will soon be time for the prayers. I am in Jorhat just now. The birds are singing. Here the dawn breaks earlier. It is daylight by five.

A copy of Ba's letter is enclosed.

I hope you have fully understood my decision. I see that it is having a good effect. After observing it, I feel that the decision was absolutely correct. It has been taken neither too late nor too early. I think it has been made at the right time. But why should we think about results? How can one claim to be a student of the *Gita* and at the same time be concerned with results? Let the results be what they will. A seemingly good result may be a snare and a seemingly bad result may be for one's

[1] The intercalary month in the Hindu calendar occurring once in four years.

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good. How can we know? Daily we sing, too, "Miseries are not what we regard as miseries."

All will meet in Ranchi. I shall guide them according to my lights. I think it is our duty to give full freedom to Congressmen who favour entering the legislatures. It is but right that those who daily attend legislatures in their thoughts should do so physically as well. Then alone will they be able to judge the relative advantages and disadvantages of that policy. Is it not better that one who daily eats *jalebi* in his imagination should eat the real thing and know the wisdom or folly of doing so ? Most probably Mathuradas also will attend, and so will Perin and others. The company will be in Ranchi for four days. I hope Raja also will come. I see that Raja fully approves of the move. And so does Mathuradas. Rajendrababu has been in favour of it from the beginning. Pyarelal is with him just now.

Pierre Ceresole, a man devoted to social service, is coming here from Geneva. One may say that it is his occupation to go and help wherever there is a natural calamity like an earthquake. He is an expert engineer. He is coming to give help in Bihar and will land in Bombay on the 25th. Mathuradas will bring him or send him to Ranchi. Higginbottom also came and saw me. He also has promised to help. Harrison and Lester will meet me in Patna. I will know from them what they have been able to achieve. Both of them had gone to Calcutta. They have been working very hard indeed. They are sincere and brave. But theirs is a cry in the wilderness.

Bal is still with me. Kaka is fairly well in Hyderabad [jail]. He has been collecting a lot of books there. Mahadev is already buried in books and now Kaka too will get so buried.

I have worked very hard for Obedullah[1] behind the scenes. I think my efforts are bearing fruit now. Probably he will be saved.

The epidemic of children's disease in Ahmedabad has become fairly widespread. Some say that the cause of the epidemic is the cinema. I wouldn't be surprised if it was so. Those who see pictures tell me that there is considerable strain on the brain and the eyes.

Chandrashankar had gone [home] and fallen ill. He returned too soon and fell ill again. And so he has gone back. I saw that he could not stand travelling.

[1] Second son of Dr. Khan Saheb. After 78 days' fast in protest against his being lodged in the uncongenial Multan jail he was transferred to Sialkot jail.

Kamala Nehru and Sarup Rani have gone to Calcutta for treatment. It has been decided that I should tour Bengal, too.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 94-5

423. INTERVIEW TO HARIJAN LEADERS[1]

JORHAT,
[*April 18, 1934*][2]

Gandhiji, being asked if the present movement would benefit backward classes other than Harijans, replied that they would certainly be benefited indirectly. When law ceased to recognize untouchability, there would be only backward classes, whether touchables or untouchables, to demand state protection. In answer to another question, he said that inter-dining and intermarriage were matters of individual choice, not susceptible of social regulation. These constituted a reform by themselves, which had nothing to do with untouchability. A worker asked if the present movement would not lead to internecine strife among Hindus. Gandhiji replied in the negative, for, he said, it took two to make a quarrel and he himself was working on the lines of least resistance and waiting for public opinion to be ripe on the subject. But they must work away with a will while there was still time. Otherwise, there would be a terrible upheaval, a human earthquake, due not to the present movement, but to the natural effect of the sin of untouchability which it was designed to counteract. Asked if he was not sorry for the part he played in the Khilafat movement, Gandhiji said he was as proud of it as of any event in his life, and it would go down in history as an outstanding instance of unselfish co-operation.

Harijan, 4-5-1934

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter"
[2] From the itinerary of Gandhiji's tour in the "Weekly Letter"

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424. INTERVIEW TO AMERICAN MISSIONARY[1]

JORHAT,
[*April 18, 1934*][2]

Gandhiji had an interesting talk with an American missionary who asked for his views about conversion. He repeated the opinion he has often given that he did not believe in conversion by human agency. Seekers after Truth were in the same position as the blind men in the Indian parable who went to see an elephant, or rather in a worse position. For, if the physically blind lacked in sight, they were compensated for it to some extent by the enhanced power of other organs of sense. But seekers after Truth could only see as through a glass, darkly, so far as inward sight was concerned. It would, therefore, be sheer presumption on their part to seek to "convert" others to their own faith. God had as many ways of approaching Him as there were human beings.

Upon the missionary friend attempting a comparison between Jesus and other men revered by humanity, Gandhiji said that such comparison was fruitless. Jesus of history was not the same as the Jesus whom Christians adored. For them He was the living God of their conception. Similarly he himself believed in the Krishna of his own imagination, who was identical with God and had not much to do with the historic Krishna about whom there was a mass of conflicting evidence. Historical persons were dead. The mystical incarnations were living ideas—more real than earthly existences. Religion could never be based on history, for, if it was so based, faith would be undermined. Tulsidas therefore clinched the point by saying that *nama* (the name) was greater than Rama.

Harijan, 4-5-1934

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter". Desai does not identify the missionary.

[2] The report of the interview in the source is placed after a report on throwing open a temple to Harijans on April 18.

425. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

April 18, 1934

That there can be, and should be, co-operation with the Government in the legislatures was the opinion expressed by Mr. Gandhi in an interview today.

Asked whether, in giving his blessing to the formation of the Swaraj Party, he meant that Congressmen should enter the legislatures for the specific purpose of getting "repressive" laws repealed and the White Paper Constitution rejected, Mr. Gandhi said that he could not define the policy of Congress parliamentarians just as he did not define the policy followed by Pandit Malaviya and the late Mr. C. R. Das although he was instrumental in handing the reins of the Congress to the Swaraj Party. If the Swaraj Party was revived and they asked him for advice as to their line of action in the legislatures, he would advise them according to the circumstances that might present themselves at the time his advice was asked for.

Asked whether he did not think that there could be occasions for co-operation with the Government in the legislatures, Mr. Gandhi replied:

Certainly I can conceive many instances in which there can be, and should be, co-operation.

Asked whether members of the old Swaraj Party now in the legislatures, Provincial and Central, should be allowed to rejoin the new Swaraj Party, Mr. Gandhi said:

They will be members for the asking.

Replying to further questions he said:

I am sure the fact that they did not resign their seats in obedience to the Lahore resolution will make no difference. Anyone that adopts the policy of the Swaraj Party will be entitled to membership no matter what his past views may have been. Suppose I become a Congressman now and adopt the programme of the Swaraj Party, I should be entitled to membership.

In reply to another question Mr. Gandhi said:

If the All-India Congress Committee endorse the revival of the Swaraj Party, the party will occupy the same place that it did when a resolution was adopted at Patna just after Mr. C. R. Das's death.

Q. It would seem from your Patna statement[1] that the suspension of civil disobedience is only temporary. Do you mean that it will have to be resorted to at least by those who are sufficiently skilled in it in the near or distant future?

A. I have not the vaguest idea of what would happen in the future, for a satyagrahi has no such settled plan. He lives, metaphorically speaking, but quite truly, from hand to mouth, day by day. Therefore, I have no notion when the call will come to me to ask my co-workers to resume the struggle.

Asked what he thought about Mr. Sampurnanand's remarks[2] appearing in *The Statesman* of April 14, Mr. Gandhi said:

I fully sympathize with Mr. Sampurnanand in his anger, but when he has read my statement in calmness, I have no doubt he will see I have cast no reflection upon any of my co-workers. I have no regret for all past steps taken in satyagraha. But I have no doubt whatsoever that, in the extraordinary situation the country is facing, it was the wisest thing for me to advise Congressmen to suspend satyagraha, confining it only to me.

With regard to the passage: "Physical non-violence combined with boycott and disobedience is only a mask for spiritual violence and, in depriving it of its outlet and condemning it to use ethical language, it intensified the inward passion of hate" in *The Statesman's* editorial on the Patna statement, Mr. Gandhi observed:

If the writer of the editorial had used the expression, "might only be a mask for spiritual violence" instead of saying "is only a mask for spiritual violence", I should have taken no exception to it. But if my evidence and that of many comrades whom I can name is of any value, I can say with confidence that boycott and disobedience were never a mask for spiritual violence. We never had any hate for a single Briton, not even those like General Dyer who in our opinion had done grave wrong to thousands of innocent men and women. When a dispassionate history of the

[1] *Vide* "Statement to the Press", pp. 348-50.

[2] Sampurnanand, in his statement, had said: "Only a short time back Mr. Gandhi destroyed all vestige of organized Congress life in the country but advocated a truncated variety of satyagraha. Next he extended his blessings to the rejuvenated Swaraj Party, notwithstanding the Lahore Congress resolution. . . . when he seeks to inject into us the virus of inferiority complex by saying that we as a people, with all our sufferings, have proved ourselves unworthy of satyagraha, we cannot let this statement go unchallenged. . . . We are neither prepared to appoint Mr. Gandhi our sole champion nor promise not to resume the fight without his bidding. If this particular weapon is unfit for us, we shall simply have to find out another. . . ."

past fourteen years is written I have no doubt whatsoever that the historian will testify to the fact that physical non-violence coupled with boycott, as defined by the Congress, and civil disobedience did materially check the outbreak of violence and taught people the value of self-restraint. Forces of violence, when they are once let loose, instead of spending themselves continue to grow and with them the underlying hate, whereas civil disobedience, when it is honestly pursued, has been known to transform the passion for hate into a passion for friendship, and this I can say with perfect confidence from personal experience dating back from 1906.

The Statesman, 19-4-1934

426. LETTER TO S. K. DATTA

AS AT PATNA,
April 19, 1934

DEAR DR. DATTA,

Many thanks for your letter and telegrams. All I can suggest is that you should ask the Bishop not to be satisfied till the Khan is released or at least those who have influence with him are permitted to see him without let or hindrance.

Yes, indeed. For me the present is merged in eternity. I may not sacrifice the latter for the present. And that has driven me logically to the statement[1]. But I am hoping that this latest decision will bring swaraj nearer than it ever was so long as the people retain the view that it can be had only through non-violent means. What can be obtained through violence won't be swaraj of my dream.

Love to you both.

Yours sincerely,

From a copy: C.W. 7950c. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] *Vide* "Statement to the Press", pp. 348-50.

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427. LETTER TO HARI SINGH GOUR

April 19, 1934

DEAR SIR HARI SINGH GOUR,

I thank you for your letter.

I have not even thought of the way you have looked at the revival of the Swaraj Party. I have simply looked at it from the Congress view-point which has been hitherto opposed to Council-entry altogether. Is there anything to prevent you from being a member of that party? Must your nationalism differ from theirs?

I did indeed read your book on Buddhism with great interest. I do not remember that I had to write to you after my having read it. Your novel I never reached. My views on social reform remain as they were and they have taken active shape in the present campaign against untouchability.

Yours sincerely,

From a copy: C.W. 7950d. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

428. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

[DIBRUGARH,
April 19, 1934][1]

MY DEAR ANAND,

I have your letters and Vidya's. I do not know that I owe any letters to you. I would love to have you with me, but you must bide your time. In the first place you must not come to me till your health is proof against disease in this trying tour. Chandrashankar got ill twice and he had finally to go for recuperation. Therefore get well and report. Meanwhile do what khadi and Harijan work you can there and make your knowledge of Hindi better than it is.

The more you read my statement the more you will like it. It is no reflection on anybody. The step was inherent in satyagraha at this stage. More when we meet.

Love.

BAPU

[1] From the post mark

[PS.]

You know I expect to be in Sind some time in June. The newspaper is of course out of the question.

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

429. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI M. PATEL

April 19, 1934

BHAI DAHYABHAI,

I don't remember having left any letter of yours unanswered. I did make use of the book you sent. For the present, go on doing whatever service you think proper. I don't remember any request for volunteers either. Chandrashankar may know. He is not here at the moment.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 2702. Courtesy: Dahyabhai M. Patel

430. LETTER TO MANSHANKAR J. TRIVEDI

April 19, 1934

CHI. MANU,

Cheerfully accept Father's final decision. If your and Vimala's[1] love is pure, you should be able to exercise sufficient self-control to discontinue meeting each other socially. If you do not regard it as your moral duty to exercise such self-control, you should not mind financial help being stopped. No son is entitled to receive help from his father after he has become a major. Any help that the father may give should be regarded as a kindness. Other parents rarely do what yours have done for you. Even now your father has taken the decision in your interest. You should not argue whether it is really in your interest. Even if it does not seem so, it would do you no harm to accept it, for the motive behind Jayashankar's decision is pure. And in any case it is certainly not against dharma. It will not be a violation of dharma to discontinue social relations with Vimala for the present.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1012

[1] Elizabeth

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431. LETTER TO VIDYA A. HINGORANI

April 19, 1934

CHI. VIDYA,

I do not remember whether I have replied to your letter or not. Yes, in June the climate of Wardha will be fine. But as long as Anand is there, it is not necessary for you to go to Wardha. Where Mahadev has to stay will be decided soon.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

432. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

DIBRUGARH,
April 19, 1934

Interviewed this morning by the Associated Press regarding the Home Member's statement[1] in the Assembly, Mr. Gandhi, who is staying at Gosala Ashram, Dibrugarh said:

I have no views on the Home Member's statement because, being continuously travelling, I have not been able to see it. It has just come to me, but I have not yet read it. It is, therefore, impossible for me to pronounce an opinion as to whether the statement is cautious or halting or magnanimous.

He added that it was doubtful whether he could make any comment on the statement while he would be touring, having the whole of his mind concentrated upon Harijan work.

Replying to a question whether he suggested that Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru should be allowed to participate in the deliberations of the Ranchi Conference, Mr. Gandhi said:

[1] Sir Harry Haig, making a statement in the Assembly on the Government's attitude towards the Congress and the release of civil disobedience prisoners, had said that there would be no obstacle to the meeting of the A.I.C.C. or the Congress.

I can only say that any conclusions that any conference may arrive at can only be inconclusive without the presence of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 20-4-1934

433. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

DIBRUGARH,
[On or after *April 19, 1934*][1]

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have all your letters. What reply can we make to *Amrita Bazar Patrika*? The articles it carries are heavily spiced. And it is not that one always writes what one believes. If you want to write in order to explain things to friends it can be done in some other way.

The Award problem is very tough indeed. Something is possible if the Mussalmans accept the way I have shown. Even if they do not, the path is quite straight. But I am afraid the Swarajists will not approve of it. I do not find today an atmosphere conducive to the achieving of Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity.

I have independently examined the question of Council-entry. I feel that the Congress will always have in it a group favouring Council-entry. It is this group which should have the reins of the Congress, for it alone needs the label of the Congress. This fact I have accepted for all time. Those very people will boycott the Councils when they find it necessary.

There are many difficulties connected with Council-entry. Decisions on these will be taken when the time comes, mistakes will be committed, some will be rectified, some will not be and things will go on like that.

I for one prefer Ranchi to Calcutta. That it is not convenient for other people is another matter. The peace Ranchi offers is an impossibility in Calcutta. But I have left it to Rajendrababu.

I shall read your address to the Federation and communicate to you my opinion.

If the meeting is held in Ranchi and if you can come, do. It might be for the good though I cannot say definitely. I hope Gopi and Gajanan are getting along well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[1] Gandhiji was in Dibrugarh on April 19 and 20.

[PS.]

Babu Raghavdas gave the enclosed. There is certainly need for training Hindi instructors. The scheme seems good on the face of it. If with the expenditure suggested Hindi-Prachar workers can be trained it is all to the good.

BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 6120. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

434. A HARIJAN'S QUESTIONS ANSWERED

A Harijan sends the following questions for me to answer.

1. Mahatmaji, why are you so much interested in our cause?
2. If all religions are one in your consideration, are the Christians not entitled to combat untouchability?
3. In what way will our people be benefited if untouchability is removed?
4. Why should we enter Hindu temples?
5. Did not the Hindu deities that were incarnated oppress us?
6. Arya and un-Arya are the divisions created for us. What harm is there if we remain separated?
7. Even in untouchables there are many sub-castes. What do you propose to do with this problem?
8. Once you said that swaraj can be attained the day untouchability is removed. Is this present propaganda directed to that end?
9. If so, are you going to give equivalent rights with other Hindus to our crores of untouchables?
10. Instead of opening temples and eradicating untouchability, suffice it if you make provision for our livelihood.

They are good questions. My answers are:

1. I am interested in the Harijan cause for the sake of purifying myself of the taint of untouchability and doing penance for the sin; and, being jealous of the reputation of the faith I profess, I am anxious that fellow-members of the faith should also purge themselves of the same.

2. Not only are the Christians entitled, but it is their duty, to combat untouchability in their own midst. But if the question is that Christians should combat untouchability in Hinduism, my answer is that they simply cannot do it, because untouchables of Hinduism should not be untouchables to Christians. The anti-untouchability movement means weaning Hindus from their error. This cannot be effectively done by non-Hindus, even as Hindus

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cannot bring about religious reform among Christians or Mussalmans. If the question means that Christians should combat untouchability among Hindus by converting untouchables to Christianity, they do not advance the cause in any shape or form, the cause being reformation among caste Hindus. If the latter repented of their sin, the Harijans would be delivered from the yoke of untouchability in a moment. Conversion can never do it. It can only add to the prevailing bitterness and introduce a disturbing factor in a situation which is already bad but which, owing to the work of the Harijan Sevak Sanghs and other movements of internal reform in Hinduism, is steadily improving, untouchability being daily undermined.

3. In many ways. I enumerate some below:

(i) Caste Hindus will be purified by their repentance.

(ii) The economic, moral, social and political status of Harijans will be improved at a bound by the removal of an artificial barrier which has been stunting their growth all along.

(iii) Untouchability that is imposed on untouchables is such a poison that it has overtaken those living within its zone. And therefore, Hindus, Christians, Mussalmans and others have become untouchables to one another. Real removal of untouchability must bring us all together and thus promote a heart-unity of the different communities of India.

(iv) Removal of untouchability with all its implications must mean a great contribution to the promotion of universal brotherhood.

4. Harijans need not enter Hindu temples, if they do not wish it. But they should, if they have faith in them. The temple-entry movement has for its object, not the entering by Harijans into Hindu temples, but the opening of these temples to all those Harijans who wish to enter them for worship. In other words, it is a movement of repentance and change of heart in caste Hindus.

5. I should be sorry if I found that the Hindu deities oppressed Harijans, and if they did, they were certainly not beneficent deities, but evil ones to be shunned.

6. He would be a bold man who is able to say today with any degree of success who is Arya and who is un-Arya. Historians tell us that a blending of the two took place centuries ago. If now a sharp division is attempted, it will harm not only Hindus, both caste and outcaste, but it will harm the whole of India and, by implication, the whole of humanity.

7. When untouchability practised by caste Hindus is radically removed, its offshoot among untouchables will automatically wither.

8. I should assert the statement again. But the present propaganda is directed only to the purification of caste Hindus and, therefore, of Hindus. And when that purification is demonstrably attained, not only swaraj but many other desirable results will follow, as day follows night. The word "swaraj" as here used does not mean a mere legal status but something far better and more lasting. I would call it an organic status evolved from within.

9. Whatever meaning may be given to the word "swaraj", removal of untouchability will be a fraud if it does not carry with it the enjoyment by the freed Hindus of precisely the same rights as the other Hindus and all other communities may enjoy under it.

10. It is beyond me, a single, poor mortal, to make provision for the livelihood of millions. That can only be achieved by their whole effort and God's grace. But, if temples are flung open to Harijans and untouchability is eradicated, the dead weight that is grinding them down will have lifted, and they will have an equal opportunity with the rest of their fellow-men for earning an honest livelihood.

Harijan, 20-4-1934

435. HOW THEY SHOULD ACT

The reader is aware that I have dissuaded Harijans from pressing for representation on Harijan boards, for the very simple and complete reason that these boards are meant to be composed of *savarna* Hindus who regard untouchability as a sin and who would do reparation to Harijans for past wrongs done to them. *Savarna* Hindus are, therefore, debtors and Harijans creditors. When debtors consider the ways and means of discharging their obligations, it is they alone who have to frame their proposals for the acceptance of creditors, who have their own boards which consider such proposals and accept or reject them or advise amendments before acceptance. I have, therefore, suggested the formation of advisory committees of Harijans to assist Harijan Seva Sangh boards.

Writing on my suggestion, a Harijan correspondent says:

> If you will kindly paint a picture of an ideal Harijan advisory committee, what it should do, how it should act and how it should assert itself, I shall certainly be able to have a clear-cut idea of what it should be. I feel also this to be essential, in view of the necessity of establishing such committees.

These are pertinent questions. I should suggest the formation of compact, small representative committees who would truly represent the opinion of local Harijans. They would frame rules for the conduct of their proceedings and formulate their expectations of *savarna* Hindus and generally watch the proceedings of Harijan boards. These advisory committees, wherever they are formed, would advise Harijan boards of their existence and show their preparedness to help the latter. If the boards are sincere in their desire to discharge their debt, that is, to serve Harijans, they will establish the friendliest contact with the advisory committees, and perfect co-operation and harmony will prevail.

There may be friction in the beginning because of mutual suspicion. Harijan boards, being naturally better organized and better off in every respect, will have to exercise tact in handling what may appear to be extravagant demands. Advisory committees would endeavour to be considerate. The more considerate they are, the better able they will be to help themselves. From their ability to conduct themselves in a dignified manner, they will learn the art of asserting themselves if the occasion ever arises. For they should know that *savarna* Hindus will never be able to discharge their debt except with the co-operation of Harijans. But the question of asserting themselves does not arise just yet, because the vast mass of Harijans have been rendered so completely helpless that they have no power of resisting injustice, even if they wanted to. Let me explain what I mean. Harijan boards have three functions, to raise the economic, social and religious status of Harijans, or to put it in another way, to remove the difficulties that *savarna* Hindus have for centuries put in the way of Harijans raising their heads in any department of life. Thus the Harijan boards have to provide wells, scholarships, boarding houses, schools and social amenities, wherever the need arises. In all these, the general body of Harijans simply take the help wherever it is offered. Advisory committees can, therefore, help the cause and themselves by making useful suggestions to the boards and also rendering such help as they themselves can to those whom they represent. Thus only will they acquire the power of asserting themselves. In short, advisory committees will best help the cause by taking up internal reform and causing an awakening among the Harijan masses, so that they may begin to realize that they are men and women entitled to the same rights as are enjoyed by the other members of the society to which they belong.

Harijan, 20-4-1934

436. LETTER TO PREMI JAIRAMDAS

April 20, 1934

MY DEAR PREMI,

Your letter. The provisional date fixed for Hyderabad is 7th July. Only 3 days have been allowed for Sind. There is ample time for you to prepare. We are a party of 12 to 16. By that time Father should be out. I do hope Dr. Choithram is better. Give my love to Father and Dr. Choithram.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 9246. Courtesy: Jairamdas Doulatram

437. LETTER TO KOTWAL

April 20, 1934

BHAI KOTWAL,

I have your letter. In course of time you will realize more clearly the correctness of my decision. Be patient. Everybody will get an opportunity to do what he or she is eager to do. Civil disobedience does not consist in courting imprisonment or mounting the gallows anyhow. Civil disobedience has been completely abused in its spirit. One must cultivate fitness for civil disobedience. It has great destructive power. To cultivate such fitness, one must have voluntarily and scrupulously obeyed all laws and rules. How many people can we find who have done so? Are you one of them? Were you? Would you be now? Don't send me your replies to these questions. Reply to them to yourself and you will understand my statement rightly and also see your path. Moreover, please remember that I have not suspended civil disobedience in all matters. Apart from the fight for swaraj, there may be countless other situations in which individuals and groups may be required to resort to civil disobedience. Have patience.

