THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

LXXXVII

(1947)

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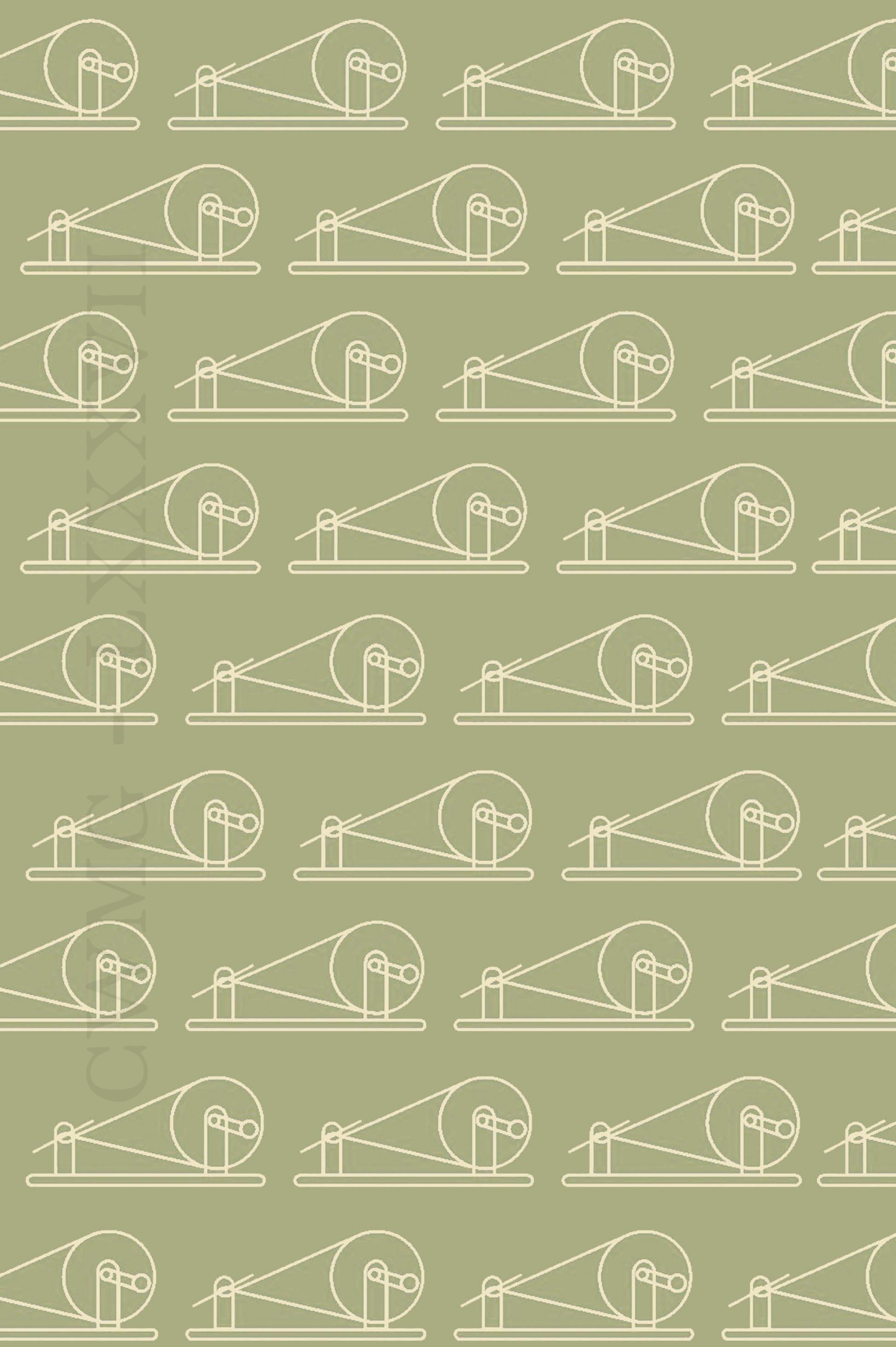


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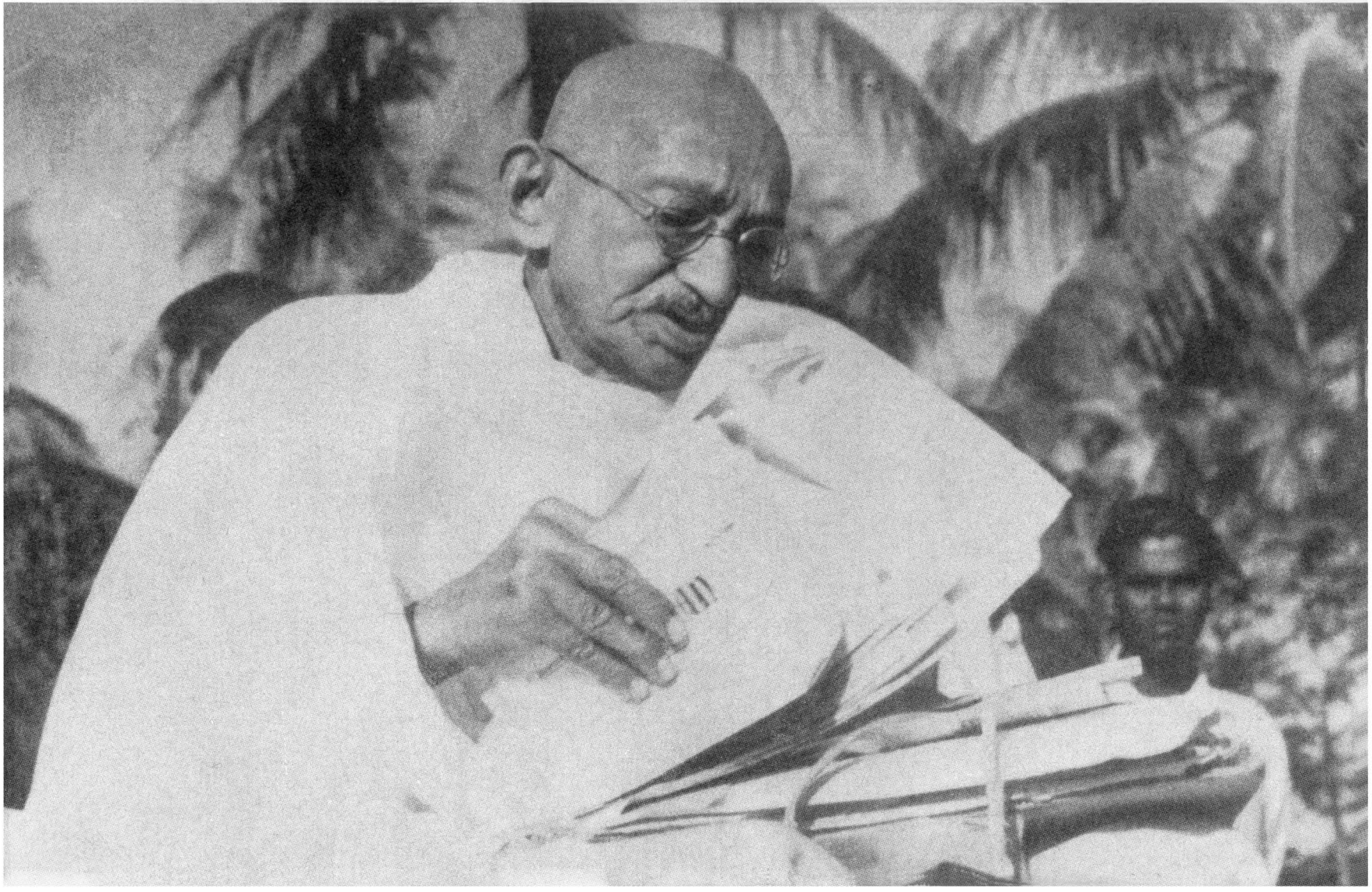


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(February 21, 1947 – May 24, 1947)

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PREFACE

This volume (February 21 to May 24, 1947) carries Gandhiji's healing mission from Noakhali to Bihar, where riots against Muslims had broken out in the last week of the preceding October as a reaction to the barbarities in Noakhali earlier in the month (*vide* Vol. LXXXVI). Gandhiji, however, was not able to pay to this new task the single-minded attention that he could to his Noakhali mission for three-and-a-half months. Events had begun to move fast in the political arena and he was twice called to Delhi for advice and guidance in the discussions which had started. On February 20, the day before this volume opens, Prime Minister Attlee had announced the intention of His Majesty's Government to withdraw British authority from India by June 1948 and the appointment of Lord Mountbatten as Viceroy in place of Field Marshal Lord Wavell to carry out the operation. The new Viceroy arrived in India on March 22 and wrote to Gandhiji on the same day inviting him to Delhi. Gandhiji met Lord Mountbatten on March 31, but in the discussions which followed he could not carry the Congress Working Committee with him in his great "act of faith" for entrusting power and responsibility to Mr. Jinnah and with their permission, therefore, he returned to his work among the people in Bihar (p. 258).

This work was much more taxing than the ordeal he underwent in Noakhali in the midst of a hostile population and cut off from the outside world. There he had been able to summon the deepest spiritual resources of his inner being and, though full of anguish at the seeming failure of his non-violence, could take joy in the "velvety earth and soft grass" of rural Bengal (p. 128). His lone tours there from village to village on foot have the sublimity of a serene faith in the reality and power of the spirit. The Bihar mission, in contrast, was an unrelieved agony and foreshadowed the cruel suffering of Gandhiji's heart in the months after August 15.

Gandhiji had expressed concern to Jawaharlal Nehru about the Bihar riots as soon as he had read about them and, in a public appeal to the people of Bihar on the day he left Calcutta for Noakhali, told them that he might have to undertake a fast if the riots did not stop. Thanks to the presence of Jawaharlal Nehru in Bihar, the situation had soon been brought under control and Gandhiji had been assured by Rajendra Prasad a

few days later that things had settled down. Trusting to that assurance, he had resisted the suggestion of Bengal's Premier H. S. Suhrawardy and other Muslim leaders that he should go to Bihar (Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 70, 78, 81-2, 137, 166, 259 and 260). But late in February Gandhiji received a report from Dr. Syed Mahmud, Bihar's Minister for Development and Transport, that the situation was indeed serious and required his personal attention. Convinced that "the happenings in Noakhali and Tipperah paled into insignificance" before "the atrocities that had been committed by the Hindus of Bihar" (p. 29), Gandhiji left his Noakhali mission incomplete and hastened to Bihar.