Await my call for joining the fight for swaraj. Make yourself fit for it. If you wish to do so, free yourself from all personal bonds. Follow the way of "I left my friends and kinsmen, and my husband as well"[1] and engage yourself in khadi work and in

[1] A bhajan by Mira

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the service of Harijans, Muslims and drink addicts. Be content with what you can earn from such work for your livelihood. You may then be sure that everything will be well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3608

438. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

April 20, 1934

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I have fully read your letter to *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. I liked it immensely. It should be sent privately to the editor. If he so wishes he may publish only the relevant portion withholding your name and the personal element in it. If he does not want to, he may withhold it altogether.

I hope you are keeping well and taking proper exercise.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 7952. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

439. STATEMENT TO ASSOCIATED PRESS[1]

TINSUKHIA,
April 20, 1934

I have not noticed any active opposition from conservative upper classes as you call it and I have certainly had considerable active support in the shape of money, as also promises of constructive work. Strange as it may appear, even in Assam, whilst the Harijans have naturally laid stress upon the necessity of educational and economic betterment, they have bitterly complained of social disabilities and bar against entry into temples and Namghars (places of worship). They feel the sting of inferiority underlying the social and religious restrictions. I believe, however, that these are fast melting away and public opinion is gathering in favour of the removal of such restrictions.

[1] The statement was made in answer to questions from an Associated Press correspondent.

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I said the problem in Assam was complex, because indigenous Harijans and coolies from provinces are all regarded as Harijans, whether they were so regarded in the provinces or not. Theirs is, therefore, not an enviable lot. They present a problem of peculiar difficulty, because they are settlers in Assam, holding land in their own right and if they are not well looked after, they must present increasingly greater difficulties; but I am hoping that the Assam leaders, as a result of the anti-untouchability campaign, will seriously deal with the problem and help these coolies to become honourable citizens.

The Hindu, 21-4-1934

440. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TINSUKHIA[1]

April 20, 1934

Alluding to the incident[2], Gandhiji said that if anybody had insulted these friends, it was wrong. But those who wanted to serve the cause of religion must learn to rise above all petty considerations of courtesy and discourtesy. Those who could not surmount their pride and become as humble as the very dust under their feet would not be able to render Harijan service.

Proceeding further, Gandhiji said he did not set much store by money as such. It was, therefore, perhaps, that he had the reputation of being an expert beggar. He wanted money only if he could carry with it the hearts of the donors. If a single donor gave him one crore of rupees, he could not abolish untouchability; but he could undertake the task without a single pie, if he could carry with him the hearts of one crore of caste Hindus. Let them know what he meant by the removal of untouchability. It meant complete removal of all distinctions of high and low, not only as to Harijans, but also among caste Hindus themselves. That was sure to lead to heart-unity among Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others, for the political causes, for the disunion were superficial. The root cause was the distinction of high and low, i.e., untouchability. They must, in the language of the *Gita*, learn to treat the Brahmin and the Bhangi with equal regard. No human being could be unclean by birth. If they would search for unclean things, they had only to dive into their own minds, where they would find a multitude of evil thoughts worthy of being treated as outcastes. Bathing was all very well, but even buffaloes had long daily baths. He only was pure who walked in the fear of God and served His creatures.

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter"

[2] Some people had complained of having been insulted when they went to the platform.

Then they had a special untouchable in Assam. That was opium. They must get rid of the curse. It was stunting their growth. Medical evidence went to show that, if the opium habit was not given up, it would extinguish the Assamese. Harijans were a prey to the habit just as much as the others. He implored the cultured men and women of Assam to deal with the curse.

The condition of the labourers from other provinces demanded the special attention of the Assamese, who must devise measures for their uplift and fusion with Assamese society.

In appealing to the Marwaris, of whom there was a fair number in the meeting and whom he described as the bankers of India, Gandhiji said he well knew their humanitarian work. They were ready to find money for the cow, for Hindi propaganda, for relief of the distressed. He wanted them to take their full share in the task of serving the indigenous Harijans and the industrious labourers from the other provinces, who were miscalled coolies and who were treated as worse than Harijans.

Assam was a beautiful country, from whose natural scenery he could not bear to withdraw his eyes. Thanks to the noble Brahmaputra and timely and sufficient rains, Assam was a veritable land of gold. But it required sustained human endeavour to extract the gold. If all the limbs of society were worked efficiently, Assam would be as prosperous and happy as it was beautiful to look at.

Harijan, 4-5-1934

441. LETTER TO PARIKSHITLAL L. MAJMUDAR

April 22, 1934

BHAI PARIKSHITLAL,

Read the accompanying letter[1]. It seems he has written to you also. I think he should have a place.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4022

[1] This is not traceable.

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442. LETTER TO NANALAL I. MASHRUWALA

April 22, 1934

BHAI NANABHAI,

I have your letters. Courting imprisonment is not by itself a dharma. One may have to go to jail for the sake of dharma. We are keeping ourselves ready for that. If going to jail were by itself a dharma, one could do that even by committing theft. But you are right in your statement that the present atmosphere is such that going to jail seems to be the only dharma.

Enclosed is a letter from Manilal. Pass it on to Sushila after reading it. I am not writing her a separate letter. There is no time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7523. Also C.W. 4999. Courtesy: Kanubhai Mashruwala

443. LETTER TO KARUNA BAI

April 22, 1934

Shri Shukdevji has given me the invitation for your wedding. I hope you and Narmada Prasad will lead a happy married life devoted to service.

Blessings from
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI KARUNA BAI
C/o SHRI SHUKDEV PRASAD TIWARI
SUHAGPUR

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8681

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444. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KATIHAR

April 22, 1934

Bapu spoke very touchingly about Gokulbabu's[1] sudden death. He said that man proposed but the disposal lay in the hands of God. He had not dreamed that he would have to speak about Gokulbabu's death at Katihar when he toured with him in Forbesganj and mofussil, Gokulbabu driving the car all hale and hearty, with so much enthusiasm and energy. He got acquainted intimately with him at Purnea. In his house, he had become acquainted with Satyavati, alas! now a widow, whose courage and devotion to duty were noticed when she begged for pice in a meeting as a volunteer and tried to protect Mahatmaji in the rush that followed the break-up of a meeting and tried to force a passage through the struggling mass of humanity. But what could physical force avail? Of course the strength of spirit helps and protects. Bapu paid a tribute to her pluck:

She is a virtuous lady and tries with success to follow the footsteps of her lamented husband.

He hoped she would continue the work left by her husband. He had received Rajendrababu's and Mritunjay's telegram and had replied that as she had been devoted heart and soul to her dear husband she must follow in his footsteps in the service of the country and tread the path he had shown. Just now Rajendrababu had assured him that she was now taking food.[2] That was well. It was wrong for a loyal wife to immolate herself with her departed husband. Such a death was not fulfilling a duty. The real discharge of duty lay in carrying on the work dear to the heart of the departed and dying in the course of doing it. All die—old, young and child. All of them will travel the same path. Why then mourn for Gokulbabu who, though delicate and nourished in ease, worked like a mazdoor. He had been for three days with him and bore all the dust and the strain courageously and did not think of hardships.

All happens as God wills. They are contemplating an Ashram to be named after Gokulbabu, who had cherished that desire.

All collections at the meeting would be made over to the proposed Ashram. It is said that Gokulbabu was the soul of Purnea. He hoped the Purnea people would show that that was their feeling. Two points were noticeable in

[1] Gokul Krishna Roy

[2] Telegrams sent to Gandhiji had informed him that she had given up food from grief.

Gokulbabu—the absence of untouchability and the absence of distinction between high and low, rich and poor.

The Searchlight, 29-4-1934

445. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

MUZAFFARPUR,
April 23, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I got both your letters. I have just sat down to write letters after cleaning my teeth. It is 3.40 a.m. now. I hope you will look upon this as an improvement as regards my hour of rising. We are in Gokhalepuri in Muzaffarpur. We arrived here from Assam at 10.30 last night. A small suburb, named after Gokhale, has been built here by Bajpai of the Gokhale Institute. I have to perform its inauguration ceremony today after the period of silence ends. Rajendrababu saw me in Katihar yesterday.

As Valji felt a little ill, instead of going to bed immediately on arrival here I sent for a doctor and could sleep only after twelve.

Please do not worry about me. I am taking the utmost care of my health. I somehow manage to get my full quota of sleep.

Narandas (Gandhi) has been quite ill after his release. There is profuse bleeding from his nose. But he is a little better now. He will see me in Ranchi.

It seems strange that you feel perplexed. I had told everybody that you would immediately understand my step. But your letters show your pain. Nobody among those who are outside seems to have felt as you do. Jawahar did so, of course, but I thought that he would understand the step after a while. I wonder whether my belief that a person who is in jail cannot correctly understand the situation outside is being proved true in your case also, or whether I am following a completely wrong path. I still don't feel that I am doing that. To me it is as clear as daylight that the decision I have taken is correct. It is useless to ask me also why I didn't think of this in Poona. I couldn't have thought of it then. The right solution occurs only at the right time, and then alone does it work. The decision taken in Poona was the right one at that time and this one is right at the present time. One shouldn't mind what Aunt[1] says. If we had not taken this decision, we would have invited untold harm.

[1] Presumably Sarojini Naidu

There are difficulties of course. Not a single one of them was out of my mind. We will overcome them. This step has raised the morale of the people. It will rise still further. We can give a reply to the cultivators, and will do so. We couldn't have done that if I also had given up civil disobedience. I hope it will not occur to you even in your dream that this is my pride speaking. Since I cannot explain all the reasons to you, who are a prisoner, I leave the matter here. The fruits of patience are sweet. Have patience. Everything will be well.

About the Swaraj Party being revived, the reply is quite simple. It was absolutely necessary that it should be revived. I feel that a party which has survived so many bitter experiences must have a place in the Congress. I don't think this is a temporary phase; it has come to stay. I know that there are difficulties in that policy too. Personal aspirations and ambitions also are playing a part. And ability is limited. You may say what else you will. But realities cannot be wished away. At the most we can improve them a little. We may exercise control. We can do neither more nor less. You may even say that I have forced them to take courage in both hands. They wanted to take this course but did not have the courage to do so. The suggestion which I had made in Poona is now bearing fruit. It would have been a different matter if we could have kept the Congress completely away from the legislatures. But that would have been coercion. You were the first to show me *The Sun*[1]. Are the reports in it always of that kind? There is some truth in that one. Poor Lester. She and Agatha will meet me in Patna tomorrow. Both of them liked my decision very much. They are trying hard and doing their best. But nobody is likely to listen to them just now. All the same, it is good that they are trying so hard to understand the situation. Both are sincere and brave. One Ceresole is coming from Switzerland. He is an expert engineer. He is coming to give help in Bihar. He is a lover of peace. I had met him in Villeneuve. He is a good man. If he keeps good health, he will be able to do much useful work. Let us see what he can do.

I got a wire only yesterday about Fulchand Bapuji's death. A good worker has passed away. It was an excellent death. The accompanying note was published by Narasinhbhai[2]. You will like it. He says that Fulchand went to bed that evening as usual. He was working till the last day. There was no trouble. Naturally,

[1] Then published from Bombay
[2] Narasinhbhai Ishvarbhai Patel

there was nobody by his side when he passed away. The clock stopped during the night. Chandrashankar Pandya has sent a wire and asked my advice as to what should be done. What do you think can be done? This is no time to think about a memorial. Do you have any suggestion to make?

Thakkar Bapa had called on Dada[1] in connection with collections for relief work. Dada is all right. His health is improving fast. He seems to be in no hurry. Be it so. That also is good.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 96-8

446. LETTER TO AMRITLAL CHATTERJEE

April 23, 1934

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your two letters. Yes, I would like you to furnish me with all the facts within your knowledge about civil resisters and Harijan *sevaks*.[2]

Your second letter seems to contradict your first letter. Your first letter shows conclusively why even individual civil disobedience must be, for the time being, simply confined to me.

In coming to the decision, I have no more suppressed private judgment than does a surgeon who instructs laymen to do or not to do certain things. Naturally those who do not believe in the surgeon won't follow his instructions.

If many people disregard my advice, it would show that I have very few instruments to work with.

The experiments hitherto made had to be made before I could come to the conclusion I have.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 1446. Courtesy: A. K. Sen

[1] G. V. Mavalankar

[2] The addressee had complained of 'un-satyagrahic' conduct of civil resisters inside jail and also about the unbecoming conduct of some Harijan *sevaks*.

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447. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

April 23, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

I hope you have the letter I wrote to you. Your Gujarati is indeed good. It would be excellent progress if you could make out my letters. It is only for you that I am trying to improve my handwriting.

It is good that you liked my decision. There is nothing more you could do. What you have done should be enough. Why do you divorce politics from religion?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

448. LETTER TO KALYANJI V. MEHTA

MUZAFFARPUR,
April 23, 1934

BHAI KALYANJI,

I have your letter.

I have no doubt at all that the revenue dues on account of the Ashram must be paid. That no one except me should offer civil disobedience does not mean that the strong must become weak. It means that the strong should become stronger and make up for the weak and the latter should try to overcome their weakness. It, therefore, does not at all mean that anyone should through flattery or through humbling himself try to get back what he has lost. The time to get back what has been lost is bound to come, but that will be when we have acquired real strength. Meanwhile we should adjust our policies to the realities of the situation. No one need be frightened. Everything will settle down after some time and our path will become clear by itself. Let everyone cultivate the utmost selflessness and engage himself in work which he can do best.

You have given detailed news about the family. The body is from its very nature subject to illness and death. One person may

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be more ill or die earlier than another. Let us employ all possible remedies within certain limits. It would be good if Mithubehn went somewhere for rest as Sardar has suggested. How can Napoleon[1], a brave boy, afford to show weakness?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2709

449. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

MUZAFFARPUR,
April 23, 1934

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

I feel ashamed of my letter. Neither I nor anyone else can derive any sense from it. It is sheer violence to write letters in such bad handwriting. However, I continue to write them because all of you want them. In this particular letter, however, there are other blemishes too. I think I must have written that letter when I was extremely tired or was dozing. Some unconnected sentences, therefore, have crept in. Read it as if the sentences underlined by you were not there. You will then find that both the ideas are complete. Probably I didn't write that letter with sufficient concentration and so some thoughts then floating in my mind got into it. Your letter will have served its purpose if it makes me more alert. What trouble you must have taken, according to your nature, to read some meaning in sentences which have no meaning!

I got your letter. Do please continue to write to me. But do not expect replies to all letters. Some may not require a reply and to some others I may not get time to reply.

You did well in giving me the information about your spinning. There is no egotism behind it; the information is correct and worth giving, and, therefore, it ought to be given.

Even if our work progresses at a snail's pace, it will have progressed fast enough, because only what is genuine will endure. All the rest will be sheer waste of energy. Our test lies in being happy even in progressing at such a slow pace.

I shall write to Balram.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 369. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P. Pandya

[1] Chhotubhai, son of addressee's brother Kunvarji

450. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

April 23, 1934

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

Your letter. It is not good for you to accompany me on the tour or to come here all the way for a couple of days. Travelling with me is a tough proposition. Almost all fall ill. You cannot even take the trip to Badrinath[1] and Kedarnath[2] but, if you can, you may go to Mussoorie or Dalhousie. There is also not any more that urgency about going to the Ashram as existed before my decision. Now Krishna Nair will be able to stay on. I hope you have understood my decision.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2411

451. SPEECH AT OPENING OF GOKHALEPURI, MUZAFFARPUR[3]

April 23, 1934

Gandhiji said Mr. Kunzru had spoken about why he was asked to perform the opening ceremony. He considered it a pleasant duty considering the relations existing between Gokhale and himself. Gokhale, said Gandhiji, was his political guru and continued to be so. Gandhiji considered himself an undeclared member of the Servants of India Society. These cottages, said Gandhiji, were built for housing earthquake sufferers as danger to life and property was absent therein. He knew of the Assam earthquake of 1879 during his recent tour. The area affected was not as large as here but the loss was appalling. Assam possessed small quake-proof houses which were not dangerous to life and property and were less expensive. Gandhiji asked Babu Rajendra Prasad to go to Assam and see designs for construction there. Gandhiji said he could not thank the Chairman of the Muzaffarpur Municipality as Gandhiji being a Bihari he could not thank another Bihari.

[1] & [2] Places of pilgrimage in the Himalayas

[3] The ceremony was performed in Rajendra Vyayamshala. Among those present were Rajendra Prasad, Dr. Syed Mahmud and H. N. Kunzru.

Referring to two years' lease of municipal land for the cottages, Gandhiji said the municipality had acted in a miserly manner in giving two years' lease only. He asked the municipality to make the lease permanent.

The Library and the Aushadhalaya attached to the cottages would be used by all.

Concluding, he asked all to see that Gokhalepuri became a permanent ideal colony.

The Searchlight, 25-4-1934

452. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

[After *April 23, 1934*][1]

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

I was wondering why there was no letter from you so far, but I got your letter today. You should not have the diet you are taking at all the four meals. There is no gain from having too great a variety in your food. It would be better to have plain *roti*. Going out for walks and the hip-bath are absolutely essential in my opinion. You must in consultation with your elder brother chalk out a regular routine for yourself. I do not see any harm in taking the trip to Badrinath and Kedarnath if your strength is up to it. But I do wish you to get well somehow and have peace of mind.

Tell your mother that I shall have a standing complaint against her. There can be no dharma in refusing to take food at the Ashram.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2390

[1] The text suggests that this letter was written some time after the letter of April 23, 1934; *vide* p. 429.

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453. LETTER TO NARGIS CAPTAIN

April 24, 1934

Your letter. I must not exchange my rupees for one-anna pieces. Satyagraha is not at a discount. It commands for me a premium. Therefore the true ones are reserved. On due occasion they will give a good account of themselves. Therefore I want you to rejoice over my decision.

Love.

SHRI NARGISBEHN CAPTAIN
COMARA HALL
PANCHGANI
Via POONA

From a copy: C.W. 7953. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

454. LETTER TO CHATURBHUJ

April 24, 1934

BHAI CHATURBHUJ,

I wish success to your Youth Conference. Let the young men remember one thing, namely, that service can be done through self-control. A person of self-restraint does not consider anybody lower than himself and should, therefore, free himself from all sense of high and low. Let the young realize clearly that a practice like untouchability can never be part of religion.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4134

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455. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

April 24, 1934

DEAR DAUGHTER,

I trust you are cheerful. You may render there whatever service you can. Ask Dr. Sharma to write to me. Ask Draupadi Devi too.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 303

456. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BUXAR

[*April 25, 1934*][1]

Mahatma Gandhi referred to the unfortunate incident[2] and offered apology to sanatanists for indiscretion on the part of the Harijan workers.

Religion, the Mahatma continued, had nowhere been promoted by violence and he appealed to the Harijan workers not to take any step hereafter to protect him from violence.

I am prepared to walk alone any distance from this place so that sanatanists may kill me, if they like. I am alone responsible for carrying on the Harijan uplift movement and if any head should be broken it ought to be mine before anybody else's. I have sufficient faith in God and that is enough protection for my physical body. I need no other protection. I have so far survived five or six attacks on my life. I do not forget for a single moment that everybody has to walk about with death in his pocket consciously or unconsciously. And I would gladly lay down my head on the lap of anybody who may be intent on killing me rather than give up my conviction regarding the Harijan uplift movement under threat from any quarter. I have no quarrel with a single sanatanist. Every sanatanist is free to propagate his own conviction according

[1] Gandhiji was at Buxar on the afternoon of the 25th.

[2] Some sanatanists had held a demonstration against Gandhiji. Three reformer volunteers were injured in the fracas as also some sanatanists.

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to his own reading of the Shastras. I am always open to conviction and would be glad if any sanatanist could convince me that there is sanction against untouchability in the Hindu Shastras. God created all men equal and as such every Harijan is entitled as a matter of right to enter the temples. But he should not seek to do it by force as I do not believe in force or violence in such matters.[1]

The Hindustan Times, 27-4-1934

457. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[2]

April 25, 1934

It grieves me to have to state that sanatanist friends have given up all sense of self-restraint whether in language or in action. This morning when I alighted at a quarter past two at Jashidih, black flags were being waved prominently with all kinds of shouts. It was with difficulty that I was taken to a car. Lathis rained upon the hood of the car. One lathi or stone, I cannot definitely say which—Shashibabu, who was occupying the same car, is positive that it was a stone—was aimed at the pane at the back of the car. Fortunately I was the only occupant in the back seat and was sitting in a corner when the pane fell just on my side. I would certainly have been seriously hurt if I had been sitting in the centre. And if there had been more occupants, one of us would have been hurt without doubt. That the hood was not broken to pieces was no fault of those who wielded heavy lathis. I was not prepared for this wild demonstration. I would like to appeal to the best minds among sanatanists and suggest that sanatana dharma will be ill served by vulgarity and violence.

In Buxar, though there was a boisterous demonstration, nothing happened to cars but there was a row between sanatanists and reformers. As soon as I saw three broken heads and one injured arm among reformist volunteers and on learning that sanatanists were also hurt, I sent Thakkar Bapa to see how they were and went to hospital myself where injuries were being examined. There were broken heads among them also. I am investigating the Buxar incident and if I find that the reformer volunteers were guilty,

[1] After the meeting Gandhiji paid a visit to the hospital where the injured volunteers had been admitted.

[2] The statement was issued through the Associated Press.

I should most decidedly do such penance as lies within my power, for in a struggle essentially religious, there can be no violence on the part of those who want to be guardians of the purity of their faiths. The pity of it all, however, is that demonstration on the part of sanatanists should be at all necessary. They must know that I have no violence in me and I want no compulsion in any shape or form. They know that even with reference to the Temple-entry Bill I have declared in emphatic terms that I should not be guilty of advocating the passage of this Bill if the Hindu majority was against it. This is a movement purely and simply for changing of hearts on the part of caste Hindus. I know that hearts cannot be changed by legislation. Not one single temple, so far as I am aware, has been opened by compulsion or show of it. If any temple can be proved to have been so opened I would move heaven and earth to right the wrong. The whole of this agitation against reformers managed by a few hot-headed men, I fear, and backed by influence behind curtain is wholly unnecessary.

The Hindustan Times, 27-4-1934

458. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, DEOGHAR[1]

April 26, 1934

It is a matter of great pleasure to me to have been able to revisit this holy place. My ancestors had visited it. But I admit that I was not fired with the same kind of motive that they had. You may not also know that this was one of the places where, on my return from South Africa to India in 1915, I was invited to open the Ashram. During my last visit, practically all the *Pandas* (priests) were volunteers, lavishing their affectionate services on me and my party. They knew that I had the same convictions about untouchability that I have today. They knew, too, that there was hardly a meeting at which I did not speak on untouchability in those days. But, alas! on this occasion they are divided into two camps; one serving me and my party and the other, be it ever so small, resisting me. I know that it is not given to man to retain the affection of all men for all time. I know of myself that such a possibility has existed for me, a very imperfect man, only in

[1] Gandhiji spoke in Hindi. This summary of the speech was prepared by Gandhiji himself.

imagination. It is, therefore, neither a matter for surprise nor sorrow that some of my old friends, the *Pandas*, I find in the opposite camp. But the manner of resistance is a matter for deep grief to me. I suppose they are responsible for the circulation of leaflets full of untruths and half-truths about myself designed to wean the people from me. Decency of language has been thrown to the winds. One of the leaflets is supposed to have been issued under the instructions of the Maharaja Saheb of Gidhaur. But unless I had authentic proof, I should refuse to believe that he had lent his name to it.