Arriving in Patna on March 5 Gandhiji toured many of the affected villages, saw for himself the extent of the destruction and heard from the survivors tales of the killings. Large numbers of Muslims had crowded into refugee camps, some had left for Bengal and some for Sind. A rehabilitation programme had been approved by the Cabinet, but even four months after the carnage little progress had been made in implementing the programme. The Provincial Congress Committee was ineffective or, worse still, not interested in helping to restore normalcy. It was even alleged that some Congressmen had themselves taken part in inciting the crowds, and after careful investigation Gandhiji could not say that there was no substance in the charge (pp. 59 and 118). Though like oases in the desert there were Hindus who had saved Muslims during the riots at the risk of their own lives (p. 136), the bulk of the Hindus felt no shock at what had happened and some of the guilty ones even boasted that by their action they had saved India from further Muslim aggressiveness (pp. 45-6).

The wound was all the more cruel because at places the crowds had perpetrated their barbarities with shouts of *Mahatma Gandhiki Jai* (p. 52). Day after day Gandhiji told his audiences at prayer meetings that the Hindus had committed a sin and a crime and called upon them to atone for their misdeeds. He could not bear to describe in detail how the Muslim houses in one village had been razed to the ground and Muslim women and children slaughtered (p. 82). At another village, Gandhiji was so affected by what he heard that he could not "narrate the whole story", he told the prayer meeting, "because my heart is so full that I might burst into tears if I tried to tell it" (p. 125). At a private meeting with Congress workers, Gandhiji very nearly broke down. And he declared, "I will not rest nor let others rest. I would wander all over on foot and ask the skeletons

lying about how all that had happened. There is such a fire raging in me that I would know no peace till I have found a solution for all this'' (pp. 118-9).

The Chief Minister tried to explain the Government's failure by saying that they ''were caught unprepared'', that the Governor was absent and that the Chief Secretary and the Inspector-General of Police, both Englishmen, ''had let them down'' to have ''their revenge for 1942''. But Gandhiji accepted no excuses and asked the Ministers to turn ''the searchlight inward''. They had shown lack of foresight, intelligence and courage (pp. 59-60). But it was not a failure of the Government alone, or even principally of the Government. With his strong sense of the organic unity of a people, Gandhiji held that the moral failure of any one section of the society was a failure of the whole society (pp. 44, 105 and 171). ''Every one of us'', he told a prayer meeting, ''is equally guilty of what anyone of us has done'' (p. 55). And not in Bihar only. ''We are all Indians,'' Gandhiji told another meeting, ''and an evil deed committed anywhere in India is the concern of every Indian'' (p. 77). And similarly he told a deputation of national-minded Muslims who expressed regret at the conduct of Noakhali Muslims: ''It is our sorrow that we always think in terms of mine and thine. You should realize that a wrong committed by even a child of India is a wrong committed by each one of us'' (pp. 296-7). In that spirit of common humanity Gandhiji wanted the Hindus of Noakhali to feel for the wrongs done to the Muslims of Bihar and the Muslims of Bihar to feel for the sufferings of the Noakhali Hindus (pp. 33, 69, 96 and 296). Quoting Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Gandhiji likened Hindus and Muslims to ''the two eyes of Mother India'' and asked both to realize that just as ''the trouble in one eye afflicts the other too, similarly the whole of India suffers when either Hindus or Muslims suffer'' (p. 152).

Gandhiji devoted his prayer speeches to educating the Hindus of Bihar in this attitude of human sympathy and moral concern. ''With our overflowing love'', he told the prayer meeting on the day after his arrival in Bihar, ''we should re-assure the Muslims that the Hindus are their brothers and that there can be no difference between us'' (p. 47). He called upon the Hindus to contribute funds for the relief of Muslims and to rebuild with their own hands the dwellings which had been destroyed, clean their wells and sink new wells (p. 126). He reminded people that the old way of retaliation had led to the atom bomb, and urged them to pray that they might be

saved from that "atom bomb mentality" (p. 70). India would be able to prove herself worthy of the freedom she was about to win only if she gave to the world what was good in her and did not compete in making atom bombs (p. 45). Gandhiji was firm in his faith that the lasting cure for all violence (whether inter-religious or international) was to be found in the moral transformation of human beings rather than in any institutional arrangements. He held further that the spiritual resources to bring about this necessary and possible change were already available in the great religions of the world and that India with its tradition of tolerance and pluralism provided the most congenial soil for the active pursuit of the spiritual value of universal brotherhood. Hence his insistence on the recitation of verses from the Koran in his prayer meetings, even in those held in or near temples, and the replacement of "Sitaram" by "Rama-Rahim" and "Krishna-Karim" in a popular *bhajan*. For the benefit of those Hindus who objected to such "defilement" of holy places and sacred hymns, Gandhiji defined a Hindu as one "who is also a good Muslim and a good Parsi" (p. 184) and claimed that he himself was a Christian and a Muslim "besides of course being a Hindu" (p. 190).

Regarding the common people with the reverence which enlightened teachers pay to children for their "wholeness", Gandhiji told the Inter-Asian Relations Conference that the essence of wisdom was to be found in the humble cottages of the poor in the villages which were the "real India", that the West had distorted the religion of Jesus, and that Asia which had produced Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed, could still "conquer the West through love and truth". And he added that this conquest "would be loved by the West itself" (p. 193).