Black-flag demonstrations took place also at some places during my tour in the South. But they were carried out gracefully. It was merely a demonstration that those who held the black flags were opposed to the movement. Many of them were urchins who did not hesitate to return my greetings, which invariably went to the black-flaggers as to the others, and even to take part in the shouts of joy. And I have little doubt that they should have said with their distinguished ancestors, Drona and Bhishma, that they were doing it for the sake of their bellies. Here, alas! not only has decency of language been thrown away, they have resorted to violence. Early in the morning, at half past two, when I alighted at Jashidih, they filled the air with yells of denunciation. They even became violent. If they could have done so, they would certainly have smashed the hood of the car to pieces. Heavy blows descended on it. The pane at the back was smashed and I had a providential escape from being seriously hurt. I believe that they do not want to do me bodily injury, and by landing lathi blows on the hood and breaking the pane, they had intended merely to make a demonstration of their anger against me. But whatever their intention, their action was undoubtedly violent. It might have ended in a manner which they would themselves have deplored. I should like to contrast the behaviour of [some people] this morning with the very correct behaviour of the Zamorin of Calicut. I went to Guruvayur. The Zamorin had certainly some cause for indignation when the battle was raging round that famous temple of the South, and yet he had prohibited any demonstration, even the black flags, against me, and he received me with marked cordiality in his palace. He frankly recognized that on each side it was a battle of principle against principle. The *Pandas* of Deoghar and the local Varnashram Swaraj Sangh have not had even a pretext, which the Zamorin would have had, for making a demonstration against me. And what is this opposition for and why this arrogation of possession of sanatana truth by the self-

styled sanatanists ? I have put forth the same claim that they have of trying to follow sanatana dharma. They have as much or as little right as I have to the exclusive interpretation of what it is. I swear by the same Shastras that they do. There undoubtedly is a difference between them and me. But that is purely in the matter of interpretation. Such differences there always will be. Surely they should be satisfied with the assurance that I do not seek to impose my views on anybody. I utterly disbelieve in methods of compulsion. I seek to bring people round to my view of truth by an appeal to their reason and to their hearts.

Take, for instance, the temple-entry question. In the course of my tour, I have had the privilege of declaring open many temples amidst the acclamations of thousands of people, practically without a dissentient voice. In the single instance where there was an appreciable minority against the opening, I refused to open the temple till the minority was won over or it had at least ample time to act upon the majority. If I discovered that a single temple was opened without such consent or by compulsion in any form, I should move heaven and earth to have the temple re-closed to Harijans. Then, take the Temple-entry Bill. I do believe that it is the bounden duty of every caste Hindu to adopt every legitimate means to redeem the pledge given to Harijans in Bombay during my fast in 1932. That pledge included resort to legislation when it was necessary. I may be allowed to say that the Temple-entry Bill or an equivalent is absolutely necessary if the will of the majority is to prevail. Today, according to legal opinion, even one dissentient voice is enough to keep a temple closed to Harijans. But I would be no party even to such enabling legislation being passed, if there is not a clear majority of caste Hindus in favour of it. What, therefore, the sanatanist opposition means is that I must not even cultivate public opinion in favour of such legislation under self-imposed restriction, which several of my friends and co-workers consider to be ludicrous. For I do not even take the votes at public meetings. Though I know that the majority will vote in favour of such legislation, I refrain, because I believe that it will be wrong to take the votes of the general body of people in technical matters. The question of necessity or advisability of such a law as the Temple-entry Bill is one to be decided by technical experts, that is, in this instance, lawyers. I have said repeatedly that the votes of only caste Hindus should count in the matter of opening temples. For, if they are unwilling to open their temples to Harijans, it shows that they have not cleansed themselves of untouchability. And it would be of little avail to me if all the

temples were opened but caste Hindus were against such opening. There is no such thing as bringing about purity by compulsion. I have tried, therefore, to discover the cause of the opposition, and I have failed unless it be that public opinion is fast changing and untouchability is on its last lap and that, therefore, by hook or by crook my tour should be brought to a standstill, no matter how scrupulously fair my means may be of converting Hindu opinion. I have, therefore, no hesitation in saying that by this morning's behaviour the sanatanists lowered the sanatanist flag in this sacred place, even as the great Yudhishthira lowered it by uttering a half-truth. For, has not the reputed author of the *Mahabharata* told us that, when Yudhishthira uttered the fateful half-truth, the wheel of his chariot sank some feet into the ground and that he had to make amends even after death? I, therefore, implore the sanatanist friends to repent of their behaviour in the sanctuary of their hearts and resolve never to repeat the violence of this morning. To the reformers I say, you are in an overwhelming majority. Those who are organizing the opposition are to be counted on one's fingers. You should try to win them over by your patience, gentleness and personal purity. This movement is one of self-purification, and only the pure of heart can have place in it. There ought to be no interference with the demonstrators. They have every right to express their resentment by carrying flags, if they like, so that I may know how many are opposed to this movement. The difficulty comes in only when they obstruct my passage or show their resentment by resorting to other species of violence. In any case you must, especially as you are in an overwhelming majority, be gentle and patient with the sanatanist friends, seek to win them over by persuasion and trust that, even if persuasion fails, time will bring them round to the truth if you are really representing it. There should be no retaliation on the part of reformers. You should know that in this movement of self-purification any violence done by the reformers may involve serious penance on my part.

Now, a word to the audience. I understand that there are several lakhs of Santhals, who call themselves Hindus, observe Hindu customs and manners, worship the Hindu deities and yet are regarded as untouchables to all intents and purposes. Those of them who do not call themselves Hindus are not regarded by you as untouchables; but those who do call themselves Hindus are almost punished for doing so. What is the wrong they have done? They have given up intoxicating liquors. They worship the cow as you do and I do or should do. They have even adopted

vegetarianism. They utter Ramanama with perhaps greater zest and certainly greater faith than you or I do. They utilize their idle hours by spinning and weaving and thus add to the wealth of the country. They deserve to be treated with affectionate consideration, instead of as pariahs of society. There is no warrant in the Shastras for regarding them as untouchables. If there is, the sooner we perish the better it will be for us and the world. And to the Santhals I would say, "If you have faith in Ramanama you will have it in spite of your being rejected by your fellows. That sacred name, and not they, will save you and give you peace and joy, of which no one can rob you."

Harijan, 4-5-1934

459. WHOSE OPINION CAN COUNT?

A sanatanist pandit complained to me the other day that in the matter of the untouchability Bills the opinion of non-Hindus, Arya Samajists, Sikhs and others who did not believe in temples and idol-worship was being taken by magistrates in Benares. If that is so, it is surprising. I have always held the view, and have expressed it in these columns, that, if opinion must be taken, that of non-Hindus, nay even of Hindu Harijans, cannot count either way. For, untouchability is a doctrine with which the caste Hindus alone are concerned, and the Bills have been designed to reflect their opinion. To hold otherwise would be to introduce coercion of caste Hindus by non-caste Hindus and others. The anti-untouchability movement is a movement of internal reform among caste Hindus. It is one of repentance and self-purification. These cannot be imposed from without. If, therefore, I had any influence with the Government and if the sanatanist pandit had given me correct information, I should advise the Government to revise their instructions so as to confine the taking of opinion to caste-Hindus only on the question of approval of the Bills.

My fear, however, is not that the Bills are likely to be passed by reason of non-Hindu opinion being given in their favour. My belief is that the so-called sanatanist opinion is not truly representative. For, so far as I am aware, caste Hindu opinion is overwhelmingly in favour of the temples being thrown open to Harijans. As to the advisability of passing the Bills in question, the masses, I hold, are incapable of pronouncing judgment. It is purely a question of law to be decided by lawyers. If caste-Hindu opinion is overwhelmingly in favour of the opening

of temples to Harijans, they have to be opened, notwithstanding the opposition of pandits, however eminent they might be. If the existing law is powerless to give effect to that opinion, as lawyers say it is, the legislature ought to correct the existing practice so as to enable caste-Hindu opinion to operate freely.

Indeed, viewed in the light here suggested, the Bills should never have been circulated for opinion. They cannot themselves throw open a single temple to Harijans. They are enabling Bills. The oppositionists hold that, even if there is one caste Hindu against the opening of a single Hindu temple, indeed, even if no one is against the opening, no temple can be opened. The position is no doubt absurd, but such in theory is the opinion held and expressed by those who claim to speak for sanatana dharma. I hold that it is the duty of the Government to hold the scales even and remove the admitted legal obstacle in the way of reform. The Bills are designed to do that and no more. The opening of temples would depend wholly on the will of caste Hindus who are entitled to worship in the existing temples.

Harijan, 27-4-1934

460. NOTES

Shameful, If True

The same pandit who complained to me about the taking of opinion by magistrates in Benares on the anti-untouchability Bills also complained that some temples had been forcibly opened at the instance of reformers. If that is so, it is certainly shameful and contrary to the wishes of those who, like me, view the movement from the purely religious standpoint and regard it as one of self-purification. Even if all the temples could be compulsorily opened to Harijans, I should not regard it as a welcome event in Hinduism. It would contribute nothing to the promotion of the spirit of brotherhood of man at which the movement aims. Indeed, the compulsory opening of even a single temple to Harijans can only retard the movement in that it must accentuate opposition, instead of weakening it. A change of heart is possible only in a free atmosphere.

The pandit produced no proof in support of his allegation that certain two temples [*sic*] in the North were forcibly opened. I have asked for proof and referred the allegation to friends for verification. I thought, however, that I should not wait for verification before referring to the subject. If it is true, the sooner

the mischief is mended the better it is for the cause itself. Such temples should be closed to Harijans till a better day dawns. If the allegation proves to be false or exaggerated nothing will have been lost by the superfluous warning given by me.

Harijan, 27-4-1934

461. HARIJANS' HANDICAP

One of the addresses presented to me at Gauhati by the Harijans has the following recital of their grievances:

1. We are not allowed entrance into the great Hajo temple and many other *devalayas* for purposes of worship, nor are we allowed admission into *namghars* belonging to Mahapurushiya or Damodhoria sects;
2. We are subjected to persecution by the higher castes, if we want to make use of elephants and *dolas* in marriages;
3. At the time of giving *diksha*, we have to be satisfied with touching the footprints of our Dharma Gurus, but are never allowed to touch their feet;
4. In some places, people of higher castes prevent us from using public wells, although the local authorities themselves maintain no discriminatory rules regarding them;
5. No *Pujari* Brahmin would touch us to put sacrificial *tilak* on our foreheads, and the idols made by us are considered polluted;
6. Oftentimes we cannot perform *shraddha* for want of priests; and some Brahmins would not perform any pooja for us even in their own houses;
7. In villages the higher-caste Hindus would be polluted if they happen to touch us after their daily bath;
8. Excepting in the Gauhati College hostels, we are not allowed into the common dining-room.

In spite of the galling social persecution, the signatory was able to say on behalf of those whom he represented:

> From the enumeration of grievances you must not think that we do this with a view to spite, or out of ill will towards, our more fortunate brethren of the higher castes. We venture to assure you that we have tried to realize the significance of your great doctrine of non-violence and that we believe that in course of time the more advanced sections of the Hindu community will embrace us as their fellow brethren.

In Assam I noticed no settled conviction about untouchability even among those who might be considered orthodox. A

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little hard work put in by cultured men and women of purity can bring about a healthy and silent revolution in the unholy custom of untouchability.

I would like to complete the list of the grievances enumerated above by adding those of the so-called 'coolie' population imported from the other provinces. The scavengers of Assam are mostly drawn from the neighbouring provinces. These are consigned to ghettos where they have, as they complained, no lights and most inadequate sanitary conveniences. Their plight in the rains must be infinitely worse than I found it to be when everything was comparatively dry. With but a little consideration and very little expense, the grievous defects can be immediately remedied.

Harijan, 27-4-1934

462. SPINNING AND WEAVING FOR HARIJANS

During my peregrinations I have observed that spinning and weaving are among the industries that are supporting thousands of Harijans and, if properly organized, can support many more. Indeed, in some places, there are to be found weavers who are classed as untouchables on account of their occupation. They are mostly weavers of coarsest khadi without any pattern. This class was fast dying out when khadi came to the rescue and there was created a demand for their coarse manufacture. It was then discovered that there were numerous Harijan families that even subsisted on spinning. Thus khadi is doubly the poor man's staff of life. It helps the poorest, including the Harijans, who are the most helpless among the poorest. They are so because many occupations which are available to the others are not available to the Harijans.

Apart from its great value from the Harijan standpoint, I have not omitted, to the extent I have been able during the Harijan tour, to study the whole problem of khadi. And I have found that the time has come for khadi workers to emphasize more than ever before the necessity of greater concentration on the observance of the laws of khadi economics. Some of them are essentially different from those that govern the general economics. Thus as a rule, articles manufactured in one place are sent or attempted to be sent to all parts of the world. Those who manufacture the articles need not use them at all. Not so with khadi. Its peculiarity is that it has to be used where it is produced and preferably by the spinners and weavers themselves. Thus, the

demand for khadi when thus used is automatically assured. No doubt this ideal will never be reached. But the worth of khadi will always be measured by the extent to which the ideal is reached. Khadi is a cottage industry in this special sense in which no other industry is or can be, except agriculture in a restricted sense, if agriculture may be regarded as an industry. Therefore it is necessary to educate the spinners and weavers to appreciate the simple economics of khadi. Where cloth is spun and woven by the spinners and weavers for their own use, it is naturally cheapest for them.

It follows that we must not seek to send khadi for sale far away from its place of manufacture. The surplus khadi should be sold in the village where it is manufactured. If there is still a surplus, it should be sold in the district of its manufacture. Special varieties will no doubt continue to be manufactured by those families which have woven artistic patterns from time immemorial. That sort of khadi will live, no matter what befalls the villagers' khadi, which is meant as a perennial source of labour and income for them.

The foregoing does not mean a revolution in the immediate administration of the A.I.S.A. Its depots will go on as usual. But it does mean a revolution in the thought world. The best mind of khadi workers will concentrate itself upon the village khadi, upon its style and durability, to suit the taste of the villagers. There will thus have to be a better and more real bond between ginners, carders, spinners and weavers, on the one hand, and the khadi workers on the other. There will be no feverish anxiety to increase the sales in towns. These sales will be regulated according to the demand of town-dwellers and the propaganda conducted by khadi lovers who will not or cannot directly reach the villagers but who will not be satisfied till they have sold some khadi on behalf of the poor spinners and weavers. Let this be borne in mind that khadi can be permanent only when it has obtained a permanent footing as village wear.

Harijan, 27-4-1934

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463. A GREAT HARIJAN OF ASSAM

The acting Principal of Cotton College, Assam, thus writes to Thakkar Bapa:

> The enclosure will speak for itself. Dr. S. B. Mali has left behind him a helpless widow and two sons of the age of 7 and 5 years, respectively. As they belong to the depressed classes (practically untouchables to the orthodox Hindus of higher castes), it will be earning the gratitude of the public of Assam if your Society could sanction an allowance for the widow for the education of her small boys. On receipt of your favourable reply I shall ask the widow to send a formal application to you.

Thakkar Bapa is attending to the widow's welfare and has sent me the character sketch of the late Dr. B. Mali, which I share with the readers of *Harijan*.[1] Had Dr. Mali not been an 'untouchable', it is difficult to say how high he would have soared. We are so stupid that we do not know even our own interest. In consigning crores of people to untouchability, we criminally waste some of the finest human material we have in our midst, and the pity of it is that we do all that in the sacred name of religion and make religion itself hateful to those whose humane instinct is wounded and who in their wrath are unable to distinguish between religion and its false votaries.

Harijan, 27-4-1934

464. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

April 27, 1934

CHI. MANILAL,

Read the accompanying letter from Miss Schlesin. I have replied to her that I could not guide you from here, and that she and Kallenbach should do that. I do hold that, if you have been making racial attacks, you should desist. But I don't feel inclined to criticize you from this distance.

Two letters from Ba are enclosed.

[1] This is not reproduced here.

I feel completely tired as I write this letter at 3.45 a.m. Hence I will not add anything more. Ramdas and Devdas have got daughters. All the four are well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4819

465. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

April 27, 1934

BA,

It is nearing four in the morning. My eyes feel heavy. I got your letter. Nimu and Lakshmi have given birth to daughters. The mothers and the daughters are quite well. Now the delivery of Bardoli Lakshmi is awaited. Some news about her also is expected in a few days. It seems Kanti will meet me in Ranchi on the 30th. Narandas also will meet me there. I get news about Rami and Kunvarji. They are both well. Since Madhavdas is all right now, why need I ask him to go to Porbandar? He is eager to start earning. I write to Bhansali from time to time. He is still in Than. His health is not at all good, but he is cheerful. Chhaganlal Joshi went and saw him. Since Bhansali's legs are not all right, he has stopped travelling. Santok and Radha are all right. Rukhi had been to see me. She had come for treatment of her eyes. Prabhavati, Kisan and Om are with me. Miss Lester also is with me. There is Rajendrababu's sister too. I don't remember anything about Lakshmibehn of Shikarpur. Sometimes it does happen that a few lines are scored out in your letters. I suppose I needn't do anything now about Lakshmibai. Jamnalalji is in Patna. Pyarelal also is there. Vasumati has gone to Wardha. She is better. Vallabhbhai is quite well. Yes, Durga and others have again settled down. I thought I had written to you about that. My health is good. There is no cause at all for worry. I am glad that you liked the slivers. They were made with Keshu's carding-bow, but were sent by Mirabehn. Assam is a small province where there is a large number of tea gardens. Most of them are owned by Englishmen. The labourers in them come from Bihar. Since the rainfall there is heavy, there is greenery everywhere all through the year. Besides, the Brahmaputra flows through the province and so the region is fertile and beautiful. The people there eat too much opium and, therefore, seem lethargic. All the women know how to weave

and they weave the cloth for their own requirements. Many of them also spin.

Blessings to all the women from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Bane Patro, p. 24

466. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, GUMIA[1]

[*April 28, 1934*][2]

Gandhiji said that it gave him great joy to meet them[3]. Referring to the groups of spinners, he said it was a fine thing that they should be producing yarn in large quantities and wearing the cloth woven from it. But this did not fully satisfy him. He wanted all the Santhals to take to it. If they all span, wove and wore their own cloth, they would fulfil the great ideal of khadi and they would be infinitely the better off themselves.

What mothers or sisters are there who would think of giving up making their *rotis* at home and getting them from the bazaar? Just as we eat our home-made chapatis, so should we wear our homespun cloth. And remember this, too, that our mothers and sisters, who make our chapatis in the home, take care not to give us badly mixed and under-baked bread. They know that, for the good of the family, the bread must be well made. That is exactly how we must regard khadi. We must not be satisfied till we can card, spin and weave well, thus producing good, lasting cloth for the home.

I must confess that the quality of carding and spinning is not half good enough to satisfy me. Your implements are also unwieldy, but could easily be improved if you had the technical knowledge. The rough quality of your khadi and the slowness of your production are simply due to want of knowledge. It is clear that those who have been working amongst you to serve and help you have not been able to impart the full skill of khadi production because they themselves are perhaps not in possession of the art. It is necessary for an instructor to have full mastery over the technique himself.

[1] Extracted from Mirabehn's report "Gandhiji with Nature's Children"
[2] From the itinerary in Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter", *Harijan*, 11-5-1934
[3] The Santhals

Gandhiji then went on to explain to them how, if their instruments were improved, they would be able to get the same output as at present in half the time each day. That would give them leisure for other things, or if they needed more cloth, they would produce double the quantity.

Gandhiji then spoke of the curse of drink, describing its awful effect on man's morality, and urged those of them who were addicted to the habit of drinking this poison to abjure it henceforth.

He then referred to the complaint that they had voiced in their welcome address about the hardships they were suffering from. He said:

You must have patience and you must acquire knowledge—the knowledge gained through a pure and devotional life. That spare time which you will gain when you improve your spinning methods can be devoted to the study of the *Ramayana* and other religious books, to improving your Hindi, to learning Bengali or anything else you like of that kind. If you gain purity and knowledge in this way, your hardships will melt.

Gandhiji then spoke to them of the beauty and power of the name of God:

You must learn to take the name of Rama with full devotion and faith. When you study the *Ramayana*, you will learn from Tulsidas the divine power of that blessed name.

You might ask me why I tell you to use the word Rama and not one of the many other names of the Creator. True, His names are as many as and more than the leaves on a tree, and I might, for instance, ask you to use the word God. But what meaning, what associations would it have for you here? In order to enable you to feel anything when repeating the word God, I should have to teach you some English. I should have to explain to you the foreign people's thoughts and associations.

But in telling you to repeat the name of Rama, I am giving you a name worshipped since countless generations by the people of this land—a name familiar to the very animals and birds, the very trees and stones of Hindustan through many thousand years. You know the story of Ahalya? No, I see you don't. But you will soon learn it when you study the *Ramayana*—learn how a stone by the road side sprung to life at the touch of Rama's foot as he passed by. You must learn to repeat the blessed name of Rama with such sweetness and such devotion that the birds will pause in their singing to listen to you—that the very trees will bend their leaves towards you, stirred by the divine melody of that Name.

And when you are able to do this, I tell you I will come all the way on foot from Bombay, as on a pilgrimage, to hear you. In His sweet name lies a power which can cure all our ills.

Harijan, 11-5-1934

467. LETTER TO M. S. ANEY

RANCHI,
April 30, 1934

DEAR BAPUJI ANEY,

I have gone through your letter to Nariman.

I agree with you entirely that the A.I.C.C. had to be held at a place and date firstly convenient to the members at large and then to me so long as my presence was necessary.

I also agree that the co-operation of Sjts. Kelkar, Jamnadas and others should be invited.

Of course there can be no settled programme. It will vary with the circumstances as they may arise from time to time.

I am quite clear that it will be wrong for the Congress to abandon C. D. altogether. I would have the Congress an illegal body so long as even the C. D. as restricted by me is objected to by the Government.

But that is my personal view. If the majority do not want it as restricted by me it should be definitely abandoned.

Yours sincerely,

From a copy: C.W. 7955. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

468. LETTER TO CHUNILAL

RANCHI,
April 30, 1934

BHAI CHUNILAL,

I received your letter today. It is beyond my power to understand your step. Still, I wish that you should complete your fast safely.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 105

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469. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI P. PANDYA

April 30, 1934

CHI. BHAGWANJI,

Your slow fever ought not to persist. Limit your work. Take hip-baths. Live only on milk and fruit. If fruit is too expensive, eat ripe tomatoes, uncooked. You should be able to get fruit in the Ashram itself.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. BHAGWANJI
HARIJAN ASHRAM, SABARMATI
B.B. & C.I.RLY.