While thus Gandhiji strove to preserve and present the freedom movement as a world-wide effort to spiritualize politics and public life, globally as well as locally, it was the tragedy of our times that others were bent on "politicizing religion" and using it for narrow, selfish ends. Hence, Gandhiji's fervent appeals in the name of the common humanity of Hindus and Muslims and the true ideals of Islam, evoked no response from Mr. Jinnah and other League leaders. It is true that Mr. Jinnah did agree, under pressure from Lord Mountbatten, to sign a peace appeal denouncing "the use of force to achieve political ends", but only on condition that Gandhiji alone, and no other Congress leader, should sign it with him (pp. 261 and 277). Even this appeal was for Mr. Jinnah a political agreement, or in the Viceroy's words a "truce" (p. 548), to be observed condi-

tionally on others observing it. The argument that it was unjust, inhuman and insane to retaliate against a wrong done by one community at one place by victimizing innocent members of that community elsewhere, found no echo in Mr. Jinnah's utterances. He made no serious attempt to see that the appeal he had formally signed was honoured by his followers. Gandhiji's pleas for more energetic action by him (pp. 247, 395, 400, 444 and 458) elicited from him nothing more than an assurance that "he would do his best" (pp. 437 and 550). Gandhiji pitted the whole strength of his body and soul to check the irrational forces at work among the Hindus and to "cleanse the dirt and brighten the image of Hinduism" (p. 56). Mr. Jinnah showed no inclination to restrain the passions aroused by years of propaganda that Islam was in danger.

Gandhiji hoped that Mr. Jinnah could be won over by a gesture of goodwill and taught the limits of power by being entrusted with responsibility. He, therefore, suggested to Lord Mountbatten that Mr. Jinnah should be given the option of forming a central government of his own choice to replace the Interim Government headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, assuring the co-operation of the Congress provided Jinnah agreed to work for the interests of the country as a whole and the new government under him did their utmost to preserve peace in the country (pp. 199-200). This bold suggestion could not be pursued as the members of the Congress Working Committee were not prepared for such an act of faith. Gandhiji withdrew from the discussions and asked for the Viceroy's permission to return to Bihar (p. 254). Writing to Vallabhbhai Patel he asked whether "keeping only the good of the country in view" it would be advisable for him "to meet the Viceroy even as an individual" (p. 271). Gandhiji again went to Delhi in the first week of May in response to a pressing request by Jawaharlal Nehru, but there was nothing he could do to prevent partition which now appeared inevitable.

Gandhiji was as much against compulsion as against violence. "He was as much against forced partition as against forced unity." But it was for the people "with a pure heart" to decide, not for the so-called leaders. If the people really and sincerely wished for anything, "God, being a servant of His servants, would Himself carry out that will" (p. 30). Gandhiji's life-long mission was to educate people and teach them self-reliance for self-rule. If the people were ignorant they would be exploited. When the people realized their strength and the fact that the bottom sustained the top, it would be well with them (p. 466).

Trusting the inarticulate wisdom and inherent strength of the common people, Gandhiji hoped to "educate" leaders by entrusting them with responsibility and letting them learn by listening and responding to the people.

His understanding of the working of moral forces in human affairs made Gandhiji feel that the communal violence which was spreading in the country was the result of the violence which had crept into the freedom struggle. He told Rajendra Prasad and others: " . . . what we regarded as non-violent fight was not really so. Otherwise the dragon of communalism would not have raised its head amongst us . . ." (p. 406). Gandhiji was more forthright with the Socialist leaders Aruna Asaf Ali and Ashok Mehta: " . . . if the Bihar masses had not had the lesson which they had at your hands in 1942, the excesses which Bihar witnessed last year would never have occurred. . . . Once the evil spirit of violence is unleashed, by its inherent nature it cannot be checked or even kept within any prescribed limits. All violence inevitably tends to run to excess." Gandhiji therefore pitted all the power of his soul against violence and staked his very life to put out the flames. If, he told them, in the course of his mission of peace "death comes, I shall welcome it" (p. 424). Gandhiji not only wished for such a death, he was daily growing more convinced "that God will bless me with a death befitting a non-violent person" (p. 408).

It was in order to make himself a worthy medium for the manifestation of perfect non-violence that Gandhiji had undertaken the *brahmacharya* experiment which had invited so much criticism from some of his valued co-workers. For him it was a *yajna*, a spiritual discipline for complete purification of self (p. 14) and he thought that it had brought him nearer to God and Truth (p. 384).

Gandhiji agreed with modern thinkers like Havelock Ellis and Bertrand Russell in refusing to look to institutions and usages for safeguarding moral purity (p. 90). But he had not become modern in the sense of disbelieving the moral and spiritual value of self-control in matters of sex. So far from believing in permissiveness, he aimed at total eradication of body-consciousness and sex-feeling and was in this sense "as ancient as can be imagined" (p. 103).

Even amid the darkening gloom Gandhiji's faith in human goodness and the power of joy stood unshaken. To his Quaker friend, Horace Alexander, who had fallen ill in Delhi, he wrote: "I must make a desperate effort to see you in your bed and make you laugh" (p. 397).

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.

Where the original is undated the inferred date is supplied within square brackets, the reasons being given where necessary.

In the source-line, the symbol S. N. stands for documents available in the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad; G. N. refers to those available in the Gandhi National Museum and Library, New Delhi; M. M. U. for the reels of the Mobile Microfilm Unit and S. G. for the documents of the Sevagram collection, which also are available in the Gandhi National Museum. C. W. denotes documents secured by the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.