From Gujarati: C.W. 370. Courtesy: Bhagwanji P. Pandya

470. LETTER TO MOOLCHAND AGRAWAL

April 30, 1934

BHAI MOOLCHAND,

I have found Swami Dayanand quite different from his writing. The work he did has great value for me. I stick to my views about *Satyarthaprakash*.[1] I have read it from a religious viewpoint. It shows an imperfect knowledge of other religions, which have not been seen with the eyes of their votaries. But I do not wish to enter into a discussion on this. I hold the Arya Samaj in great esteem.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 840

[1] For Gandhiji's views on *Satyarthaprakash*, *vide* Vol. XXIV, p. 145.

471. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

May 1, 1934

BA,

I got your letter addressed to Ramdas. I am writing this from Ranchi. We arrived here last evening. At the moment a good many people are here. Sushila from Rajkot also has come. Jamnalalji, Pyarelal, Rajaji, Dr. Ansari, Narandas, Kanti, Lilavati Munshi, Sarojinidevi, etc., have all come. Dr. Roy is coming today. We shall be staying here up to Thursday. After that we shall go to Jamshedpur, and from there to Utkal. A son has been born to Maruti and Lakshmi. I keep good health. Please do not worry in the least. I shall be in Patna when you are released and from there I shall be going to Calcutta. Ramdas is pining for you. So go and see him first. From there go to Delhi. You should go to Bardoli too, and from there you may go to Ahmedabad for a few days. About that time I may also go there, in which case you can join me. This is only what occurs to me. Do what you yourself like. Yes, if you go to Wardha, Deolali will be on the way. Therefore break journey there and see Radha, and Kishorelal too. This must be done in any case. I had long talks with Raojibhai about Shanta, Lalita, etc. I will try to send a copy of the *Ramagita*.

Blessings to all women from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Bane Patro, p. 25

472. CONFERENCE WITH SWARAJIST LEADERS[1]

RANCHI,
May 1, 1934

GANDHIJI : Sarojini Devi told me that it was generally understood that I had advised the complete suspension of civil dis-

[1] Among those present were Asaf Ali, C. Rajagopalachari, Dr. Ansari, Rajendra Prasad, Sarojini Naidu, Dr. B. C. Roy, Bhulabhai Desai, Jamnalal Bajaj, K. M. Munshi, Deepnarayan Singh, Mathuradas Trikumji and K. F. Nariman.

obedience on the part of the Congress. Then I would say it is not so. If this is the interpretation put upon my statement, it is the imperfection of my language, but this is not what I have sought to convey. Dr. Ansari, Bhulabhai and Bidhan know what is at the back of my mind.

BHULABHAI: They do not mean to say that this is what the statement conveys, but that this is what it ought to be.

G. Sarojini Devi observed that the interpretation put upon my statement in Bombay was that there would be a suspension of civil disobedience on behalf of the Congress, and that my civil disobedience would be quite individual. It is not so.

B. The wish is father to the thought. Many people read into it that meaning. The two conceptions are quite distinct. They read that meaning in hope. Please see if it may be possible to remove the wrong impression by another statement.

G. Is it the impression also among those that are here? And is it your desire that the Congress should wash its hands of civil disobedience as restricted to me?

B. Will you offer it in the name of the Congress?

G. Yes.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI: Is the Congress going to disown him?

B. There is a third, middle course. It may be possible to persuade Gandhiji not to treat it as the Congress disowning him but as his releasing the Congress from it.

G. It would be possible if it was my advice that civil disobedience should be undertaken by me not on behalf of the Congress but on my own account.

B. It may be possible to put it to Gandhiji as the desire of the Congress, 'Will you please relieve us? We are unable to bear the burden.'

ASAF ALI: I have understood your statement to mean that you have relieved the Congressmen; and since you say that civil disobedience should be according to your own conception, you have confined it to yourself. The Congress has faith in civil disobedience, but we cannot say so about the modification of it.

G. Under these circumstances the Congress should free itself altogether from this.

A. A. The civil disobedience must remain in our armoury. But the present is not the time to use it, nor does it seem likely to come in the near future. You should not use that weapon now.

DEEPNARAYAN SINGH: The Congress would wish not to reject it, but to suspend it.

G. I will explain later why I have given this advice. But what I wish to know just now is whether my language is capable of bearing the interpretation I am now putting on it.

D. S. We have taken it to mean complete suspension of civil disobedience.

G. If the people have interpreted it in this way, then it would be a different matter altogether. A sense of relief there is, because they have come to know that they have no longer to offer civil disobedience. 'He will go to prison. It is enough if one man goes to jail on our behalf.' If the sense of relief is due to this feeling, it is one thing. But it would be quite a different thing if the sense of relief is due to the feeling that, 'He will go on offering it himself; but we are free from it.' After Sarojini Devi spoke to me, I asked myself if there was anything in my statement to justify this interpretation. I read the statement once again at three o'clock last night. I have nowhere said in the statement that the Congress should suspend civil disobedience. In fact, I have assumed that the Congress is not prepared for complete suspension. In Poona it was definitely against it. If the Congressmen wish to get out of it altogether, I must respect their wish, and you may disown me. It would, in my opinion, be detrimental to Congress prestige. I said so at Poona also. If there is violence and it goes on increasing, we can suspend civil disobedience; but we cannot suspend it because our number is small. We should carry on civil disobedience, even if there is one satyagrahi left. If the adviser says, 'I have nothing left now and even I am unable to offer civil disobedience', then we can do something else. But I do not feel that I cannot offer civil disobedience. I feel no despondency in me. I do feel that it can be still more powerful in certain circumstances. One of them is that civil disobedience is confined to me. I want to do this as the Congress expert on this subject. The Congress is responsible for civil disobedience. But finally I am responsible. I am not feeling helpless. I cannot suspend it in my own person, nor can the Congress. The Congress dare not suspend it. The Congress must not suspend it, because thousands of persons have ruined themselves in this movement. What answer shall we give to them? And what reward? Are you afraid that the Congress will still be treated as illegal? But there is something much more powerful.

D. S. They will not like to disown you, and yet they want to suspend this civil disobedience for a time.

G. You can't have both the things together. If the Congressmen have that desire and yet do not want to disown me, I may withdraw from the Congress. There are two instances of a similar nature. I might have become a member of the Servants of India Society. But it came to votes and I withdrew. I said, 'I don't want to divide the house.' The second instance refers to the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad. Some people wanted to elect me as the president of the Parishad in 1926, and there was the controversy over the proposal. Munshi brought the matter to me. I said, 'I don't want to enter into any rivalry. It is unthinkable.'

B. Government did not put the two propositions together; it was the newspapers that did so.

MUNSHI: My impression is that they want the A.I.C.C. to do nothing more than endorsing Gandhiji's statement. If you don't do so, it will be a vote of censure, whether you wish it or not.

G. There are some Congressmen who want to go further. I have, in my statement, advised the Congress to restrict civil disobedience to me. Now the suggestion is that I should practise it in my own person but not in the name of the Congress. If that is the desire of the bulk of the Congressmen then I would give that advice, without dividing the A.I.C.C. on the question.

B. That is precisely what I want to say.

G. I want to know two things: first, whether I am misunderstood; secondly, whether it is the desire of the bulk of the Congressmen that I should go further than this.

B. If the word 'effectively' means endorsing your statement, Congressmen would be too glad.

C. R. 'Effective' means something more.

G. It is quite likely that the Government may say that this is not enough.

C. R. They had a doubt as to whether a majority of the Congressmen would accept the advice. Let us only think whether we want to disown Gandhiji.

G. The Congressmen don't want to disown me. They want this accommodation from me. If that is so, I must give them that accommodation. If there is such a desire on the part of a majority of Congressmen, I must do so.

C. R. Does it not mean that they don't want civil disobedience?

G. No, I won't go so far as to say that. An honest man would say, 'I cannot understand one man doing it. If you have

invincible faith, you may do it. If you show results, we shall come to it!' That many can't understand it I can see. But my hope is that many don't have that feeling. Having seen brilliant results, they would say, 'We can't possibly give it up.' If I give up civil disobedience, I would be denying myself. There are some Congressmen who wish to tell me, 'You should not isolate yourself from the nation; therefore, you too should give up civil disobedience.' The U.P. Congressmen have said this.

DR. ANSARI: They prohibit you just now, but they say, 'When you go forward, take us with you.'

JAMNALAL BAJAJ: In any case he is not going to jail just now—at least not till August.

G. The resolution in effect means to say, 'Your advice is good, but you should go one step further and suspend civil disobedience completely. When in future we go that way, we will all go together.' Grannie[1], you were right about those two women, and I was staggered.

NARIMAN: I want civil disobedience to be given up as the official programme of the Congress.

BIDHAN ROY: Nariman says that in accordance with your statement, it will be the official programme of the Congress.

G. Civil disobedience is still the official programme of the Congress.

N. Can you please give us the formula you will place before the A.I.C.C.?

G. My formula will be : 'Having read Gandhi's statement carefully, and having heard his explanation, the A.I.C.C. endorses the advice tendered by him to restrict civil disobedience to himself, provided that when and if he has the proposal for the extension of the programme of civil disobedience, the A.I.C.C. reserves the right of accepting it or not. The A.I.C.C. asks all other Congressmen to follow his advice and suspend civil disobedience.' It will not be a blank card given to me. Every time I have something, I shall come to the Congress. You don't pledge yourselves as to the future. You reserve your right to accept my advice or reject it. The Congress has a perfect right to offer civil disobedience. I say that you should not do so just now. The Congress may not do so till the expert does not advise. All energy will thus be husbanded, instead of being frittered away and wasted.

[1] Gandhiji was addressing Sarojini Naidu.

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The nation has got energy of which you have no conception but I have. I do not want to put an undue strain on the energy. Those who want to go to jail may retain the desire and prepare; and if and when I am ready, I shall come to the Congress, if I am alive. Civil disobedience will be wholly unnecessary, if the constructive programme is followed out. The parliamentary programme will also form part of the Congress programme, supposing the members of the Congress who go to the Councils are not going there for their personal ends. If a communal settlement is achieved, if untouchability is removed, if there is an Indian sober instead of an Indian drunk, and if we build up universal cottage industries in India, then there will be no occasion for civil disobedience. My civil disobedience will cover everything. My civil disobedience will be enough even after swaraj is achieved. The only difficulty lies in convincing the people that this way lies swaraj. And your parliamentary programme will be nugatory, if Hindu-Muslim unity is not achieved. You will be in a turmoil.

N. But how will this decision contribute to the parliamentary programme?

G. It will contribute by releasing your energy. I cannot go into the Councils. I am a red rag to the bull. My silence has contributed more than my words. My words have lost their power. I know that I shall give a good account of myself when the time comes.

N. Is this dual programme not inconsistent—civil disobedience confined to one individual on the one hand, and the parliamentary work on the other?

G. It is absolutely consistent. The law-maker is no good, if he is not also a law-breaker.

N. I can understand the same individual doing the two things at different times. But how can an organization do both the things at the same time?

G. Yes, it would be very difficult, but not impossible. If the Congress does not endorse my statement, you will be rendered impotent, and you will be asked to give up position after position. If you say, with your back to the wall, 'Thus far and no further', no Government can defy you.

B. You can make a good law and can break a bad one. This distinction is unnecessarily verbal.

N. Are we to have a dual programme with two parts opposite to one another?

G. Are they really opposite?

N. We then shall have two sections—one making and the other breaking laws. Why should there be hurry for Council-entry at this stage?

G. If I were in your place, as lover of the country I would say, 'We do believe in Council-entry.' I tried to see if we could have such a strong mentality in the Congress that no one would think of the Councils. But I find that we have a large body of men looking to the Councils. I will not call it a weakness. It is a felt want in the country, I called it a weakness while I was hoping about keeping out this mentality from the Congress. But I could not keep it out. Every time it erupts. I realized the situation. I goaded Dr. Bidhan Roy. I said, 'I advise you to form a party.' And I gave similar advice to Asaf Ali, Satyamurti and Abhyankar. I said to them, 'In the Councils you will be able to swear at the Government.' 'But we are swearing at the Government', they said, 'when we are in jail.' 'But you can't go to jail', I answered, 'because you don't believe in individual civil disobedience. When mass action comes, you will, of course, be there.' I am for prosecuting the constructive programme. I am not a believer in Councils. But if I were, I would be the first member of the Swaraj Party.

Mahatma, Vol. III, pp. 261-6

473. LETTER TO ROMAIN ROLLAND

RANCHI,
May 3, 1934

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have your two searching letters which Mira has translated for me. Your letter about your personal affairs has touched me deeply. Your utter frankness and your endeavour to let me understand your action as fully as was possible endeared you all the more.

Your exposition of the Soviet system I appreciate. I shall try to find time to understand it more fully from Ceresole.

My love to you and yours.

BAPU

From a copy: C.W. 10585. Courtesy: Madeleine Rolland

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474. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

RANCHI,
May 3, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I got your two letters. I have no remedy for your distress. Time alone can cure it. It shouldn't be made easy for people to go to jail and enjoy themselves there. What will it avail to run away from difficulties? What is the alternative? I have not snatched away the weapon which I had put into people's hands. I have suspended its use in order to demonstrate its effectiveness. This can be realized only through experience. Whoever lives will see it.

Chandulal, Kanjibhai, Chhotubhai[1] and Ravishankar[2] have arrived here. Mridula also has come, and so have Gosibehn[3] and Perinbehn. But I have no time to give you all the news. I am writing this letter only to soothe your feelings. Since others have been regularly writing to you, there will be no harm if I stop here. Velanbehn is still there. Kanti and Narandas are here. The latter seems to have grown thin.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 99

475. THREE UNHAPPY INCIDENTS

On the 25th April I commenced the Harijan tour in South Bihar. The first place to be visited was Arrah. On the way I had to motor to visit the temple of a zamindar, who had opened it to Harijans, and to receive a purse from him. As the Reception Committee had feared obstruction by black-flag sanatanists, they suggested that I should go in a lorry, in the hope that it might escape molestation, the sanatanists not suspecting that I would be thus stolen away. But, unfortunately for the members

[1] Chhotubhai Purani, pioneer of physical culture activities in Gujarat
[2] Ravishankar Vyas, popularly known as Ravishankar Maharaj
[3] Dadabhai Naoroji's granddaughter

and for me, the black-flaggers had anticipated the ruse, and as soon as the lorry entered the dense crowd which contained them, they made a dash for it. They were but a drop in the ocean and were soon overpowered and torn away bodily from the lorry wheels to which they were clinging. I could not bear the sight. That nobody was seriously hurt was mere good luck. The crowd was certainly in no mood to tolerate the obstruction. Terrific shouts of "पकडो, पकडो (seize, seize)" filled the air. The handling was none too gentle. The black-flaggers were determined to court injury, as the leader had assured me even when his party had begun the plan of obstruction. They were, therefore, resisting the seizure of their persons.

I was the helpless onlooker of the wretched scene. I had no present method of dealing with the situation, unless I was to turn back from my mission. I had, therefore, to allow the black-flaggers to be bodily removed. The police were on the spot and they, too, were trying to remove the obstructionists without hurting them. But though there was no serious hurt caused to anybody, the sight was enough to move me to the marrow. An indescribable sensation crept over me and I felt like swooning. I began the conscious recital of Ramanama, which unconsciously goes on continually in me. It steadied me. I was able to go through the day's work without anybody knowing what had happened to me or what was going on in my heart.

We reached the temple, received the purse and motored to Arrah to attend its meeting which, owing to the din and noise, it was impossible to address beyond saying a few words in response to the address and the purse. From Arrah we took the train for Buxar, which we reached at noon. There was a black-flag demonstration at Buxar. My car passed safely, but Mirabehn came in for a lathi blow on the hood of her car. Within 15 minutes of my arrival, I heard that there was a scuffle between the reception volunteers and the black-flaggers, who must have numbered not more than thirty in a vast crowd. This news was followed by three volunteers walking in, two with broken heads. The third had a swollen arm. They told me that they were injured while they were averting the blows of the sanatanists and pacifying the infuriated crowd, which was angry over the boisterous behaviour of the demonstrators. They told me also that some sanatanists were undoubtedly injured.

The time for attending the public meeting was approaching. I was ill at ease. The Arrah incident was still fresh in my mind. In consultation with Thakkar Bapa and Vindhyababu, I decided to walk to the meeting. I felt that the car was a red rag to the

bull and that my walking would perhaps disarm the black-flaggers' anger and sober the crowd of sympathizers and admirers. Vindhya-babu went in advance to tell the crowds that I proposed to walk to the meeting and that they should neither shout, nor attempt to touch my feet, nor molest the black-flaggers if they wished to demonstrate. The whole route, less than a mile, was lined on either side by a dense row of people, leaving a clear broad passage for me. The walk for me was a pilgrimage. Thakkar Bapa and Vindhya-babu had accompanied me. The meeting was most successful. The enormous crowd listened to me in perfect silence. I described what I had heard and seen and said that my apology was due to the demonstrators if any injury was done to them by the reception volunteers, and gave my assurance that I would inquire further into the happenings.

The meeting over, I walked back to the residence. Immediately on my reaching there, I found a sanatanist volunteer, who showed an injury in his head and told me that there were others hurt, of whom one would surely die. They were all at the hospital. I sent Thakkar Bapa to the hospital, whilst I was preparing for going to the station. On finishing the preparation, I followed him to the hospital and saw the injured men. I saw four in all, of whom the one who was reported to be dying was certainly not in any such condition. He was injured in the head. He was awaiting examination. He was able to carry on a sustained conversation with me and was quite in his senses. I should not describe his injuries as serious. The medical officer entertained no fear about his condition. The other three were not much hurt. All said they could recognize one of their assailants who had the reception committee ribbon. As I was unable to make a detailed enquiry, I asked them to send me the names or description of their assailant and a full account of what had happened. I told them what the injured volunteers had told me and assured them that I would do such penance as was possible for me if I found that the volunteers had assaulted them or had incited others to do so, and that for me they were just as dear as the volunteers. It was a hurried visit to the hospital. I had to hasten to the station to catch the train for Jashidih, the junction for Deoghar, which I was to reach at 2.10 a.m. the next day, i.e., 26th.

The night was disturbed by Pandit Lalnath and his party, who were travelling with us, getting out at every station and vigorously singing out "We shall not let him proceed on his mission" and other slogans. To my knowledge, they were in no way molested whilst they were going through the performance. Indeed, the

crowds who had come to greet me, as they did practically at every station, remained still whilst the sanatanists were trying to provoke me into stopping the tour or the public into seriously molesting him and his party. Thus we reached Jashidih which was a seething mass of humanity. The station was ill-lighted. I therefore could not see faces. The police were certainly there. They took part side by side with the volunteers in escorting me.

After we had arrived with difficulty at the station gate where tickets were collected, we passed through a suffocating crowd interspersed with numerous black-flag demonstrators. With the greatest difficulty the police officials and the volunteers showed me into the car. Thakkar Bapa, who was to have got into it with me, simply could not do so, and it was considered dangerous to detain the car for him. So the car proceeded, making its way very slowly through the crowd. Heavy blows descended on the hood of the car. I momentarily expected it to break to pieces. Meanwhile came a blow on the pane at the back of the hood. The broken bits fell at my side. Shashibabu, who was occupying the front seat, was sure it was a stone that was aimed at the pane. I was not sure. But I knew that I had escaped serious hurt if not worse.[1]

I felt sorry and humiliated to find sanatana dharma so vulgarly and violently represented. I can find no justification for the conduct of the few men who are organizing these demonstrations in the name of Varnashrama Swaraj Sangh.

Harijan, 4-5-1934

476. LETTER TO CHANDULAL DESAI[2]

RANCHI,
May 4, 1934

It is undoubtedly true that the temporary suspension of civil disobedience raises in an acute form the problem of the cultivators who have suffered and lost their farms and homes. Nor is there any doubt that it is the duty of every Gujarati to give whatever help he can to enable those cultivators to stand on their feet again. But it is necessary to remember that in giving them help we do not make them permanently dependent. Great battles have never been fought, and will never be fought, without some individuals suffering.

[1] For incidents at Jashidih and Deoghar, *vide* also "Statement to the Press", pp. 433-4, and "Speech at Public Meeting, Deoghar", pp. 434-8.

[2] The addressee later released the letter to the Press along with a public appeal for relief of the farmers.

Please also remember that there is no question of compensating the cultivators for their losses. It is a question of rehabilitating them. Those who have lost their lands should have faith that, if not they themselves in their lifetime, their heirs will surely get back one day the lands which they have lost. According to me, this is only one sign, and that too a small one, that we shall get swaraj.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2712

477. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, JAMSHEDPUR*[1]

May 4, 1934

Gandhiji said . . . that in a newly-built city like Jamshedpur, taking its name after one of the greatest and the wisest philanthropists of his age, it was a pity that the hovels occupied by its Harijans were not changed into decent tenements. He added that in that cosmopolitan city it was hardly creditable to its population that there had to be separate Harijan *bastis* at all. It was essentially a labourers' city. Labour at least should be free from the taint of untouchability.

The speech also dealt with the drink evil which, he had learnt at Jharia, was on the increase. Claiming himself to be a labourer by choice, Gandhiji warned his fellow-labourers that their greatest enemy was not capital but drink and other bad habits. If they did not give up drink, it might finally prove their undoing.

Gandhiji also adverted to goondaism, which was reported to be growing in their midst. It was a disgrace that barbarous methods were employed, no matter by whom. He had heard that ex-labourers were employed in this nefarious traffic. It was a shame if such was the case.

Gandhiji deplored the fact that the labourers could not trust themselves to part with their money[2] for sacred causes when once the cash came into their hands. He, therefore, asked the labourers and their advisers to arrange for payment of their donations on the next pay day. He did not mind how small the donation was, but he wanted to feel that labour was solidly for the removal of untouchability. He cited the example of labour in all the other labour areas he had visited—the last being Chakradharpur—that very day. Labourers there had paid their own quota.

Harijan, 11-5-1934

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter"

[2] Gandhiji had been told that the purse presented to him contained very little from the labourers.

478. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

JAMSHEDPUR,
May 4, 1934

Asked as to the results of his Harijan campaign, Mr. Gandhi smilingly said:

Ask Lord Willingdon.

He then added that it had gone forward by leaps and bounds and that there had been a marked mental revolution. It was only a question of when it would be translated into action in every caste-Hindu household.

Asked about the advisability of reconverting the aboriginal Christians, Mr. Gandhi said he could not think of such a course. He, however, thought that there were many among the aborigines who were Christians nominally and would gradually gravitate towards Hinduism without anybody's efforts. Those who had become sincere converts to Christianity should be allowed to grow in that faith.

The Searchlight, 9-5-1934

479. ENTRY IN VISITORS' BOOK[1]

May 5, 1934

I was glad to be able to visit this deserving institution.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1991

480. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

May 5, 1934

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

I had your letters. You may go to Bombay and get yourself operated upon.[2] Tell me if you need a letter to some doctor. Be happy and content.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 302

[1] Of the Sambalpur Sudder Leprosy Clinic
[2] For piles

481. A FRAGRANT FLOWER

Fulchand Bapuji Shah was a lovely flower in the garden of Gujarat. It has dropped but left its fragrance behind. I had come in intimate contact with Bhai Fulchand at the time of the Kheda Satyagraha. Ever since I knew him as a silent worker, he was always ready to serve in whatever way the call came to him. Being an honest servant of the Harijans, he had become a Harijan himself. He was a brave man. I have not known of any occasion when he hesitated to make a sacrifice. God has granted him a death worthy of a brave worker. He took this great journey without accepting any service from others. We shall not grieve over his death. Let not the members of his family grieve. Fulchand had a large family. He considered all of us as the members of his family. To emulate his silent service is the true memorial for such a servant. At this moment of self-purification, let us remember Fulchand and cleanse ourselves of all impurities.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 6-5-1934

482. LETTER TO SRI PRAKASA

As at Patna,
May 6, 1934

MY DEAR SRI PRAKASA,

I have your long letter followed by a short one. I note the pains you have taken over giving me accurate information about Markandeya temple. If your meaning of sanatana dharma was accepted, there would of course be no difficulty.