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

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1. LETTER TO E. W. ARYANAYAKUM[1]

February 21, 1947

I was more than glad to have your brief visit[2] and the briefest chat with you on matters of common interest.

You have given me a cutting from the *Hindustan Standard* purporting to report the views of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad[3] on education. Assuming the correctness of the report I say categorically that it is inconsistent with the line followed by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. It is in the villages of India where India lives, not in the few Westernized cities which are the citadels of a foreign power.

I do not believe that the State can concern itself or cope with religious education. I believe that religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations. Do not mix up religion and ethics. I believe that fundamental ethics is common to all religions. Teaching of fundamental ethics is undoubtedly a function of the State. By religion I have not in mind fundamental ethics but what goes by the name of denominationalism. We have suffered enough from State-aided religion and State Church. A society or a group, which depends partly or wholly on State aid for the existence of its religion, does not deserve or, better still, does not have any religion worth the name. I do not need to give any illustrations in support of this obvious truth as it is to me.

The second point deserving attention in the report in question is regarding the replacing of the Urdu and Nagari scripts by the Roman script. However attractive the proposition may appear to be and whatever is true of the Indian soldiers, in my opinion the replacing would be a fatal blunder and we would find ourselves in the fire out of the frying pan. In this connection, I would like you to read my statement[4] on the subject issued to the Press on January 21 last.

[1] Secretary, Hindustani Talimi Sangh. This appeared under the title "Religious Instruction, Military Training and the Roman Script."

[2] From February 19 to 21

[3] Member, Education and Arts in the Interim Government. He was reported to have said: "It is likely that under State supervision even denominational teaching can be imparted in a more liberal spirit than under private control. The aim of all religious teaching should be to make men more tolerant and broad-minded and it is my opinion that this can be more effectively done if the State takes charge of the question than if it is left to private initiative."

[4] *Vide* Vol. LXXXVI, p. 374.

The third thing that pained me was the reference to military education. I think that we have to wait a long time before a nationwide decision on the point is made. Otherwise, we are likely to become a curse rather than a blessing to the world. Leaders are not made, they are born. Should the State be in a hurry over this matter even before full independence is established? Therefore, I am surprised that the Central Advisory Board should be party to such a sweeping recommendation as they have made.[1]

Harijan, 23-3-1947

2. *LETTER TO P. R. CHENGALVAROYA CHETTIAR*

KAZIRKHIL, RAMGANJ P. S.,
NOAKHALI DISTRICT,
February 21, 1947

DEAR CHENGALVAROYAN,

Many thanks for your letter. Real forgiveness accrues to him who is truly penitent. Harilal[2] knows that when he has shed his evil habits he will be welcome in Sevagram. All those good people who, out of mistaken kindness, nurse [his] evil habits are his enemies. Here is a letter[3] for him.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

P. R. CHENGALVAROYA CHETTIAR
40 VENKATACHALA CHETTY STREET
TRIPLICANE, MADRAS

From a photostat : G. N. 102

[1] The recommendations of the Central Advisory Board of Education were as follows: "The Central Board of Education has endorsed the view of the Working Committee of the National War Academy that residential schools, where boys may obtain adequate facilities for developing the character and powers of leadership, should be started by provinces and States to act as 'feeders' for the National War Academy. The Board is of opinion that the new type of schools contemplated in the scheme of National Post War Education will provide the necessary training for the leadership, character, intelligence, courage and physical fitness required by the military authorities for the Army, Navy and Air Force. It directs the attention of provincial authorities to the necessity of developing their schools on these lines which will actually serve as the kind of schools which the military authorities have in mind...."

[2] Harilal Gandhi, eldest son of Gandhiji

[3] The letter is not available.

3. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

February 21, 1947

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I got your long letter yesterday. Manu[1] read it out to me in the evening.

What you say about cultivation is absolutely correct. We should grow as much grain as we can and give it to the people. We did this once at Sabarmati. Were you there at that time? We raised a *bajra* crop out of season and gave potfuls of it to the poor people. We did, of course, charge them something. Vrajlal[2] used to spend the whole day in distributing the grain to labourers. Something like that should be done at Sevagram too, and that on a much larger scale. Money should be no difficulty. You may show this to anybody you like.

I was indeed very happy to learn about Kanchan[3]. May her delivery pass off without difficulty. I cannot judge whether her plan of going to Vyara is right or not. Sushilabehn[4] is going there and she might be able to guide you better. It is very good that Kanchan's sister has arrived there. It is as well that you are looking after the building work. That work also had to be done by somebody. You are an expert at the job.

My fate lies entirely in God's hands. If I am able to accomplish my mission here[5] and leave Bengal, I will certainly go there. But I do not know whether I shall succeed. If I should die in my attempt here, I would welcome such a death. Your running down here will serve no purpose. If you have learnt anything from me, build further on it. If you happen to come to this side and call on me incidentally, that would be another matter. I had an excellent letter from Kanchan, but have had no time to reply to it. Now lying in bed I dictate letters to Manu and to others if the letters are in other

[1] Daughter of Jaisukhlal Gandhi

[2] An Ashram inmate

[3] Addressee's wife

[4] Sushila Nayyar

[5] Gandhiji had gone to Noakhali on November 6, 1946 and had been touring on foot from village to village from January 2, 1947 to establish peace and communal harmony.

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languages. I am thus able to give sufficient rest to the body and cope with the correspondence to a certain extent. There are some newspaper correspondents with us and they also help. Their help partly makes up for Parasram's[1] absence. I dictate Urdu letters to Dev[2] and Bengali letters to Nirmal Babu[3]. Thus my correspondence work seems to be well arranged now and I am able to spare both my hands and eyes. That I do not write to Kanchan should not mean that she need not write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8628. Also C. W. 7210. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah

4. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*[4]

KAMALAPUR,
February 21, 1947

Gandhiji congratulated the audience on having come from the surrounding villages. He however sympathized with them for being exposed to the sun. He also hoped that they were not afraid of the Indian sun, perhaps the greatest gift from God. Happy was India which had clear blue sky for the larger part of the year.

He then referred to the fact that he had gone to Chandpur more than once whilst India's grand old son Shri Haradayal Nag[5] was alive. He was then his guest. He knew, therefore, what importance Chandpur had. He was glad that Chandpur had played its part in looking after the refugees. But he deplored the disregard of the laws of sanitation and cleanliness. If they rigidly carried out these rules they would not have to live in constant dread of the plague and other diseases which were the brood of insanitation.

He then told them that they must not harbour ill will against their Muslim neighbours. He appealed to both the parties to live at peace with each other. But he held that even if the Hindus alone harboured no ill will against the Muslims, or vice versa, strife would abate. If however both harboured ill will, one against the other, strifes were bound to be the result. There

[1] Gandhiji's stenographer who accompanied him during part of the Noakhali tour. *Vide* Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 138 and 299-300.

[2] Devprakash Nayyar

[3] Nirmal Kumar Bose, a professor of Calcutta University, was touring with Gandhiji as his "companion and interpreter". *Vide* Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 128 and 138.

[4] Extracted from "Gandhiji's Walking Tour Diary"

[5] (1853-1942); participated in the non-co-operation movement and Salt Satyagraha; devoted his life to constructive work

was a *mantra* in the Upanishads [which says] that man became what he thought.[1] How true it was found in every walk of life! Let them beware of harbouring an evil thought.

He then came to the two questions before him. The first was:

Q. You advocate inter-caste marriages. Do you also favour marriages between Indians professing different religions? Should they declare themselves as belonging to no denomination, or can they continue their old religious practices and yet inter-marry? If so, what form should the marriage ceremony take? Is it to be a purely civil function or a religious function? Do you consider religion to be an exclusively personal matter?

A. Though he admitted that he had not always held the view, he had come to the conclusion long ago, that an inter-religious marriage was a welcome event whenever it took place. His stipulation was that such a connection was not to be a product of lust. In his opinion [if it was a product of lust][2] it was no marriage. It was illicit intercourse. Marriage in his estimation was a sacred institution. Hence there must be mutual friendship, either party having equal respect for the religion of the other. There was no question in this of conversion. Hence the marriage ceremony would be performed by priests belonging to both faiths. This happy event could take place when the communities shed mutual enmity and had regard for the religions of the world.

Q. Should religious instruction form part of the school curriculum as approved by the State? Do you favour separate schools for children belonging to different denominations for facility of religious instruction? Or, should religious instruction be left in the hands of private bodies? If so, do you think it is right for the State to subsidize such bodies?

A. As to this question he said that he did not believe in State religion even though the whole community had one religion. State interference would probably always be unwelcome. Religion was a purely personal matter. There were in reality as many religions as minds. Each mind had a different conception of God from the other. He was also opposed to State aid, partly or wholly, to religious bodies. For he knew that an institution or group, which did not manage to finance its own religious teaching, was a stranger to true religion. This did not mean that the State schools would not give ethical teaching. Fundamental ethics were common to all religions.

Harijan, 16-3-1947

[1] "According as one acts, according as one behaves, so does he become. The doer of good becomes good, the doer of evil becomes evil. One becomes virtuous by virtuous action. Others, however, say that a person consists of desires. As is his desire, so is his will; as is his will, so is the deed he does, whatever deed he does, that he attains." *Brihadaranyakopanishad*, IV. 4. 5

[2] From a report in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*

5. LETTER TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY[1]

February 22, 1947

I have seen in the newspapers a statement attributed to you which reads like a jibe at me.[2] I would not expect that from you. Therefore I give you the credit of believing that I have the inner voice to which I listen. My belief is that all mankind has it. But the outside din and noise have practically deadened it for the vast majority of people. When my voice speaks I shall find myself in Bihar without any further prompting.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 249

6. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

Not revised

KAZIRKHIL, RAMGANJ P. S.,
NOAKHALI DISTRICT,
February 22, 1947

CHI. AMRIT,

Just as I am dictating to friend Rangaswamy[3] I get your letter and I have interrupted the dictation in order to see your letter. I have now read it and hasten to dictate my answer.

I have received all the letters referred to by you and I have sent replies also. I can't recollect just now but I will see if I can give you the dates. I do hope that by the time this reaches you, you will have recovered your voice fully.

Of course there is every chance of your getting back your Hindi and Roman-Urdu dictionary. I don't think I carry it with me. I will enquire and send it to you, care of Sardar[4] as soon as I trace it.

There is no cold here but there is still a freshness in the air. Real hot weather has not set in. Nights are quite cool and

[1] Chief Minister of Bengal

[2] The addressee had made a frivolous reference to Gandhiji's "inner voice".

[3] Correspondent of *The Hindu*

[4] Vallabhbhai Patel, Member, Home and Information and Broadcasting in the Interim Government

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I use all my blankets. But there is no need to worry about me. I am keeping good health and have been able hitherto to go through my programme with clockwork regularity.