If I had seen eye to eye with the members of the Servants of India Society I would not be merely an unrecognized member. I claim to be a member because the same spirit that fired Gokhale is the spirit that fires me. And who knows in what scales he would have thrown his weight if the events of 1919 and after had taken place in his lifetime?

You must not be a literalist. "The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life" is not only true for Christians, but it is true for

the whole world. See how the letter is killing the self-styled sanatanists!

Yours,
BAPU

SHRI SRI PRAKASA
SEVASHRAM
SIGRA, BENARES

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

483. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, ANGULI[1]

May 6, 1934

I am very glad to see you all. You all know that I never came to this part of Orissa. Railway communication to this place is not sufficient. For this and for other reasons I had not come to this place. It is a good thing that I get an opportunity of speaking about removal of untouchability here as I do elsewhere.

I wish to say that untouchability as we observe it nowadays has no mention in our religious Shastras. The *Dharmashastras* do not mention the names of people whom we call untouchables. We cannot show any reason why we call them untouchables.

In matters of religion which concerns crores of people such ignorance is unpardonable. It is a pity that for so long we have been taking darkness for light and ignorance for knowledge. So I ask you all—the old, the young, male and female, who have assembled here—to save yourselves from the darkness of ignorance. If we do not save ourselves from this ignorance, we are sure to lose our existence and our dharma will be wiped out. We are all sons of one Father. God makes no distinction among His own sons. Ordinary parents do not make any distinction among their children and so in the case of God difference is not possible. We should wash off the idea of untouchability. It is not desirable to treat anyone as untouchable. We should have self-purification by forgetting considerations of great and small and high and low.

There have been divisions high and low even among the *savarna* Hindus. This is the consequence of untouchability. It is also a sin to find differences among the untouchables as high-class and low-class. Parents teach us that there is no difference between a Brahmin and a *Chandala* and that they can serve each

[1] Gandhiji spoke in Hindi and the speech was translated into Oriya.

other. I cannot find any difference between them. The Shastras never teach that illiterate people should be shunned. It is our duty to impart knowledge to the ignorant. To cure the diseased is a good service. Ignorance is a sort of disease. We are establishing schools at places to remove ignorance of people. When we go to school we never think that we are low and the teachers are high. One who thinks himself high and his pupils low is not fit to be a teacher. You should learn from this that to think anyone low is meanness and sin. There is a kind of untouchability in the world; it is evil thought. Removal of real untouchability consists in dismissing all the evil thoughts from our minds. We should all pray to God in the morning daily that He will give us strength to overcome all the evil thoughts that come to our mind. Another kind of untouchability is drinking liquor. Wine is the great untouchability. Those who drink wine should give it up believing that it is a sin. Idleness is an untouchability. It is our great enemy. I know Orissa occupies a prominent place in idleness. It has various reasons and I am not going to make an exposition of them. But I say that whatever be the reason all should give up idleness. We cannot be industrious throughout the year by taking recourse to cultivation only. My advice to Orissa people is that when they have no work in hand they should pick cotton, spin and weave khaddar for their own use. This will not only make you self-dependent but crores of rupees will be saved.

Instruction on spinning-wheel is the best instruction that can be given to our boys. They will learn to earn their livelihood by means of spinning-wheel. I know that thousands of Harijans of Orissa do not get any work in the year. If we want to make the Harijans our own we should train them in cotton cultivation, picking cotton, spinning thread and weaving cloth.

If you realize that it is necessary to remove untouchability then you can contribute a pice or two or whatever you can. Those who contribute and those who do not, should all be peaceful.[1]

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 8-5-1934

[1] The report in the source says: "People were not satisfied with this. They surrounded Gandhiji's tent on all sides. By that time more than 25 thousand people had gathered. . . . Police was tired and left the place. An hour and a half passed." The report goes on to say that the throng pressed so close that volunteers had to lie down to save the situation. Gandhiji then came out and spoke to the crowd, pointing out how they were inconveniencing him. He finally persuaded them to disperse after promising to speak to them later in the afternoon, which he did.

484. LETTER TO DRAUPADI SHARMA

May 7, 1934

CHI. DRAUPADI DEVI,

I have your letter. It is good. Parents should not regard their children a burden even though they may have decided to observe *brahmacharya*. Their care is essential as a part of one's accepted duty. Other tasks of service may be undertaken side by side. It will result in the children turning out to be true servants. This is my opinion but if you are still unsatisfied you can follow your inclination. Do write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsha*, between pp. 66-7

485. LETTER TO HIRALAL SHARMA

May 7, 1934

BHAI SHARMA,

I instructed Narandas to send a reply to your letter. You should certainly treat Ramdas as you think best. Keep writing to me. Your sacrifice should be only within your capacity. You can assuredly come to me when I am settled somewhere for a certain length of time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsha*, facing p. 66

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486. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

PURI,
May 8, 1934

The idea is growing on me that I should finish the balance of the Harijan tour by walking as far as it may be possible. When the Tamil Nadu tour was being settled by Mr. Thakkar, and pressure was being put upon him and Dr. Rajan to include places which could not possibly be done during the time allotted to Tamil Nadu, I suggested to Mr. Thakkar that if he could share my faith, I would gladly cancel the elaborate programme that was then being drawn up and finish the tour by walking from village to village. Latterly, the idea has been revised and it has gripped me especially after the Deoghar incident. I know that those who are resorting to the violent method are to be counted on one's finger's ends. But even the fewest can disturb meetings. I would love to demonstrate to them in every way I can that the movement is essentially religious in conception and execution. If the motive is religious, so is the end sought. I am anxious too to show that it does not depend for its spread upon swift locomotion. A suggestion that I should use the aeroplane was dismissed as soon as it was made. Nor need anyone run away with the idea that the tour has been undertaken for the sole purpose of collecting funds. I am sure that both the men, women and money that may be necessary for the cause will be forthcoming even though I may be walking. It is likely that if my message comes from the heart, it will travel faster on foot than by rail or motor. And then I am tired of the terrific noises. Though they are an expression of people's affection and joy at seeing me, they jar on my nerves which have now become too weak to bear them. I am equally tired of the hustling that has become my daily lot. The pressing towards me of vast crowds and the frantic efforts of volunteers to protect me from these crowds are proving too much for my weak body and I see no use in these shouts and this pressure. The mania for touching my feet is a source of danger to my body. Hardly a day passes when I do not get light scratches from the nails of the merit-seekers. I have made little lasting impression in

[1] The statement was issued through the United Press. It was also published in *Harijan*, 11-5-1934, under the title "Shall it be on Foot?"

spite of having strongly disapproved of the shouts, the pressings and the touching of feet. I do produce a local impression when I succeed in being heard. This opportunity cannot occur to me often when I have to rush through space as I have been doing and have to take, during the day, three places far apart from one another. For the essential truth of the message to soak into the people, it has to be delivered to silent and listening crowds. Religious truth, or for that matter any truth, requires a calm and meditative atmosphere for its percolation. I have therefore three suggestions to make to my co-workers for the balance of the tour. I give them in their order of merit:

(1) I should begin the tour on foot wherever I may be on the day the resolution is made, interrupting it for attending the A.I.C.C. meeting at Patna or the like and returning for resumption to the point where the interruption may take place, or choosing a fresh start after interruption.

(2) Choosing a new province after finishing Orissa and finishing the tour in that province or taking as many provinces as possible on foot.

(3) Drawing up a new programme to cover not all as arranged at present but as many provinces as possible and using the railway for going from province to province.

I am sure that if the workers have faith in the spiritual nature of the message, they will not hesitate to adopt the first suggestion. In no case may the workers come to a mechanical decision. Theirs must not be a borrowed faith. If none of my suggestions appeals to their hearts, they must reject them summarily and I shall go through the balance of the tour in the best manner I can. The question may be asked if I am sure of my ground why I do not act independently of the co-workers as I have been known to have done before. The question is appropriate. I do not so act because my own faith is not quite as strong as I would like it to be. I perceive the truth of it but dimly. Then the tour is not of my seeking. It was suggested by Mr. Thakkar and Sheth Ghanshyamdas Birla. It was planned too by them. I have not mooted my suggestion to the latter. The former is not enthusiastic about it. He dreads what he thinks might be a breach of promise to the provinces and in no case will he act without the consent of the provinces concerned. Of course he is right after his own manner.

Will the Chairmen or Secretaries of the remaining provinces after consultation with their co-workers wire briefly their views to me?

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 8-5-1934

487. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

May 8, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

It is just now 2.25 a.m. The ink in the pen has run out. Hence the pencil writing. I hope you are at peace with yourself now. You have evidently little faith in the ultimate rightness of things or the victory of truth. If you have, you ought not to worry as you do over my safety. If you will obey, you will go on with your work without brooding over me or my doings. I am quite well and happy. And so should you be. I hope the heat there is not too trying for you.

Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

488. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

May 8, 1934

CHI. AMTUSSALAAM,

I hope you will stop worrying now. You are free to go to Bombay. You should get the piles removed. If you wish, I would send a note of recommendation to the doctor. Follow Sharma's advice. Don't attempt anything beyond your strength. Write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 304

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489. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, PURI[1]

May 8, 1934

Gandhiji gave the citizens an idea of the new dispensation. He was glad that his walking tour[2] would commence from Jagannathpuri, the Eastern shrine *par excellence*, where all Hindus received the *prasad* of the Lord of the Universe on a footing of perfect equality. The walking pilgrimage emphasized the spiritual nature of the Harijan movement. His own experience, fortified by a study of history, had convinced him that all conveyances, even bullock-carts, not only did not help but hampered the free operation of spiritual forces. The work before them was so arduous, and the canker of untouchability had taken such a deep root in their body politic, that all the renunciation and *tapas* that they were capable of were required for its removal. Hence did the idea grow upon him from day to day that he must give up railway trains and motor-cars and content himself with what he could do on foot, so far as the delivery of the message was concerned. But at Vaidyanath the idea simply gripped him. He had long realized that his body must ever be resigned to the tender mercies of the people, and he also felt that, if God still intended his body as an instrument of service, His arm was long enough to defend it against all designs upon it. It would be painful to him if he had to have resort to conveyances in order to save his skin. Whilst the police did their duty, he could not help feeling ashamed that they had to defend him against possible mischief. All these considerations had weighed with him in coming to the present decision. If there was vital truth in the message he was delivering, it should be self-luminous and self-propagating and reach millions by the sheer force of thought. If, therefore, the results were not what he expected, he would question his own worthiness for the mission, rather than question the truth of the mission. He would start for the villages on the Puri-Cuttack road the next day, and he asked them to bless the effort.

To the *sanatani* oppositionists he would give the assurance in sight of the great temple that, so far as he could help it, temples would be thrown open to Harijans only with the consent of the temple-goers and never by force.

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter". Gandhiji walked to the place of the meeting. Before the speech Gandhiji unveiled a bust of Gopabandhu Das.

[2] From here onwards Gandhiji renounced the use of conveyances for the duration of the Orissa tour.

People were welcome to join him in his pilgrimage, but they must not try to touch his feet or crowd round him. They must walk behind the pilgrims, never ahead or abreast of them, and obey their instructions. They must not make noises, but march in peace, and they must make their own arrangements for food and shelter. There must not be any burden to the villagers.

Harijan, 18-5-1934

490. LETTER TO UTTAMCHAND SHAH

PURI,
May 9, 1934

CHI. UTTAMCHAND,

My Harijan tour on foot will commence tomorrow[1]. But that will be from the city. Today we are visiting a village. It is three in the morning just now and I am trying to dispose of as many letters as I can. Your letter was expected. Many other co-workers have felt as you have done. My decision has certainly shocked everybody. But they also feel that their burden has been lightened. The co-workers will be tested more severely now. They should silently go on doing constructive work along scientific lines, cultivate greater simplicity, truthfulness and patience and get to know villages more closely. I want both of you to build up good health.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I have no time to write about other things.

UTTAMCHAND
KASTURBA VANASTHALA
MAROLI, B.B. & C.I. RLY., *via* NAVSARI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9441

[1] The walking tour actually commenced on May 9.

491. LETTER TO RAMANANDAN

May 9, 1934

BHAI RAMANANDAN,

I wish you success in your enterprise and may your *sadhana* for service ever increase.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 96

492. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

May 9, 1934

BHAI BALVANTSINHA,

I have your letter. You will by and by realize the correctness of my decision. There were quite a few simple satyagrahis like you who offered civil disobedience. But there were spiritual reasons too for the decision apart from the shortcomings of co-workers. Experience is confirming every day that the decision was absolutely right. Now more responsibility has fallen on you. You will be tested well in your constructive capabilities, your faith and steadfastness. Do as Narandas says.

You may reply if someone obstructs you in your constructive activity. But endure imprisonment if it comes your way.

Civil disobedience will be the right thing and even a duty if the situation demands it.

Those who are outside should act according to their judgment in the event of my arrest. In this too you have to do as Narandas bids. Remember that in itself going to jail is no dharma and that one has to qualify for it.

I am keeping well but of my weight I am ignorant. The subject of my touring on foot is quite old by now.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1870

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493. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

May 9, 1934

I am glad to be able to say that when I discussed the proposal[1] this morning with Utkal workers they readily accepted it and realized the spiritual significance of the proposed step. Of course, they had difficulties about the severe disappointment that would be caused to local workers and people in general in places to be omitted but I suggested to them that the disappointment would turn to joy when they would see that the reality of the message dawned upon them more quickly than now.

I hope that co-workers will spread the news in villages and instruct villagers about the solemnity of the mission. All cries should be abandoned. No hustling should take place, and whenever meetings are held people should be prepared to receive my message in perfect silence. The habit of touching my feet should be discountenanced. It would be most embarrassing to me if whilst I was walking people insisted on touching my feet. To workers in places that were to be visited I would suggest that they should bring their purses if they are so inclined to any of the villages I would visit.

Indeed, if the full significance of the pilgrimage is realized I should expect purses from all parts of Orissa if not India. If provincial workers have understood the significance of this step they would absolve me from having to travel in their provinces and let me take the tour as it has come to me in Orissa itself after finishing the A.I.C.C. meeting at Patna. I feel that my touring in Orissa is equal to touring in the whole of India. The effect of the pilgrimage will be marred by constant interruptions. I am quite clear in my mind that continuous walking is far more effective than frequent interruptions followed by a few days' tour on foot in the remaining provinces. Workers should give up the idea for the sake of the mission itself of having me in their midst. I would like workers in the provinces to consider my proposal and wire their opinion as early as they can.

The Bombay Chronicle, 11-5-1934

[1] *Vide* "Statement to the Press", pp. 466-7.

494. SPEECH AT HAREKRISHNAPUR

May 9, 1934

Today is a very auspicious day. Up till now the Harijan movement was being carried on by going in motors and vehicles. Thus I had travelled thousands and thousands of miles. Still I am not satisfied with the movement. With much deliberation and thought I have decided to walk on foot and deliver my message as was formerly done by our *rishis*. This method I have had recourse to consequent upon some medieval [*sic*] developments. Through experience I have learnt that an atmosphere created by going in motors and vehicles is quite different from the atmosphere made by going on foot. I see that Brahmins and higher-caste Hindus live separately from the Harijans. I also see here distinctions of high and low. It has wounded my feelings. The Brahmins have a pride and they feel that their lineage is the foremost of all the Hindus. It is our duty to look to cleaning of their houses. I have come here for service of the Harijans which we had long neglected. If you have thoroughly understood my teachings, go over to them, call them your brothers and devote yourselves to the service of the Harijans.

As Hindi is our lingua franca, try to learn Hindi as much as possible. It has many advantages. As some of your time is wasted without labour you should take to some other callings, be it hand-spinning, carding and ginning cotton or weaving.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 9-5-1934

495. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

[After *May 9, 1934*][1]

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUSSALAAM,

I have read all your letters carefully. You are grieved over nothing. On the one hand you await my orders, on the other you imagine all sorts of things. The obedient never indulge in melancholy. You must not even think of undertaking jobs which

[1] According to the editorial note in *Bapuke Patra–8: Bibi Amtussalaam ke Nam*, this was written during Gandhiji's walking tour in Orissa which commenced on this date.

your health cannot stand. You must visit your mother. You have also to undergo the operation for piles. You must relinquish the temptation of coming to me. Travelling on foot is beyond you. Even the requisite food is not available in the villages. Doing work is as good as living with me. Patience is indispensable for you and your place is in the Ashram. Why do you take it that going to jail has been totally put off ? You have to prepare for it. And the preparation consists in being calm, giving up temptation, refraining from obstinacy, etc. Your worrying the doctor is also not good. What more can I write now?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 305

496. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

CHANDANPUR,
May 10, 1934

BA,

I have still not received your letter this time. The above place, where I am writing this, is ten miles from Puri. It is one o'clock after midnight just now. After cleaning my teeth, I wrote one postcard and have now taken up this letter for you. We decided the day before yesterday that from now on I should tour on foot. One cannot propagate dharma by travelling in trains or cars, nor in bullock-carts. That can be done only on foot. The local leaders and Thakkar Bapa finally agreed. We started the tour on foot the very same day. This has given me new strength. Yesterday we covered more than eight miles, but I felt no fatigue. I have got up quite fresh at this odd hour. People came in huge crowds, but there was complete peace. The pushing and jostling had stopped. Comparatively more work was done. The composition of the party remains the same. Among the women, Sushila, Prabhavati, Om and Mira are there of course. Besides them there are Purbai[1], Sonamani who was in the Ashram, and Ramabai, Gopabandhubabu's wife. Jivrambhai[2] also is in the party. And so also are Harakhchand, Purushottam's father-in-law. All of them will part from us at Cuttack. From there I shall have to go to Patna for three days. The All-India Congress Committee is

[1] Co-worker of Jivram Kothari
[2] Jivram Kothari of Kutch

meeting there. Personally I want to return from there to Orissa and complete the tour. But that will be finally decided when I meet the other co-workers.

Kusum Desai had met me in Puri. She has gone to her relations in Calcutta. She is likely to see me again in Patna. Vasumati is in Wardha. Ramdas, Nimu and the child are quite happy, as also Devdas, Lakshmi and her baby; also Hariji, Lakshmi and her baby. Pyarelal is still with Rajendrababu. Valjibhai, Bal and Prithuraj are with me. Chandrashankar is not in the party. He is still ill. I send with this a copy of the *Gita Praveshika* or *Ramagita*. You will have no difficulty in understanding it. If you want another copy, let me know. Leave this one behind you. I have already written to you suggesting what you should do after you are released. However, do what you like. There was a letter from Uttamchand. He has gone to Maroli. His wife too has gone with him.

Blessings to all from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Bane Patro, pp. 25-6

497. LETTER TO JITENDRANATH KUSARI

AS AT PATNA,
May 10, 1934

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. Whilst I do not mind at all inter-dining and intermarriage on the part of individuals, I am quite sure that for the sake of the cause itself these two things ought not to be included in the movement's programme. These two things stand on a different footing from the atrocious disabilities under which Harijans are today labouring.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI JITENDRANATH KUSARI
NASANKAR P.O.
DT. DACCA
BENGAL

From a photostat: G.N. 7191

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498. LETTER TO BHAI PARMANAND

May 10, 1934

DEAR BHAI PARMANAND,

I have your personal letter. I have indeed been exercising my mind on the question of a communal settlement. I have expressed nothing publicly, but I do feel that the Communal Award[1] can never be unsettled except by agreement, and an agreement is impossible without large-heartedness on our part.

The Hindu, 6-8-1934

499. LETTER TO N. VENKATAKRISHNAYYA

AS AT WARDHA,
May 10, 1934

DEAR FRIEND,

Through Shri Sitaram Sastry I am following your interesting experiment. Please give (1) number of workers men and women, (2) monthly production of various things, (3) what is the method of exchange, how much vegetable or grain would you give for [a] pair of shoes or a *lota*? (4) number of counts of yarn, (5) is cotton grown on the farm? (6) yield of yarn, carding, ginning, weaving per hour.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI N. VENKATAKRISHNAYYA
KHADDAR SANSTHANAM
BEZWADA
ANDHRA

From a photostat: G.N. 9241

[1] This fixed the number of seats in each of the various Provincial Legislative Councils for the various minority communities. Elections to these were to be by voters voting in separate communal electorates.

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500. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

May 10, 1934

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I left the bed at one in the morning and feel quite fresh. Please do not get alarmed or angry or start worrying. This is simply God's greatness. I am sitting on a bed of straw spread on the ground in a small village. On one side are sleeping Mira and others, and on the other Thakkar Bapa and other men. This is a village named Chandanpur. Today is the third day since we started walking. We are ten miles from Puri. Or it may be eight. We started from Puri yesterday in the morning. Thakkar Bapa has planned this march as you had planned the Dandi March.

I got thoroughly upset in Puri. I was tired of travelling by rail and car. I put my difficulties before Bapa and other companions. Everybody recognized the need for doing what I was suggesting, but they were afraid. They got over their fears and we took the decision in Puri itself and implemented it immediately. I went to the Puri meeting on foot. The sanatanists seemed subdued and there was less of noise and other disturbances at the meeting. When we started yesterday in the morning, the news had not spread, but in the first village where we halted more and more people came as the day advanced. When we walked to Chandanpur in the afternoon, the road overflowed with people and the meeting which was held immediately on arrival here was attended by crowds which had poured in from all sides. We are camping in the open air on the outskirts of the village. A hut-like structure has been put up for me, but the thing only looks like a hut. The companions are the same. Harakhchand, Jivram and Purbai have joined the party. The local leaders also have come. With them are the wife of Gopabandhu Chowdhari and Sonamani, who once stayed in the Ashram. This is how we intend to tour Orissa. I have appealed to the other provinces, too, that they should permit me to complete the our of the tour in the same manner and that, if I continue the tour on foot, I should not be pressed to visit them. If they agree, I would complete the remaining period of the tour in Orissa itself. However, when the rains set in we shall have to consider

whether this way of touring is possible. If we cannot continue touring on foot, then I personally would prefer to camp in one place. I will see how things shape. I shall be meeting all the co-workers in Patna. I shall have a clearer picture there. I will try my best to persuade them to fall in with me. I hope you will have no difficulty in understanding this step. You know that whenever you approve of a step of mine I feel pleased. But I would not like you to give your approval just to please me.

You must have read about the serious accident to the car soon after we had left Ranchi. "Who can harm him whom Rama guards?" Thus sang Dhiro Bhagat. How well-founded on experience!

Who can persuade the terrorists? And the Government? See to what mad lengths they went in Darjeeling.

Did not I send you a copy of the accompanying *Gita Praveshika*?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 100-1

501. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

May 10, 1934

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I am writing this letter from the village Chandanpur, some ten miles from Puri. I am sure you will like the idea of my walking tour. I had had it in mind for a long time but the feeling was never so strong as now. Buxar and Deoghar would appear to have contributed much towards it. There is no doubt that a scholar like Panchanan Tarkaratna was also involved in the Deoghar incident. How can such darkness be dispelled by travelling by train ? The very idea of collecting funds has left my mind. This work can hardly be accomplished by money. I find that the change of heart can be brought about more by touring on foot. Now I would like to confine my tour to Utkal if I can persuade the co-workers in other provinces to accept it. I would not like to go even to Patna.

You must have agreed with my opinion about "National Call". Sahni has addressed a long letter to Rajendrababu assuring that he would act in accordance with the wishes of the latter or of

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myself. You will have received Rajendrababu's letter. Ansari too fully concurred.

I have gone through your prosperity plan. The idea is good. But I do not find it as attractive as your other schemes. It contains much material on the necessity of a plan but it is not a plan. A plan should be so devised that it can be put into effect by the Government and the people right from today. That they may not implement it is another matter. Such a plan is not beyond you. Think it over and if possible do something on these lines. In my view charkha should be at the centre of it. If you do not think so, you should produce the arguments against. It should not be left hanging in mid air. Crores of rupees will be saved at one stroke if Government, i.e., State-aid, is forthcoming. It is not necessary that all planning should be on the Western pattern. You know that I hold strong views on the subject. These have become strengthened. You can see that people are becoming lethargic in the absence of the charkha. Our cattle have become a liability owing to our ignorance of animal husbandry. India can beat any other country in prosperity by the study and practice of the charkha and animal husbandry and by solving the problem of small holdings. We shall discuss this when we meet.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I hope you are well. If you find it difficult to read my handwriting I can write in English, i.e., have the letters typed.

From the Hindi: C.W. 7959. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

502. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS

KADUA,
May 10, 1934

This attempt at the murder of Sir John Anderson[1] is undoubtedly most deplorable.

Every minute of life's experience further confirms me in the belief which I hold that non-violence is the only remedy for all the ills of life to deal with which violence is practised today. It is a great tragedy that some young men will not see that there is no

[1] Governor of Bengal. On April 8, two young men had fired revolver shots at him.

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short cut to deliverance from evils. I am not thinking of non-violence as a mere passive state. I do not know a more active force than the force released by the vital adoption of non-violence.

The Bombay Chronicle, 11-5-1934

503. SPEECH AT SHIVALICHAK

[*May 10, 1934*][1]

Why do I use the expression "Harijan"? Whom man disowns God owns. All religious books teach us this. Mother *Gita* tells us the same thing. Ahalya was changed into a stone. Society had repudiated her. Rama touched the stone and she revived and found refuge in Him. Caste Hindus have disowned Harijans. God has therefore taken them under His protection. For this reason they are Harijans, Hari's people. It is only after we have willingly taken the untouchables to our hearts that we shall all become Hari's people.

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 3-6-1934

504. SPEECH AT VIRPURUSHOTTAMPUR[2]

May 10, 1934

Gandhiji said that, according to the Shastras, Brahmins[3] were expected to spend themselves in the service of religion by *tapas*, social service and the quest of *Brahma* or truth. It was a pity that modern Brahmins not only paid no attention to the duties which had been laid upon them and did not serve religion, but followed all manner of professions to enrich themselves. A true Brahmin should be the very image of humility, and not be proud of his knowledge or wisdom. A Brahmin would cease to be a Brahmin if he considered himself superior to others, as it was his duty to teach people to look upon a Brahmin and a Bhangi with an equal eye. Again, a Brahmin was hardly worth the name if he did not have the courage of his own convictions. We must fear the Lord and none else. Cowardice was incompatible with divine wisdom.

[1] According to the source, from Shivalichak Gandhiji went on to Virpurushottampur to spend the night. Gandhiji was at the latter place on May 10.

[2] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter"

[3] The village was inhabited solely by Brahmins.

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It would not do to say that sinful people could not be allowed to enter temples. Temples were like spiritual hospitals, and the sinful, who were spiritually diseased, had the first right to be ministered unto by them. Temples were for sinners, not for saints. And who was to judge where no man was without sin? They declared every day in their prayers: पापोऽहं पापकर्माहम् (I am sinful, I am a doer of sinful deeds). So, if the temples were intended only for the sinless, they would have to bar their doors in the face of all mankind.

Harijan, 18-5-1934

505. NOTES

DISOWNING RESPONSIBILITY

In a letter dated 2nd inst., the Maharaja Bahadur of Gidhour writes to me as follows:

> A Press copy of your speech at Deoghar having just been put into my hands, I hasten to inform you that you were right in doubting if the leaflets alleged to have been issued under my instructions were so at all and that I have no knowledge of such leaflets.[1] Certainly there is not the least foundation of truth in the statement that I had lent my name to it in any way.
>
> This is to make my position perfectly clear, and, without troubling to have to let you know my individual views as regards the proposed Temple-entry Bill, I must share with you in expressing regret at the spread of untruths as well as the unseemly demonstrations at Deoghar.
>
> You may publish the letter for the Press if it is worthy of release.

I am glad of this disclaimer. It would have been regrettable if the Maharaja Bahadur had lent his name to palpable falsehoods.

Harijan, 11-5-1934

506. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

May 11, 1934

DEAR ANAND,

Your letter. You see what I am doing. When you are well and can walk easily 10 miles per day and rough it in the villages you will come. Meanwhile you must assiduously study Hindi and card and spin.

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Public Meeting, Deoghar," pp. 434-8.

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Vidya may go to Multan if she likes.
Love.

BAPU

[PS.]
This for both of you.

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

507. LETTER TO VIDYA A. HINGORANI

May 11, 1934

CHI. VIDYA,

No time to write separately.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

508. LETTER TO DEWAN CHAND RATTI

May 11, 1934

DEAR FRIEND,

The only thing I can advise is to ignore the man. After all if your wife is firm, nothing can happen.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI DEWAN CHAND RATTI
KATRA BIHARILAL
GALI QASIMJAN
NEAR LALL KUAN
DELHI

From a photostat: G.N. 3778

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509. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

May 11, 1934

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I get some time now after we started touring on foot. I got your postcard today. You do not seem to have received my last one. You can write to the Government immediately,[1] if you wish, and say: "I have read Gandhiji's statement. Since I was an inmate of the Ashram, I am bound to obey his instructions. Till I get fresh instructions from him, therefore, my civil disobedience will remain suspended. In these circumstances I request you to withdraw the order served on me prohibiting me from entering British territory." On receiving the reply to this request you may enter British territory. Or you may wait for some time.

I would like it if Rama agreed to go to Wardha. If she does not wish to do that, she may do whatever service she likes at any place selected by her. Discuss the matter further with Narandas. How do you like my decision to tour on foot?

BAPU

SJT. CHHAGANLAL JOSHI
RASHTRIYA SHALA
RAJKOT, KATHIAWAR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5521

510. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

[After *May 11, 1934*][2]

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letter.

I can understand your hesitation in making an application for the lifting of the ban on you. But I don't see any harm in your writing as follows:[3]

[1] The addressee had been declared an alien subject and ordered to stay in Dwarka and not enter British territory.

[2] From the contents this letter seems to have been written some time after the letter to the addressee dated 11-5-1934 and is placed immediately after it in *Bapuna Patro–7: Shri Chhaganlal Joshine*, pp. 243-4.

[3] The paragraph that follows is in English.

"Being a member of the S. Ashram and therefore subject to G'.s discipline, I have decided to suspend C. R. I was convicted to imprisonment as a C. R. and was deported on . . . from Thana prison. By reason of suspension may I be dispensed from the prohibition to enter British territory?"

One should feel no hesitation in informing the authorities about the decision one has taken as being one's dharma and enjoying the concessions that one is entitled to in consequence of such decision. If you write such a letter, you would be able to know the Government's attitude. But of course I don't press you to take this step. However, till the ban is officially lifted it would not be proper for you to enter British territory and leave it if expelled. That would certainly involve disobedience of the law, and it would not be civil disobedience. If it can be so described, you should not commit it. Voluntary obedience of the law gives tremendous power to civil disobedience. If the Government displays extreme authoritarianism, it may some day become our moral duty to offer civil disobedience in the interests merely of our self-respect. Meanwhile, isn't there enough work to do in Kathiawar? In doing service, one shouldn't pay too much attention to one's likes and dislikes. One should accept whatever work comes to one unsought and whenever it comes. I hope you fully understand the recent change which I have made. You may put to me any question which you may wish to.

Rama may be said to have settled down for the present. I have agreed to come to Kathiawar to meet co-workers like you. I hope Parikshitlal likes my decision.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5538

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511. TELEGRAM TO DR. B. C. ROY

[Before *May 12, 1934*]

THIS PILGRIMAGE CAN BEAR FULL FRUIT ONLY BY CONTINUING IT IN UTKAL AND ALL INDIA PARTAKING AS IF IT WAS IN EVERY VILLAGE. THAT IS A SPIRITUAL TEST. HENCE SUGGEST ABANDONING BENGAL TOUR AS WALKING TOUR IN UTKAL IS IMPRACTICABLE AFTER THE MIDDLE OF JUNE. CAN THEN COME CALCUTTA FOR COLLECTION AND CONFERRING WITH LEADERS. WIRE CONSENT.[1]

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 12-5-1934

512. MESSAGE TO PEOPLE OF GANJAM[2]

[Before *May 12, 1934*][3]

I know that the workers and villagers in the place which I was expected to visit will be disappointed by the step that I have taken of carrying on the balance of the Harijan tour on foot. That naturally ruled out all places which could only be reached by rail or road. In order to demonstrate as far as it was possible the religious character of the mission I felt the peremptory necessity of adopting the ancient simple method of walking. There were several other reasons which precipitated the decision. I would like you to appreciate this ancient method and feel that by walking to the few villages I shall be walking spiritually to all the villages of Orissa. Such mental performance was necessary even while I was covering long distances by means of rail or motor. But speed is most probably inimical to spiritual progress. Spiritual messages are better delivered through the natural methods of locomotion. The mental attitude that I have suggested is therefore more easily attainable when a person is walking than when he is speeding through space at the rate of 50 miles per hour.

[1] The addressee replied: "As physicians Dr. Ansari and myself agreed at Ranchi to your suggestion for a walking tour in Bengal. Appreciating your view-point as explained in the Press and your wire agree to confining walking tour to Utkal."

[2] Sent through Jayamangala Rath, Secretary of the Ganjam Gandhi Reception Committee

[3] The report in the source is dated May 12.

I am convinced that if I receive the hearty co-operation of the workers and the villagers throughout this province we will see results through this pilgrimage on foot which could not have been attained through the carrying out of the original programme. I would, therefore, ask you to regard this pilgrimage as a greater fulfilment of the programme than its literal carrying out. Some of the co-workers who came from their respective places pressed upon me to alter the decision and to resume the original programme but their argument was wholly unconvincing and the decision taken after incessant prayer and consultation with workers who were available at Puri could not be given up. After all you will not want me to conduct this tour mechanically as I would have been doing after the conviction came clear to me that I should finish this tour on foot. The co-operation that all can give during these precious seven days will be by doing concrete work in Harijan *bastis* in the way of cleaning up tanks, wells, roads, etc., by inducing the different Municipalities to perform their duties by Harijans, by awakening *savarna* conscience to a sense of its duty towards Harijans; by opening temples to Harijans where there is a practically unanimous wish on the part of *bona fide* temple-goers, by making collections of coppers and silver and sending them to me. I know that monies have been collected in anticipation of my visit to particular places. If the donors want to recall the gifts because I shall not be visiting their places the donations should be refunded and if any monies have been legitimately spent in connection with the tour out of the funds collected and if they desire them to be refunded they will be refunded on receipt of authenticated accounts if the expenses incurred are found to be legitimate. But I do hope that the necessity of the step taken will be recognized by all and that therefore not only will the donations not be recalled but that during the pilgrimage substantial additions will be made.

The Hindu, 14-5-1934

513. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

As at Patna,
May 12, 1934

CHI. MARY,

I have your letter. I have been always thinking of you and Duncan all the time. But I have had no time at all to write to you. I wish I had the time to write to you about the swift and momentous changes that have taken place during the last few

days. Each one has given me the keenest satisfaction, and the experience I am daily gaining as a result of these changes proves the correctness of the changes. I hope that you are following whatever I am able to write about them. This walking pilgrimage, if you had been with me, you would have thoroughly enjoyed. I am dictating this after the last march at night. Every time immediately on reaching the village there is a meeting. These meetings are a perfect study—no noise, no stir and every word spoken is certainly heard by the audience. Whether the audience assimilates it or not remains to be seen.

The instance you quote of the Hindu widow nursing a Mussalman sister is certainly very touching. We need have no doubt that they are not only not rare occurrences, but they are frequent in many a place in India. Personal affection overrides all barriers.

You should persistently try to get the weavers to weave the yarn that is spun under your aegis. I am glad the experiment in growing *bhaji* is proving successful. I do not mind your having wasted a few annas or even more on getting seeds. Next time you would know that the seeds are obtainable in every bazar. You won't get them by asking for seeds. You have only to get a little local mustard and you will have the mustard leaf growing.

I hope you are getting your *Harijan* regularly.

My correspondence with Margarete continues. Yesterday or the day before I answered her question about the *Gita*.[1]

Love from us all.

BAPU

MISS MARY BARR
KHEDI-SEOLIGARH, BETUL DT. (C. P.)

From a photostat: G.N. 6024. Also C.W. 3353. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

514. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

May 12, 1934

DEAR DAUGHTER RAIHANA,

Now that I am touring on foot I find some time to write to my teacher. I have a letter from you after a long time. You poor thing were so busy that you could not find time even to

[1] This letter is not traceable.

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write a card! Well, you must now write to me and tell me how my two statements impressed you and Father. My mission is progressing well. Why does not Hamida write? My respects to the elders and a slap for you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: S.N. 9652

515. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

May 13, 1934

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I had offered to write to you in English if you had difficulty in deciphering my handwriting. Today I have to dictate if I am to write to you at all, not because I have not got the time to write but because the heat is so terrific and some kind of insects are so pestering me that it is better for me to dictate than to write.

I am anxious to know how you have taken this walking pilgrimage and, if you have appreciated the step, I want you to throw yourselves heart and soul into it. If you are in Calcutta, I would like you to collect as if I was in Calcutta and a purse had to be presented to me. That very purse can be sent to me here. I have told Dr. Bidhan that about the middle of June I should come to Calcutta for two purposes: first to talk with those who would wish to about the Poona Pact and secondly for collections. But I am developing a reluctance even for doing that. On the contrary, if nobody would care to come to me to discuss the thing, I need not go to Calcutta for it. It can be attended to in August wherever I may be. There is no hurry about it. As to the collections I should have faith enough that whatever is to come will come whilst I am performing the walking pilgrimage. Every day makes me stake all on this walk. I have discussed the whole thing with Satisbabu. He must give you some of his own experiences. Of course I am having experiences which I would not have on any other account.

I read your letter to Chandrashankar. In the altered circumstances I have given up the idea of having any rest. This easy walk every day obviates the necessity of rest. Therefore we can meet now only at some point in the tour. It is no use thinking of my inviting you to Patna. After finishing Patna, that is on the

morning of the 20th or the night of the 19th, I leave for Cuttack or some point in Orissa to resume the walk and to continue it till the middle of June, that is, till the rains set in here. You could easily come and pass one or two days in the pilgrimage or pass a Tuesday with me, because on Mondays there will be no march and on Tuesdays also none except in the evening. The idea is to resume the march at 5.30 on Tuesday.

Here is a letter from Gopi. You can perhaps throw more light upon what she writes.

I have already written to you telling you what action Dr. Ansari and Rajendrababu had taken about the *National Call*. I would like you to furnish me with all the cuttings that you may come across.

In view of Sahni's letter I do not despair of his abiding by the instructions that might be given to him. That should be enough for us.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the original: C.W. 7958. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

516. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

May 14, 1934

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I got your letters. I went through the Press cuttings. The criticism of Andrews's letter was not convincingly argued. If Manilal says that he had not made any such promise, he should have quoted the exact words. A promise like that couldn't have been merely an oral one. Manilal has quoted from Andrews's letter though it appeared in the same issue, whereas he has [not] quoted the exact words of the promise on which his whole case is based and thus has denied the reader an opportunity to judge for himself. How could a person who has a doubt in the matter merely trust Manilal's word? If, therefore, the promise was in writing, he should even now quote the exact words, so that the charge of violation of pledge may be refuted. If the promise was what Manilal asserts it was, Andrews's statement is plainly unjustified. He must have arrived there now. Manilal should have a talk with him and try to convince him if he can. There is no need for him to satisfy me. You should follow what seems to be truth to you both, and that should be enough for me.

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I agree with Miss Schlesin with regard to Thambi. The views expressed in the article are bound to appear as vilification. There is a saying[1] in Latin, to the effect that one must speak nothing but good of the dead. Tulsidas says: जो सहि दुःख परछिद्र दुरावा। This is described as one of the marks of saintly character. दुरावा means to cover up. A good man will himself suffer but will not expose the weaknesses of others. He might say something for the good of such a person, but that would be a different matter. This cannot be applied in Thambi's case, for he is dead now. Try to satisfy Miss Schlesin in this matter if you can.

You know that very important changes are taking place in my life. Learn from them what you can. All this is the result merely of devotion to truth. You know that your duty in regard to civil disobedience has now increased a hundredfold. You have to cultivate the fitness to be ready for it when it comes. The same is true about this tour on foot. It is not unlikely that many more people may have to undertake such tours. Make your life straightforward, simple, tough, truthful and self-controlled so that you may be able to take up such duties.

Ba will now be released in three or four days. Lakshmi and her daughter and Nimu and her daughter are fine. I have no time to give other news. But I think I have given enough this time. You must have read about my narrow escape.[2]

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Today we are camping on the bank of a river near a village in Utkal. It is extremely hot.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4820

517. LETTER TO BALA, JAYA AND OTHERS

May 14, 1934

CHI. BALA, JAYA, BAPU, UMIYA, DAMAYANTI, BALI AND MANEK,

A letter which you get somebody else to write for you cannot be interesting. One written by you yourselves, no matter what its contents, would have given me pleasure. God will protect

[1] *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*

[2] The reference presumably is to the incident at Jashidih; *vide* pp. 456-9.

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me as long as He wants me to serve. This is true of everybody else.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Just now I am touring in small villages, like Maroli.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2708

518. LETTER TO MITHUBEHN PETIT

BALIANTA,
May 14, 1934

CHI. MITHUBEHN,

I got your letter.

So long as God wants me to serve, He will save me through every accident no matter how serious. When He has decided to call me back, a mere yawn will suffice.

I am at present wholly engrossed in this tour on foot and cannot think about Maroli or any other place. Let us see now how things shape. At the moment it seems to me that the period of the tour will end in Utkal.

I got the annual report which you had sent.

You did right in paying the revenue. Can't you think of some way of proceeding against Sitaram? It is not necessary to put up with his tyranny. You need not go to a court of law immediately. For the present, it will be enough to make a complaint to the local officer.

Ba will soon be released. She has maintained good health.

The box of khadi which you gave is still lying in Wardha. Krishnadas is trying to sell a few things from it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2703

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519. LETTER TO MADHAVLAL PATEL

BALIANTA,
May 14, 1934

BHAI MADHAVLAL,

I got your letter. Enclosed are one letter for the girls and one for Mithubehn.[1]

I think it will be wise to pay the fine and save the land.

It is not worth while accepting the balance of Rs. 4-10-0. If the lender, however, wants to accept it, he certainly may.

All these are bitter draughts. But they seem the right things to do and it is only by doing the right that we can follow truth.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6109. Also C.W. 3419. Courtesy: Madhavlal Patel

520. MESSAGE TO VILLAGERS[2]

BALIANTA,
May 14, 1934

Lastly, I may state that if I can persuade co-workers in the other provinces to recognize the necessity and importance of pilgrimage on foot and if they will disengage me from the obligation of visiting their provinces, I would, after attending the A.I.C.C. meeting at Patna, gladly return to Utkal to resume the pilgrimage; because I feel that if there is truth, as there is, in the original conception, the spiritual value of the tour is enhanced by its continuance at the point where it might be interrupted.

After all, why should not the whole of India identify itself with Utkal and the pilgrimage in Utkal?

The Hindu, 16-5-1934

[1] *Vide* the two preceding items.

[2] This was issued for publication through the United Press. The appeal is largely a repetition of "Message to People of Ganjam", pp. 485-6 except for the last two paragraphs which alone are reproduced here.

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521. MESSAGE TO UTKAL WORKERS

[Before *May 15, 1934*]

In a statement to Utkal workers Mr. Gandhi hopes that they would appreciate Bengal's magnanimity in giving up the Bengal tour and letting him resume pilgrimage in Orissa after the A.I.C.C. meeting at Patna. This increased the responsibility of the workers. They have to perceive the religious nature of the movement and its implications. Seven days' experience has showed that hundreds of people came daily from surrounding villages. They should have a message given to them in detail. They should be brought in touch with the Harijans, who should be specially looked after. They should be invited to mix freely with crowds and not keep themselves in isolation as they often do. A detailed survey should be made of villages along the route to ascertain the conditions of the Harijans. If people appreciate the superiority of walking pilgrimage over motor and train journey, collections must be much more than they would have been if he had kept to the original programme.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15-5-1934

522. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

May 15, 1934

CHI. VASUMATI,

Have you resolved never to write to me? I asked Valjibhai to write to you some time ago, but you have not replied even to that letter.

Are you happy there? How do you use your time? What do you do about fruit and other requirements? I hope there are no bickerings among you.

I often remember you all during this tour on foot. All of you will have to undertake such tours by and by.

I am writing this in a village at 3.15 a.m. So far we have experienced no difficulty in touring on foot.

You should write to me regularly.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9385. Also C.W. 630. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

523. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

May 15, 1934

CHI. AMALA,

Your Hindi transcription is quite good. You are certainly making more rapid progress than Mira in Hindi. The latter has never tried Gujarati. Nor was it necessary for her to do so. The accident produced no effect on any of us and there was nothing more to say about it. Of the attack on the car, I had said so much in public. Instead of thinking of me as a god, why not think that I am more man and less beast? We have only the form of the human being but in manners we are often even less than beasts. Hence it is something to be human in substance as we are in form. Are you well?

Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

524. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

BALIANTA,
May 15, 1934

BHAI JIVANJI,

I have received your letter. However, it is surprising that there is none from Mahadev. Please let me know immediately when you receive one from him. Your understanding about the books concerning the Bible is correct. But carry out the idea after consulting Balubhai. The expense incurred in getting the books safely transferred should be recovered from the Municipality. Write to Mohanlal that he should get well soon. His fever has lasted too long.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9945

525 LETTER TO BEHRAMJI KHAMBHATTA

May 15, 1934

BHAI KHAMBHATTA,

Every day I wait for a letter from you both. I also know that you do not write so as to save my time. Even so, I often long for news about your well-being. My desire was satisfied by chance. I was sorry to learn that you had again developed an ulcer. I am sure it will disappear with proper treatment. Let me know what changes in diet you have made.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6606. Also C.W. 4396. Courtesy: Tehmina Khambhatta

526. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

BALIANTA, UTKAL,
May 15, 1934

I hope you have not been alarmed by the changes in my life. They are not the result of my impatience, but are the natural outcome of my quest for Truth. A tour on foot is an old aspiration of mine. I would even like to give up completely travelling by rail or car. That time has not come yet, but my mind is working in that direction. I, therefore, have often declared that I regard railway trains, cars, etc., only as a necessary evil. I have never taken pleasure in travelling by them. Dharma does not use even a bullock-cart. He may only limp, but ever goes forward in his journey. The experience of even these seven days has been wonderful. It is only now that I see villages and can see untouchability as it really is. This will also mollify the wrath of the sanatanists, but even if it does not I can retain peace of mind. When travelling by car, I am always afraid that it might get crushed.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 145

527. LETTER TO GOVINDLAL SAHA

May 15, 1934

BHAI GOVINDLAL,

I have received your letter after a long interval. I hope you are keeping well.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. GOVINDLAL SAHA,
ALMORA

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 10676

528. SPEECH AT OPENING OF TEMPLE[1]

BALIANTA,
May 15, 1934

Temples, Gandhiji said, were a reflection of the state of the society for whose use they were built. Temples of yore were reported to have had such a moral atmosphere round them that the worshippers felt elevated and, for the time being, shed all their evil thoughts. Then, one found on the temple ground primary schools for boys and girls. They had pandits attached to them who imparted Sanskrit learning to seekers. They were an abode of refuge for the poor who would always be sure of finding shelter for the night, and they had commodious rooms or open spaces for the assembly of elders. That was the ideal surrounding ancient temples. In his wanderings, he had seen temples where one or more of the institutions he had described were to be found. There was no difficulty about carrying out the programme he had suggested if the trustees put forth their best effort for the realization of the simple ideal. Nor was there a question of large funds. The school might be a palm grove, the assembly hall might consist of mother earth below and open sky above. The question, therefore, was one of will and sufficient men of purity and strength of character. He hoped that such men would be forthcoming.

Harijan, 25-5-1934

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter". The temple was intended for all Hindus, including untouchables.

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529. LETTER TO G. V. GURJALE

May 16, 1934

DEAR GOVINDRAO,

I am glad you have the land now. I hope that the school will flourish.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 1382

530. LETTER TO MANSHANKAR J. TRIVEDI

CUTTACK,
May 16, 1934

CHI. MANU,

I sent you messages but could not write to you. I read your letter. I have sent it to Father. I don't have the time to explain my letter in detail. My chief argument is clear, that considering all sides of the question your children should be brought up as Hindus—provided you regard yourself as a sincere Hindu who has faith in Hinduism. I can understand Vimala's desire being different, but that fact would be an argument against your marriage. That the children should be brought up in Vimala's religion is not a correct position. Children are bound to be influenced by their mothers, and that is why parents should not belong, and generally do not belong, to different religions. When they do, it is only outwardly so. You will find that one of the two is indifferent to his or her religion. I shouldn't like that in your case. Vimala's insistence that the children should be brought up as Catholics seems wrong to me. If she marries you, she should merge herself in you. But at present you shouldn't think about this problem. Your immediate duty is to obey Father's instructions to the letter and dispel his fears. I have faith that ultimately what is for your good will be done. I hope you will not expect a longer letter from me during this tour on foot.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1011

531. SPEECH AT KAJIPATNA[1]

May 16, 1934

In replying to the address, Gandhiji said that, if this were true of him,[2] it would be a matter, not of praise but of reproach. He was a follower of Advaita or the theory of oneness of all. East and West, South and North were all one to him. How could he, sworn opponent of untouchability in every shape and form, dare to make an untouchable of the West? What he had really said was that it would be suicidal for them to imitate Western, or properly speaking, modern civilization, which they called Western because it came from the West. Modern civilization stood for indulgence, while ancient or Eastern civilization attached great importance to self-denial and self-restraint. It was, therefore, a conflict, not of East and West, but of two widely divergent philosophies of life. Untouchability was the worst form of exclusiveness. The Harijan movement was really only the first step in his programme of breaking down all barriers whatever which divided man from man.

Harijan, 25-5-1934

532. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS

CUTTACK,
May 16, 1934

Mr. Gandhi said that he did not know whether there was any particular problem concerning the Harijans in Orissa not common to other provinces. He was, however, not concerned with shades of untouchabilities. He did not think that any more tinkering would answer the purpose. He, therefore, looked at the problem as one indivisible whole. It permeated the whole of the society, the extreme form of untouchability being the most hideous expression of it. The arrogation of superiority of one caste over another in the name of religion would have to go. This could be done only by appeal to heart.

Replying to a question as to whether he intended to ask the Working Committee or the A.I.C.C. to take up Harijan work, Mr. Gandhi said that

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter"

[2] In the address presented to Gandhiji on behalf of four villages, there was a remark that he had shown that the East and the West were incompatibles.

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it had already become one of the chief items in the Congress programme of 1920 and it had since suffered no alteration.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 17-5-1934

533. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CUTTACK[1]

May 16, 1934

Gandhiji congratulated the audience upon their having accorded a patient hearing to the Pandit and observed that such courtesy was the very essence of culture and religion.[2] They should deal gently by their opponents and try to convince and, perhaps, convert them to their own view. The cause of religion could never be advanced by violence or force.

Harijan, 25-5-1934

534. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

May 17, 1934

CHI. PREMA,

Kisan stayed with me for so many months, and now Sushila is with me. It should be enough for you to know how often and what precisely we must have talked about you. That being so, where was the need to send any message to you? There are two reasons why I am writing this letter today. One is that Sushila has been urging me to do so. And the second reason is the news given by her. I am told that you cried for three days because of my decision. I had thought that you would feel unhappy on hearing of it, but I had also expected that you would at the same time dance and sing with joy because you would not fail to see its significance and importance and its absolute conformity with truth. Experience is daily proving the correctness of the decision. There is no question here of the unworthiness of co-workers. Nobody has proved himself unworthy. But the facts which had come to light were significant and prompted me to take the decision which I did. When the time comes—and it will certainly come—those very co-workers will fight again. The chief thing is to cultivate more strength and self-control.

[1] Extracted from Valji Desai's "Weekly Letter"

[2] Pandit Lalnath, the sanatanist leader who had been organizing the black-flag demonstrations against Gandhiji, had been allowed upon the dais and even permitted to address the audience.

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My weapons cannot be said to be wrong because they are ineffective at present. Maybe they require sharpening or the time is not ripe for their use. I cannot write more on this subject. When you are released, come straight to me and, if you are not convinced even then, contend with me as much as you please and understand my reasons. This decision will test everybody, myself included. With God's grace, I am sure all of us will emerge successful. I think this should be enough.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I wrote this letter in the train which is taking me to Patna. Trains on the E. I. Rly. run so smoothly that one has no difficulty in a moving train.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10355. Also C.W. 6794. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

535. LETTER TO VIDYA R. PATEL

IN THE TRAIN,
May 17, 1934

CHI. VIDYA,

I got your letter. What am I to write long letters to you about? I can certainly write such letters if you take interest in other things. I am dictating this letter in a running train. It is, therefore, difficult to hear as also to write. There was nothing particular in Raojibhai's[1] letter. What you imagine is completely wrong. You will know this in a few days. You have done well in giving up rice and dal. If you keep up this self-imposed restriction, you will see in future the great benefit of doing so. Read from *Harijan* the description of my tour on foot. Om is with me so far. Perhaps she will now go to Almora with Janakibehn.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 9584. Courtesy: Ravindra R. Patel

[1] Addressee's father, Raojibhai Manibhai Patel

ADDENDA

1. LETTER TO GOVINDBHAI R. PATEL

January 21, 1934

BHAI GOVINDBHAI,

It seems my stay in Pondicherry will be a very brief one. But if I can, I should very much like to see Mother and to go round the Ashram. Sri Aurobindo's letter reached me yesterday after a good deal of wandering. I cannot follow all that you say in your letters. I may say this for myself, that nothing is dearer to me in this world than the search for truth.

MOHANDAS

SHRI GOVINDBHAI
THE ASHRAM
PONDICHERRY

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10741. Courtesy: Govindbhai R. Patel

2. LETTER TO GOVINDBHAI R. PATEL

February 3, 1934

BHAI GOVINDBHAI,

I have your letter. A new programme has been drawn up, in which the visit to Pondicherry has been dropped. I must confess that I do not have the same curiosity that you have. I have respect for all individuals. I have known about Sri Aurobindo since a long time. You have many Gujaratis there. There are others, too. I would want to know something of an ashram which shelters so many people. It was in order to satisfy this desire that I made the attempt. But that is over now. It would have given me some satisfaction if I could have at least met you all.

MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10742. Courtesy: Govindbhai R. Patel

3. LETTER TO GOVINDBHAI R. PATEL

February 17, 1934

BHAI GOVINDBHAI,

I have your letter. Where can I see you? Your condition is difficult to fulfil. If you get into the car with me, it might be possible. Or you may tell Chandrashankar, who will be staying behind in Pondicherry. My efforts must necessarily be limited by my capacity.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10743. Courtesy: Govindbhai R. Patel

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S STATEMENT[1]

It has caused me painful surprise to find Mahatma Gandhi accusing those who blindly follow their own social custom of untouchability of having brought down God's vengeance upon certain parts of Bihar, evidently specially selected for His desolating displeasure. It is all the more unfortunate because this kind of unscientific view of things is too readily accepted by a large section of our countrymen. I keenly feel the indignity of it when I am compelled to utter a truism in asserting that physical catastrophes have their inevitable and exclusive origin in certain combination of physical facts. Unless we believe in the inexorableness of the universal law in the working of which God Himself never interferes, we find it impossible to justify His ways on occasions like the one which has sorely stricken us in an overwhelming manner and scale.

If we associate ethical principles with cosmic phenomena, we shall have to admit that human nature is morally superior to Providence that preaches its lessons in good behaviour in orgies of the worst behaviour possible. For we can never imagine any civilized ruler of men making indiscriminate examples of casual victims, including children and members of the untouchable community, in order to impress others dwelling at a safe distance who possibly deserve severer condemnation. Though we cannot point out any period of human history that is free from iniquities of the darkest kind, we still find citadels of malevolence yet remain unshaken, that the factories, that cruelly thrive upon abject poverty and the ignorance of the famished cultivators, or prison-houses in all parts of the world where a penal system is pursued which, most often, is a special form of licensed criminality, still stand firm. It only shows that the law of gravitation does not in the least respond to the stupendous load of callousness that accumulates till the moral foundation of our society begins to show dangerous cracks and civilizations are undermined. What is truly tragic about it is the fact that the kind of argument that Mahatmaji used by exploiting an event of cosmic disturbance far better suits the psychology of his opponents than his own, and it would not have surprised me at all if they had taken this opportunity of holding him and his followers responsible for the visitation of Divine anger. As for us, we feel perfectly secure in the faith that our own sins and errors, however

[1] *Vide* pp. 95 and 155.

enormous, have not enough force to drag down the structure of creation to ruins. We can depend upon it, sinners and saints, bigots and breakers of conventions. We, who are immensely grateful to Mahatmaji for inducing, by his wonder-working inspiration, freedom from fear and feebleness in the minds of his countrymen, feel profoundly hurt when any words from his mouth may emphasize the elements of unreason in those very minds—unreason, which is a fundamental source of all the blind powers that drive us against freedom and self-respect.

Harijan, 16-2-1934

APPENDIX II

BACKGROUND TO "LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE" WITH EXTRACTS FROM AN INTRODUCTION BY HORACE ALEXANDER[1]

When Mr. Gandhi was returning to India at the end of the Second Round Table Conference in December 1931, he visited Rome. It may be recalled that, just as he was leaving Italy for India, he was reported by *The Times* correspondent in Rome to have given a sensational interview to the *Giornale d'Italia*. Denials and counter-denials followed, Mr. Gandhi was soon afterwards imprisoned, and the public were left to draw their own conclusions.

In view of all that has happened since, this affair may seem trivial today . . .. But it wrought great mischief at the time, and such mischief may subconsciously continue to affect judgments. Accordingly it seems necessary that now at last . . . an exact statement of the truth should be made available.

In republishing the statements from *The Times* together with Mr. Gandhi's recent letter on the subject to Sir Samuel Hoare, it has seemed desirable to prefix a statement on the circumstances under which Mr. Gandhi left England. For the Rome interview gained credence in England largely because it seemed to fit in with some of the things Mr. Gandhi had said just at the close of the Conference in London. After listening to the Prime Minister's declaration of policy, Mr. Gandhi had questioned whether a new "parting of the ways" had been reached; he had also spoken of the "hidden meanings" in the Prime Minister's statement. What did these phrases indicate? Did the Rome interview provide the answer? (Those who were in Mr. Gandhi's confidence during the last days of his stay in London know that there was no such connection, for certain decisive private conversations had intervened.)

There were in fact two matters that were specially occupying Mr. Gandhi's mind during the last days of the Conference: the question of India's public debt, and the fresh measures just taken by the Govt. of India for destroying terrorism in Bengal. . . .

[1] *Vide* p. 253.

However, before he left England he had conversations with the Prime Minister and with Sir Samuel Hoare. These conversations reassured him. He understood that if he accepted membership of the small representative working committee to be appointed in India, he could raise the question of India's public debt there. As to Bengal, the Govt. of India was free to decide with whom they would discuss their administrative measures. The India Office was not closing either door.

Finally, on the eve of his departure from England, Mr. Gandhi solemnly assured his friends that he would do all he could to keep the door of negotiation open. Though he admitted that for him the Conference in London had been, indeed, a "long and slow agony" he still hoped to find a peaceful solution of the outstanding problems.

(A)

THE INTERVIEW

'A NEW TRADE BOYCOTT'

The Rome correspondent of *The Times* writes on December 15, 1931:

Mr. Gandhi, who had refused to make any statements to the many journalists, both Italian and foreign, who had been invited to meet him, has now made a long statement to Signor Gayda of the *Giornale d'Italia*.

Mr. Gandhi said that the Round Table Conference, which "marked the definite rupture of relations between the Indian nation and the British Government" had been for Indians a long and slow agony. It had, however, served to make quite clear to the British authorities the spirit of the Indian nation and its leaders and to test the true intentions of England. He was returning to India in order to restart at once his struggle against England, which was to take the form of passive resistance and the boycott of British goods. He considered that the boycott would now prove a powerful means of rendering more acute the British crisis, already difficult through the devaluation of the currency and unemployment. The closing of the Indian market to all British products would signify substantially a reduction of English industrial activity, an increase of unemployment, and a new depreciation of the pound.

Mr. Gandhi concluded his remarks by lamenting that few European countries had hitherto shown interest in the Indian problem. That was a pity, since an independent and prosperous India would mean a richer market for the products of other nations and Indian freedom would be manifested through commercial and intellectual exchanges with all countries

(B)

GANDHIJI REFUTES

The Times of December 18, 1931, publishes the following:

Mr. Gandhi has authorized a complete denial of the authenticity of an interview which he was alleged to have given to the *Giornale d'Italia* during

his brief stay in Rome, and which was summarized in *The Times* of December 15. The statement attributed to him went so much farther in respect of the prospect of restarting civil disobedience in India than any previous utterance that it was felt necessary to ascertain precisely what he said. Accordingly a telegram was sent from an authoritative quarter to Mr. Gandhi on board the Italian liner *Pilsna* in the Mediterranean in the following terms:

Press reports state that on embarkment, you issued to *Giornale d'Italia* a statement which contained expressions such as following:

(1) Round Table Conference marked a definite rupture of relations between Indian nation and British Government.

(2) You are returning to India in order to restart at once struggle against England.

(3) Boycott would now prove powerful means of rendering more acute British crisis.

(4) We will not pay taxes, we will not work for England in any way, we will completely isolate British authorities, their politics and their institutions, and we will totally boycott all British goods.

Some of your friends here think you must have been misreported, and, if so, denial desirable.

Gandhiji's Reply

The following telegraphic reply was received from Mr. Gandhi yesterday:

"*Giornale d'Italia* statement is wholly false. I never gave any interview to Pressmen at Rome. Last interview I gave was to Reuter at Villeneuve in Switzerland, where I asked the people of India not to come to hasty decision but to await my statement. I shall take no precipitate action but shall make ample previous entreaty to the authorities should direct action become unfortunately necessary. Please give this statement the widest publicity possible."

Signor Gayda's Reaffirmation

The following appears in *The Times* of December 21, 1931:

Signor Gayda has resolutely refused to accept Mr. Gandhi's denial of the statements attributed to him in the *Giornale d'Italia*. In a laconic note Signor Gayda has declared that the words attributed by him to the Mahatma were written in his presence as he spoke them and in the presence of other witnesses. So far as I understood the facts of the case, the "demanti" of Mr. Gandhi may be correct in so far as Signor Gayda did not request a formal "interview", and no such "interview" was granted.

According to information given to me, Signor Gayda was introduced to the Mahatma in a private house, and it was made perfectly clear to Mr. Gandhi who Signor Gayda was. When Mr. Gandhi began to make the remark-

able statements attributed to him Signor Gayda, realizing their interest and anxious to make no mistake, asked for a pencil and paper, which were given to him. Signor Gayda then wrote down the statements of Mr. Gandhi there and then in his presence and in that of a follower, without any word being spoken by either of them that the remarks were not for publication.

It would appear, therefore, from the version I have received that so far as the substance of the remarks is concerned Signor Gayda, who, as I personally can testify, understands English quite well, took down the utterance of the Mahatma with particular care.

Mirabehn's Recollection

My recollection of the occasion, which occurred now two years and three months ago, is as follows:

Gandhiji with his companions was invited to an informal gathering at the house of an Italian Countess in Rome, friend of the Italian Consul, Bombay (then in Rome). It was a long visit consisting of a drawing-room talk followed by light refreshments and further general conversation. During the beginning of the visit I was the only member of our party with Gandhiji, the others dropping in later one after another. I was with Gandhiji during the whole visit except for 15 or 20 minutes near the end of the time when I went into the dining-room to prepare some fruits, etc., for Gandhiji and to take some refreshment myself.

During the talk as far as I can now remember, the conversation was, to begin with, somewhat social and varied. The Countess was busy introducing people to Gandhiji and leading off conversations on various topics. As the talk warmed up two or three gentlemen from amongst the group became conspicuous by their persistent questioning on the political and economic situation, and I remember one of them asking for a pencil and paper and beginning to make notes. After a little while the rest of our company began to turn up and we soon moved into a bigger room next to the dining-room. Here the conversation again became general except for a little serious talk of Gandhiji with someone, the particulars of which I cannot now remember.

I heard every word that Gandhiji uttered except for the few minutes I had gone out. He was giving his usual replies to political and economic questions with rather extra force and plainness of language because of the difficulty the Italian gentlemen felt in understanding English and because of the persistence of the questioners. If Gandhiji had said some of the things attributed to him by *The Times* correspondent I should have been dumbfounded. It would have meant that he had thrown his ideals and beliefs to the winds, and I could no longer have looked to him as my guide and father.

The Bombay Chronicle, 3-11-1934

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APPENDIX III

PYARELAL'S NOTE ON GANDHIJI'S VIEWS[1]

[On or after *April 4, 1934*][2]

The present step is a logical corollary of the Poona decision. When mass civil disobedience was suspended in August last under the Poona resolution it was expected that all those who could should offer individual resistance. The idea was that they should keep the spark of satyagraha alive till under favourable circumstances the movement could again develop white heat. It was assumed that those who took to it were capable of developing independent inspiration and could go on indefinitely without any outside direction or guidance and in such an ideal manner what was lost in numbers would be more than made up by gain in quality.

Experience, however, has shown that the assumption made was unwarranted. Those who went in had not assimilated the spirit of satyagraha fully. Almost to a man the individual civil resisters who were in the field were fighting because they felt that they ought to, not because they must. Those who came out showed no impatience to rush back. Instead they hesitated and faltered. Even the best ones instead of feeling spiritually exhilarated had experienced mental anguish in prison. No good can come out of sacrifice that is forced instead of being spontaneous and natural.

Under the circumstances Bapu felt that the continuation of *individual* civil resistance would only result in internal decay. For coercive effect it was too insignificant; for spiritual effect too cumbersome and heterogeneous. Because it proved inadequate for producing immediate political results it failed to satisfy the patriotic instinct of the terrorist, and because its quality was indifferent it failed to touch the spirit of his idealism which craved for intenser and intenser forms of self-expression and self-sacrifice.

The present step is an essay on Bapu's part, to purify and intensify the ideal of satyagraha to the last degree. There was danger of indifferent numbers smothering the flame of his individual satyagraha when it should burn the brightest and of diluting its potency. Unadulterated by numbers it should prove more efficacious.

Even as it is, Bapu feels that it would be possible to put thousands of civil resisters in the field, if not today, in the very near future. Of that

[1] *Vide* p. 353. Gandhiji expressed the views in talks with Dr. M. A. Ansari, Dr. B. C. Roy and Bhulabhai Desai. The source bears Gandhiji's corrections. A similar report was also made by Raojibhai Patel.

[2] The talks were held on April 4.

his experience of the present Harijan tour has left him in no doubt. But now he has discovered that for a successful fight the plan of civil disobedience as it has been practised so far would have to be radically modified and extended. In what way he cannot say at present. We have not succeeded in harnessing the classes to our cause. They have uniformly failed to rise to the occasion and unsupported by the classes the masses have been overwhelmed. In other words Bapu has suddenly discovered that we were advancing into a blind alley. It was absolutely essential to retrace the steps. Even if all had gone well with the mass movement this reorientation of the strategy should have been inevitable sooner or later. That being so, Bapu is anxious to save to the utmost the remnants of his disorganized force and give the country time to reorganize, rest and recuperate.

He remained the ideal satyagrahi. Because the next fight, as Bapu conceives, must be planned on a different pattern. Bapu would not like even a perfect satyagrahi today to go on. To do so would be wasteful. It would be, to use his own simile, like cashing a good cheque at the wrong bank, at the wrong time.

As far back as August 1933 the feeling had come upon him that there was something internally wrong in the movement somewhere. But at that time, first owing to the quick succession of his fasts and then owing to the Harijan tour, he could not analyse that feeling further. "The step I have taken today ought to have been taken after the Poona Pact. That was the right time for it," he remarked the other day. "The arrest of every worker since then has jarred upon me. But I have ignorantly allowed things to drift like an improvident speculator who fails to pull himself up when every fresh deal would make the chance of his ultimate solvency more and more remote." On another occasion he said, "by allowing my best men to go now I would only be bargaining for the survival of the unfittest. The fittest would be reduced to utter wrecks for want of a proper grounding, leaving the field a barren waste after I am gone". Instead, therefore, of making a holocaust of his old guard he has chosen to release the civil disobedience forces that were lying locked up owing to the present stalemate to combat in whatever ways it might be possible the fresh rivets that are being sought to be fastened upon the country. In the mean time he himself would be active in his laboratory making fresh researches in satyagraha. And given time and God's grace he expects to discover a weapon that would give us what we have lacked so far.

Let it be noted here that what Gandhiji has said about the imperfection of satyagrahis in connection with individual civil resistance does not apply to all that has taken place before the Poona resolution. Perfect satyagraha was essential for individual resistance, not for mass resistance. The mistake lay in sanctioning *individual* civil resistance when perfect satyagrahis were not forthcoming. If the mass civil disobedience had to be started tomorrow we would not have to wait for perfect satyagrahis. There is therefore no cause

to feel despondent about the future of mass satyagraha; because perfection is not a *sine qua non* of mass civil disobedience.