The second stage of the pilgrimage ends in Haimchar on Monday, the 24th instant.[1] It is Thakkar Bapa's[2] headquarters. I want to watch myself for a few days in Haimchar before resuming the third stage. It may also be that I might have to hurry to Bihar[3]. Sardar Niranjan Singh Gill[4], who was in Bihar for three days, gave me the impressions of his tour and had strongly recommended that I should go to Bihar if only for a few days. I have put myself in communication with the Prime Minister of Bihar[5] and await his reply.

I begin the pilgrimage every day at 7.30 or 7.35 and the stages are so divided as not to require me to walk more than one hour and fifteen minutes at the most. The least I have been called upon to walk is thirty minutes. Once and only once has it been one hour and thirty minutes.

I see that this dictionary business[6] causes a lot of worry and takes away much of your time. Would you like to be relieved of that work? If you would, I would then like to keep your dictionary for the time being.

I am glad that the licensing clause in regard to khadi has been removed. How I would love to think that you have carried conviction to the Prime Minister[7] of the Punjab about *vanaspati*[8]; Pyarelal is in his village,[9] now about twenty miles from here, and doing excellent work. Sushila has gone to Sevagram in order to put matters straight about the maternity home and

[1] The first stage of Gandhiji's walking tour had begun at Shrirampur on January 2 and the second stage commenced from Srinagar on February 5.

[2] A. V. Thakkar (1869-1951); President, Gujarat Antyaja Seva Mandir; Secretary, Harijan Sevak Sangh; General Secretary, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust; established Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh

[3] Where communal riots had broken out on October 25, 1946, which was celebrated as Noakhali Day

[4] Of the Indian National Army, under whom a group of I. N. A. men were working in Noakhali

[5] Shrikrishna Sinha

[6] The reference is to the English-into-Hindustani dictionary published fortnightly in *Harijan*, from September 1, 1946. It was originally intended to be the joint effort of a few co-workers but had subsequently to be taken up by the addressee herself at Gandhiji's instance; *vide* Vol. LXXXVI, p. 28.

[7] Khizar Hyat Khan Tiwana

[8] Hydrogenated vegetable oil

[9] The workers accompanying Gandhiji had spread themselves out in the villages of Noakhali. *Vide* Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 138-9.

hospital. It is growing by leaps and bounds and has become very popular. She may return to her village work here as soon as she has finished her work in Sevagram. Renuka[1] is here with me at the village. Her village is less than two miles from here. In appearance she looks just as she was. She has had to take great care of herself. But she is all right otherwise. Only this morning she enquired about you. I told her that I heard from you fairly regularly but that you were trying to save my time as much as possible. She asked me whether you were ever coming to this part of India. I told her not whilst I was moving from day to day but that if I stayed for any length of time in one place and if you are well and available from your work in the Assembly or otherwise, I would like you to come for a few days, and she was happy. She is doing her work steadily with her little band of workers.

Manu I have reserved to the last. Everybody here knows everything about her. Therefore I would love to say a word or two for your information. But I must forbear for it is now towards one o'clock and I must have a little bit of rest and grease on the soles of my feet.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Keep both the shawls with you. Give them to me when we meet. Have you given your consent to the Central Advisory Board's recommendation[2] regarding military training?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the original : C. W. 4190. Courtesy : Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7826

7. *A LETTER*

February 22, 1947

I say you cannot tread this path (the path of *brahmacharya*) if you fight shy of the thorns, stones and pitfalls in the way. Maybe we shall stumble, our feet will bleed, we may even perish. But we dare not turn back.

* * *

[1] Renuka Ray
[2] *Vide* footnote 1, p. 2.

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If I am successful, the world will be enriched by my venture. If on the other hand I am found to be a fraud or a misled fool, the world will reject me and I shall be debunked. In either case the world will be the gainer. This is as clear to me as two and two make four.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 223

8. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

CHAR KRISHNAPUR,
February 22, 1947

At the outset Gandhiji said that he had received from a Muslim friend in Baluchistan a printed sheet containing what he thought were the sayings of the Prophet and the teachers. The whole selection was good but he was attracted by the following from Prophet Mohamed's sayings:

> When God made the earth it shook to and fro till He put mountains on it to keep it firm. Then the Angels asked, O God, is there anything in Thy creation stronger than these mountains? And God replied, iron is stronger than these mountains for it breaks them.
>
> And is there anything in Thy creation stronger than iron?
>
> Yes, fire is stronger than iron, for it melts it.
>
> Is there anything stronger than fire?
>
> Yes, water, for it quenches fire.
>
> Is there anything stronger than water?
>
> Yes, wind, for it puts water in motion.
>
> O our Sustainer, is there anything stronger than wind?
>
> Yes, a good man giving alms. If he gives it with his right hand and conceals it from his left, he overcomes all things. Every good act is charity. Your smiling in your brother's face, your putting a wanderer on the right road, your giving water to the thirsty, is charity. A man's true wealth hereafter is the good he has done to his fellowmen. When he dies people will ask, what property he had left behind him? But the Angels will ask, what good deeds has he sent before him?

Gandhiji then dealt with the following questions.