The freedom to offer civil resistance for specific purposes is there. But an early or extensive exercise of it is not envisaged. The country has to pass through a period of darkness, depression and reaction. But Bapu has faith that there is sufficient vitality in the nation to enable it to pull itself through the morass. The length of the period of recuperation can be curtailed by the civil resisters of today deporting themselves as ideal constructive workers and using all the energy set free from the civil resistance to free the country from the paralysis that has overtaken it, instead of allowing it to be dissipated by despondency or self-indulgence. Here I may add that just now Bapu's mind is teeming with fresh constructive projects. He contemplates covering [the country] with new institutions and organizations that would be based not on ideals adulterated with heavy doses of compromise as was the case with our old institutions but would be erected on pure unwatered principles. The old institutions were good enough for their time but institutions that we now need to carry us over the remaining stage of our journey need to be differently patterned. It is good therefore in a way that old institutions have disappeared leaving the ground clear for the rise of new ones.

Lastly it should be remembered that the fight for independence has not been given up. Civil disobedience has not been suspended. It remains the official programme of the Congress. If the Government will not tolerate the sanction of civil disobedience by the Congress even when it was confined to Bapu alone and foreclosed to everyone else, it would be best for the Congress to remain under suspension. Dr. Ansari, Bhulabhai and Dr. Roy have agreed that the Congress must not repudiate Bapu's civil resistance, come what may. For to do so would spell death to the Congress. If, however, the Government recognizes civil disobedience as a legitimate political weapon by restoring the Congress unconditionally after Bapu's latest statement, it would be open to the Congress to adopt the Council programme while recognizing civil disobedience as an alternative weapon.

The conditions about the resumption of civil disobedience during Gandhiji's lifetime for the attainment of swaraj should not worry an intelligent satyagrahi. It should be realized that owing to the self-imposed restrictions by Gandhiji during the year of grace several things had to be left unsaid in his statement. There is nothing whatever in that statement to prevent the nation from launching upon individual civil resistance of the direct and the most extensive type to secure Gandhiji's release, for instance, if the authorities should choose to indefinitely incarcerate him. Even in 1930 mass fight had that for culminating point.

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CHRONOLOGY

(*January 16—May 17, 1934*)

January 16: At Calicut, Gandhiji met the Zamorin and discussed with him question of temple-entry. Left Calicut in evening for a tour of Cochin.

January 17: At Trichur. Visited Harijan Colony. Spoke at public meetings at Trichur, Kurukkancheri and Alwaye. Visited Perruvanam, Irinjalakuda and Chalakudi. Went to Ernakulam in evening.

January 18: Spoke at public meetings at Palluruthi, Thuravoor, Ernakulam and Alleppey. Visited Tripunittura, Chalavennur and Nedumudi.

January 19: Spoke at public meeting, Kottayam. Opened Anandashram, Changanacherry. Visited Odur and Panamanna.

January 20: Spoke at public meetings at Panamanna, Quilon and Trivandrum.

Gave interview on Travancore Government communique declaring open tanks and wells to all castes. Visited Sivagiri and Varkala.

January 21: At Trivandrum. Visited Harijan Hostel. Visited Neyyattinkara, Pappanam Amaravilai, Kuzhuthorai, Takkalai —Nagarcoil.

January 22: Reached Cape Comorin (Kanyakumari)

January 23: Gave interview to Members of Self Respect Party at Cape Comorin. Visited Nanganeri and Velliyur. Reached Tinnevelly.

January 24: At public meetings at Tinnevelly and Tuticorin, exhorted people to donate generously for Bihar Earthquake Relief Fund and to banish untouchability. Visited Palamcottah and Tenkasi.

January 25: Spoke at public meeting, Rajapalayam. Visited Tuticorin, Ettaiyapuram, Koilpatti, Sankarankoil, Sivakasi, Virudhunagar, Kalligudi.

January 26: At Madura, appealed to merchants for Bihar Earthquake Relief. Spoke at Municipal Council meeting, public

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meeting, women's meeting, Hindi Pracharak Sabha and at meeting of labourers.

January 27: Appealed to Karaikudi Municipal Council for better treatment of Harijans.
Spoke at public meetings at Karaikudi and Devakottah and exhorted people to contribute generously for Bihar Earthquake Relief Fund. Visited Therukutheru, Kilaour, Chittanoor, Tiruppattur, Paganeri, Sivaganga and Manamadurai.

January 28: Laid foundation stone for Harijan School, Devakottah.
Spoke at Harijan *cheri*, Chitthanur.
Had talks with Nattars at Devacottah.
Gave interview to *The Hindu* on Nattar-Harijan problem.
Visited Pollachi and Podanur.

January 29: At Mettupalayam and Coonoor.

January 30: At Coonoor.

January 31: Laid foundation stone of Harijan school, Ramnagar.

February 1: Gave interview to Adi-Dravida Jan Sabha, Coonoor.

February 2: Spoke at a public meeting, Kotagiri.
Issued appeal to foreign countries on behalf of earthquake -affected people of Bihar.

February 3: Visited two Harijan *cheries*—Ottupatrai and Thandakaramcheri.
Spoke on untouchability at public meeting, Coonoor.

February 4: Visited Ramakrishna Ashram, Dakshinamoorti Ashram and Om Prakash Mutt, Ottacamund.
Gave interview to the Adi-Hindu Deputation.

February 5: At Coonoor.

February 6: Addressed public meetings at Erode, Chokkampalayam, Tirupur, Coimbatore and Podanur.

February 7: Addressed public meetings at Pollachi, Palni and Dindigul.
Visited Pondar, Udamalpet and Vannivalasi.

February 8: Visited Batlagundu, Vadugapatti.

February 9: Spoke at public meeting and women's meeting, Thevaram.
Visited Cumbum, Bodinayakanur and Theni. Left for Trichinopoly by train.

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February 10 : Spoke at public meeting, Srirangam.
Gave interview to Harijans, Srirangam.
Spoke at the National College and at a public meeting, Trichinopoly. Visited Manachanalloor, Samayapuram and Chintamani.

February 11 : Spoke at public meetings at Karur, Erode and Tiruchengodu. Visited Kulittalai, Mayanur, Kodumudi, Bhavani and Pudupalayam.

February 12: Spoke at public meeting, Pudupalayam.
Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested in Allahabad.

February 14: Gandhiji spoke at public meetings at Namakkal and Salem.
Visited Sendamangalam.

February 15: Spoke at public meetings at Tanjore, Kumbakonam and Negapatam.

February 16: Addressed students of Annamalai University, Chidambaram, and public meetings at Karaikal, Shiyali and Cuddalore.
Jawaharlal Nehru was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.
Gandhiji visited Nagore, Tillaiyadi and Mayavaram.

February 17: Spoke at public meeting, Pondicherry.
Visited Gandhi Kuppam, Tiruvannamalai and Vellore.
Kaka Kalelkar was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

February 18: Gandhiji spoke at public meeting, Vellore.
Visited Katpadi and Ambur.
Spoke at Christkula Ashram, Tiruppattur.

February 19: At Madras.

February 20: At Madras. Gave interview to *The Hindu*.

February 21: Spoke at public meetings at Conjeevaram, Arni, Arkonam.
Visited Chingleput, Walajapet, Ranipet, and Arcot.

February 22: Left Mysore for Coorg by car. Spoke at public meetings at Hudekeri and Pannampet.

February 23: Spoke at public meetings at Virajpet and Mercara.
Visited Bellur, Somwarpet and Gundukutti.

February 24: Spoke at public meeting at Puttur; Jnanodaya Samaj, women's meeting, public meeting, Mangalore. Visited Mercara, Sampaje, Sulya Uppingadi, Vithal-Gabka, Kannadka, Panemangalore and Bantval.

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February 25: Spoke at students' meeting, Mangalore, public meetings, Mulki, Udipi, Kundapur.

February 26: At Kundapur.

February 27: Visited Bhatkal, Honavar, Tadri and Karwar.

February 28: Spoke at public meeting at Sirsi. Visited Karwar, Binaga, Chandia, Ankola, Hiregutti, Madangeri, Kumata, Aminpalli and Hegde.

March 1: Spoke at public meeting, Siddapur. Visited Kanasur, Dasankop, Islur, Ekambi, Samasji, Alur, Devihosur, Haveri, Byadagi, Moti-Benur and Murgimath.

March 2: Visited Haveri, Ranibennur, Harihar, Davangere, Duggathi, Bemipalli, Harpanahalli, Kotturu, Kudilgi, Kanivihalli and Sandur.

March 3: Spoke at public meeting, Bellary. Visited Hospet, Bhanapur, Gadag and Jakkali and Hubli.

March 4: Spoke at Railwaymen's meeting, Hubli. Visited Dharwar, Marewadi, Aminbhavi, Morah, Harobidhongal, Uppin-Betgeri, Hireullegiri, Saundatti, Guruhosur, Hosur, Bailhongal, Sampagaon, Bagewadi and Belgaum.

March 5: At Belgaum answered Harijan workers' questions.

March 6: Visited Tondikatti.

March 7: Addressed Mercantile Association, Nipani.
Visited Yamkanmardi, Vantimuri, Hukeri, Gokak, Sankeshvar, Gad-Hinglaj and Hat Kanagle, Bhoj, Navlihal, Kothali, Dholgarwadi, Chikodi, Ankali and Shedbal.

March 8: Visited Mangsuli, Banhatti, Athni, Honwad, Tikota, Torvi, Bijapur, Ilkal and Jorapur.

March 9: Addressed women's meeting and public meeting, Hyderabad and public meeting at Secundrabad.
Gave interview to the Associated Press of India, Hyderabad.

March 11: At Allahabad. Met Kamala Nehru and Swarup Rani Nehru. Reached Patna at night.

March 12: At Patna. Wrote his message to afflicted Bihar in earthquake bulletin.

March 14: Toured the affected area and visited Hajipur, Chatro, Lalganj and Motihari.

March 15: At Motihari spoke at public meeting.

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Gave interview to the Middle-class Deputation of Motihari and Relief Workers of Champaran.

March 16: Spoke at public meeting, Muzaffarpur.
At Patna, gave interview to *The Searchlight*. Visited Chapra.

March 18: Addressed meeting of Bihar Central Relief Committee, Patna.

March 20: Spoke at public meeting, Patna.

March 21: Spoke at meeting of Representatives of Relief Societies, Patna.

March 22: Spoke at Dinapore.
Advised the Ashram inmates to stop courting imprisonment.

March 23: In message to the Press, laid down some rules for guidance of relief workers.

March 24: At Patna. Visited Dinapore.

March 27: Addressed public meeting and meeting of relief workers, Chapra.
Visited Sonepur, Sarava, Parasurampur and Panapur.

March 28: Spoke at meetings at Hajipur and Sonepur.
Visited Chapra, Muzaffarpur and Baulghat.

March 29: Addressed public meetings at Bhartua Chaur and Sitamarhi.
Visited Muzaffarpur, Bedaul, Belsand, and Chandauli.

March 30: Spoke at workers' meeting and prayer meeting, Sitamarhi.
Visited Kamtaul, Koriapira, Sursand and Puri.

March 31: Addressed public meetings at Darbhanga and Madhubani.
Had talks with relief workers, Darbhanga.
Reached Rajnagar.

April 1: Visited Nirmali and Saharsa.

April 2: From Saharsa issued statement to the Press, advising suspension of satyagraha by others but himself retaining right of starting of individual satyagraha.
Visited Bihpur and Bhagalpur.

April 3: At Monghyr. Spoke at public meeting.

April 4: At Patna. Had talks with Congress leaders including Dr. Ansari, Dr. B. C. Roy and Bhulabhai Desai on revival of

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Swaraj Party to take part in elections to Central Assembly.
Visited Jamalpur, Mokamah, Punarek, Barh and Bakhtiyarpur.

April 5: Wrote to Dr. Ansari approving revival of Swaraj Party.

April 6: At Patna gave interview to *The Hindu* on Bihar earthquake.

April 7: In interview to *The Hindu* said that he would, consistent with his views on Council-entry, render all the assistance to Swaraj Party.

April 8: Visited Katihar, Forbesganj, Fulkana and Araria.

April 9: Addressed public meeting, Purnea. Bihar tour ended. Left for Assam Harijan tour.

April 10: At midnight reached Assam.

April 11: At public meeting at Rupsi appealed to the people to efface untouchability.
Addressed meetings at Dhubri, Barpeta.
Visited Gauripur, Bansbari, Chaprakata, Sorbhog, Howli and Sorupeta.

April 12: Visited Goreswar, Tangla, Udalguri, Bindukuri Rangapada.
Spoke at public meetings at Tejpur.
Left Tezpur for Gauhati by steamer.

April 13: Reached Gauhati. Spoke at public meeting.
Inaugurated Seva Ashram.
Visited Leper Asylum and Harijan quarters.

April 14: Addressed women's meeting and Marwaris' meeting, Gauhati.
Visited Chaparmukh, Khetri, Nowgong and Furkating.

April 15: Addressed public meeting, Golghat.
Visited Ganakpukhari, Dergaon and Jorhat.

April 16&17: At Jorhat.

April 18: At Jorhat. Gave interview to Harijan leaders.
Gave interview to American Missionary. Gave interview to the Press on the role of Swaraj Party.
Visited Charing and Sibsagar.

April 19: At Dibrugarh gave interview to the Associated Press.
Visited Dimu, Sapon, Kwang and Dihing.

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April 20: Visited Chabua.
At Tinsukhia issued statement to the Associated Press on untouchability. Addressed public meeting. Left Tinsukhia by train for Bihar.

April 21: At Gauhati.

April 22: Addressed public meeting, Katihar.
Reached Muzaffarpur.

April 23: At Muzaffarpur. Opened Gokhalepuri—a settlement for displaced persons on account of earthquake.

April 24: Left Muzaffarpur. Reached Patna.

April 25: Visited Kulharia, Jamira, Arrah.
Addressed public meeting, Buxar.
In Jasidih sanatanists attacked Gandhiji's car with lathis and stones.

April 26: Gandhiji spoke at public meeting, Deoghar. Reached Gaya.

April 27: Visited Chatra and Hazaribagh.

April 28: Spoke at public meeting, Gumia. Visited Bermo and Jharia.

April 29: Visited Purulia and Ranchi.

April 30: At Ranchi.

May 1: Conferred with Swarajist leaders, Ranchi.

May 4: In interview to the Press at Jamshedpur discussed the results of his Harijan campaign.
Addressed public meeting, Jamshedpur.

May 5: Visited Leper Asylum, Sambalpur.

May 6: Addressed public meeting, Angul.
Visited Bamur, Meramandeli, Banurpal, Hindol, Sadashivpur and Cuttack.

May 8: From Puri issued statement to the Press announcing his decision to complete tour on foot.
Addressed public meeting, Puri.

May 9: Commenced his walking tour.
Addressed meeting at Harekrishnapur and Chandanpur.
Visited Gopinathpur.

May 10: Spoke at Shivalichak and Virpurshottampur.
Visited Virgovindpur and Sakhigopal Kadua.

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May 11: Visited Dandmukund, Pipli and Balasore.

May 12: Visited Seola and Balkati.

May 13: Visited Satyabhamapur, Balianta and Pipli.

May 14: At Balianta.

May 15: Spoke at opening of Kunjabihari temple, Balianta.
Addressed meeting at Telangapeth.

May 16: Spoke at Kajipatna.
At Cuttack. Gave interview to the Press.
Addressed public meeting, Cuttack.
Kasturba Gandhi was released.
Gandhiji left Cuttack for Patna by train.

May 17: Reached Patna at night.

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ADDENDUM

On page 34 to item 30, "Letter to Jamnalal Bajaj", 22-1-1934, insert the following after the first paragraph:

A wire has been sent to Devi Prasad. I have also written to him. I have called Lester only to meet her.

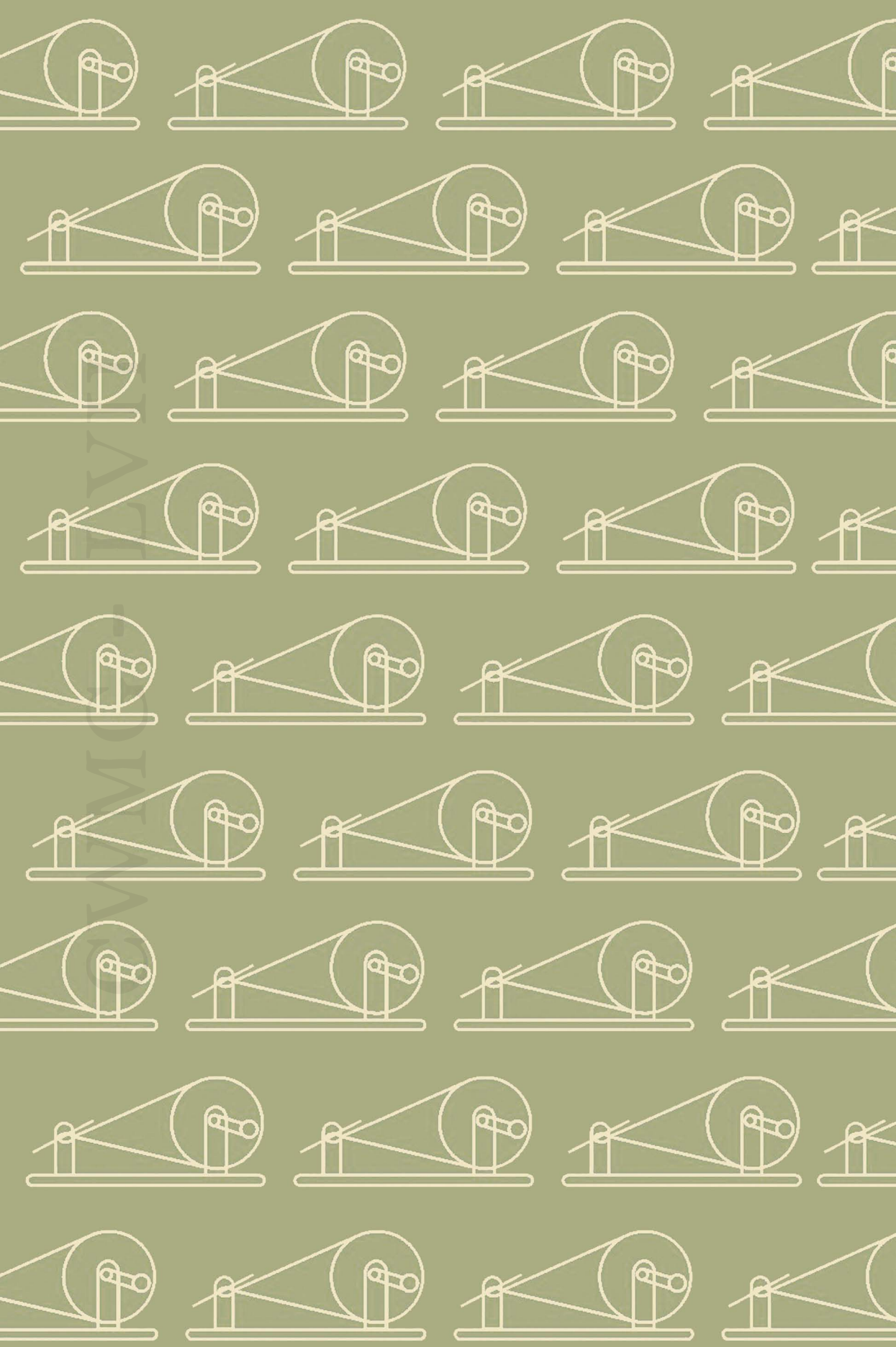
I have written to Satisbabu that he should go to Puri. You must improve your health.

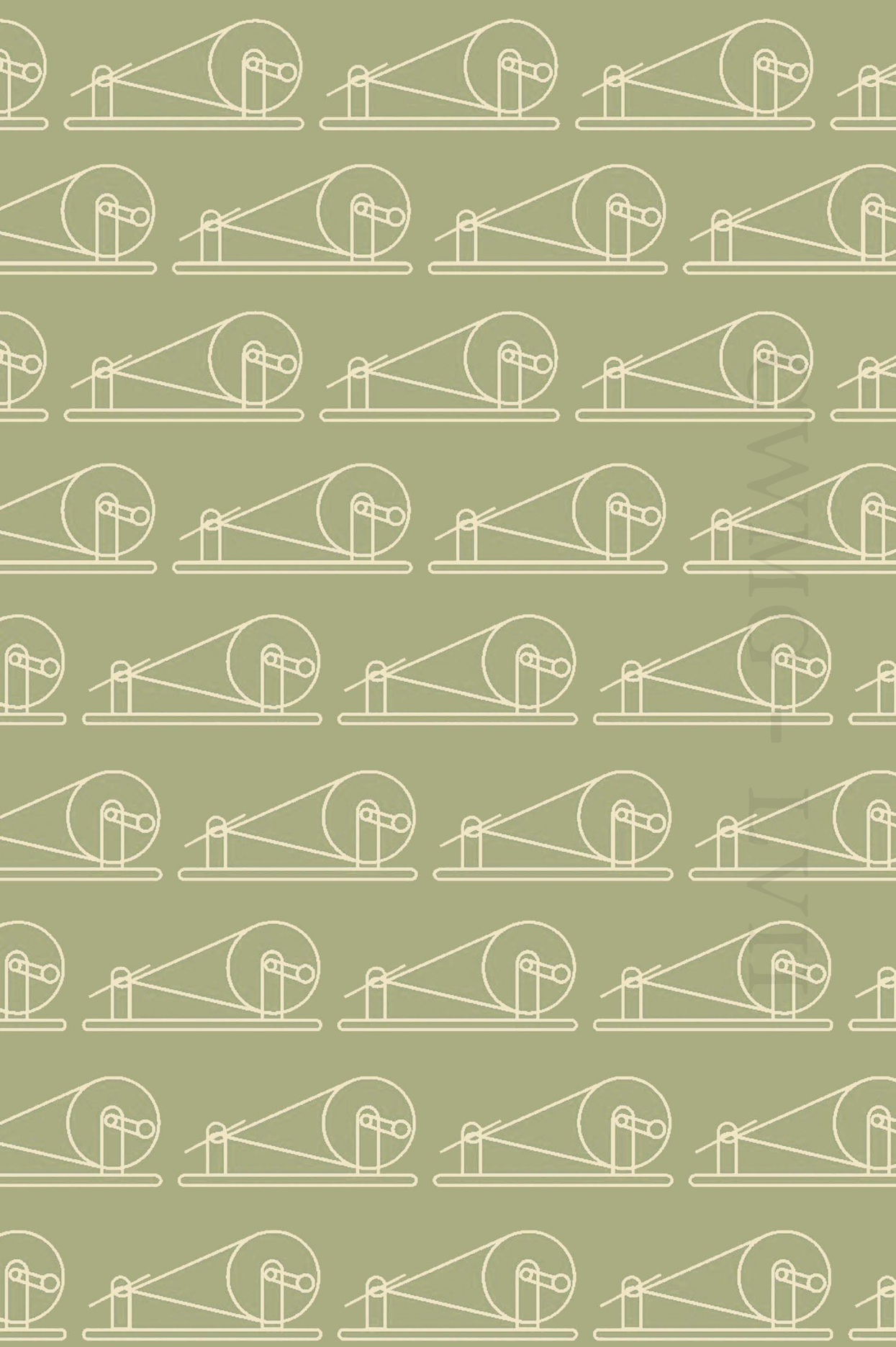
ERRATA

PAGE	FOR	READ
ix * Line 31	in	on
28 * Line 2	shape or form that	shape or form. That
141 * Line 18	most places. I	most places, I

* Due correction made.

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