Q. Why should there be insistence on temple-entry? Of course, we understand that in case of objection, there is scope in it for satyagraha. No-caste dinners have a limited value; for those who join do not shed untouchability in their homes or during social ceremonies. They look upon these dinners, organized by Congressmen or other progressives, as special occasions when caste rules are held in abeyance; something comparable to what one

[1] Extracted from "Gandhiji's Walking Tour Diary"

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does when one goes to Jagannath Puri and partakes of cooked rice offered to Jagannath without reference to one's caste. Anti-untouchability has not yet gone deep enough to affect the normal social life of individuals. What can be done to break down barriers in private homes? Even with regard to temple-entry there is one question. Do you think that priests in public service in free India will be drafted from among competent men and women without any reference to their former castes?

A. Gandhiji said that it was an apt question in this part of Bengal where there were the largest number of *Namasudras*. He welcomed the question doubly because he had occupied the lowest rung of the Hindu ladder and because he did not believe in the ladder of castes. He invited all to occupy that lowest rung. Then there would be no occasions for such questions as were addressed to him. Meanwhile, he was bound to deal with them. He entirely endorsed the proposition that untouchability would be doomed and totally abolished when there was no prohibition applied against anyone by reason of his caste. The only universal prohibition would be against insanitation, degradation, etc. But he clung to the belief that temple-entry took the first place in the programme of removal of untouchability and he made bold to say that social public dinners would precede as they were preceding the final conquest over the demon of untouchability. He prophesied that Hinduism would be destroyed if untouchability was not destroyed, even as the British race would lose its name if British rule was not destroyed *in toto*, as it was certainly being dissolved before their very eyes.

Q. You wrote about economic equality in 1941. Do you hold that all persons who perform useful and necessary service in society, whether farmer or Bhangi, engineer or accountant, doctor or teacher, have a moral right only to equal wages with the rest? Of course, it is understood, educational or other expenses shall be a charge of the State. Our question is, should not all persons get the same wages for their personal needs? Do you not think that if we work for this equality, it will cut sooner under the root of untouchability than any other process?

A. As to this Gandhiji had no doubt that if India was to live an exemplary life of independence which would be the envy of the world, all the Bhangis, doctors, lawyers, teachers, merchants and others would get the same wages for an honest day's work. Indian society may never reach the goal but it was the duty of every Indian to set his sail towards that goal and no other if India was to be a happy land.

Harijan, 16-3-1947

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9. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

CHARSOLADI,
February 23, 1947

Q. *Namasudra* girls are usually married off at the age of 12 or 13; formerly the usual age was 8 or 9. The bridegroom has to pay a dowry of Rs. 150 for the bride. The average difference between the two is about 12 to 15 years. As a result of this the number of widows in the *Namasudra* society is rather large. Among one section of the caste widow-marriage was prevalent. But in imitation of another section which was looked upon as superior, the former are giving up that practice. What is your advice regarding child-marriage and widow-remarriage?

A. Dealing with the question Gandhiji said that his opinion was definite. In the first instance there should be no possibility of child-widows. He was averse to child-marriages. It was an evil custom which unfortunately the *Namasudras* had perhaps taken from the so-called higher castes.

Gandhiji was also against the system of dowry. It was nothing but the sale of girls. That there should be castes even amongst *Namasudras* was deplorable and he would strongly advise them to abolish all caste distinctions amongst themselves. And in this they should bear in mind the opinion the speaker had often expressed that all caste distinctions should be abolished, and there should be only one caste, namely, Bhangis, and all Hindus should take pride in being called Bhangis and nothing else. This applied to the *Namasudras* as well.

When child-marriages were abolished, naturally there would be few, if any, young widows. As a general rule he was for one man one wife for life, and one woman one husband for life. Custom had familiarized women in the so-called higher castes with enforced widowhood. Contrary was the rule with men. He called it a disgrace, but whilst society was in that pitiable condition, he advocated widow-remarriage for all young widows. He believed in equality of the sexes and, therefore, he could only think of the same rights for women as men.

Q. You say that you are in favour of inter-religious marriages[2] but at the same time you say that each party should retain his or her own religion and, therefore, you said, you tolerated even civil marriages. Are there any

[1] Extracted from "Gandhiji's Walking Tour Diary". It being Gandhiji's silence day the questions and answers were read out.

[2] *Vide* p. 5.

instances of parties belonging to different religions keeping up their own religions to the end of their lives; and is not the institution of civil marriage a negation of religion and does it not tend towards laxity of religion?

A. Gandhiji said that the questions were appropriate. He had no instances in mind where the parties had clung to their respective faiths unto death because these friends whom he knew had not yet died. He had, however, under his observation men and women professing different religions and each clinging to his or her own faith without abatement. But he would go so far as to say that they need not wait for the discovery of past instances. They should create new ones so that timid ones may shed their timidity.

As to civil marriages he did not believe in them but he welcomed the institution of civil marriage as a much-needed reform for the sake of reform.

Harijan, 16-3-1947

10. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

KAZIRKHIL, RAMGANJ P. S.,
NOAKHALI DT.,
February 24, 1947

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,[1]

Today being silence day I am writing this. But it will be typed for your easy reading.

I have read Attlee's speech[2]. Lest I might embarrass you by an untoward word or phrase I am not saying anything just now.

Evidently I had anticipated practically the whole of it in my speeches here, i. e., if I am interpreting the speech correctly. My interpretation is this:

Independence will be recognized of those parts which desired it and will do without British protection.

The British will remain where they are wanted.

This may lead to Pakistan for those provinces or portions which may want it. No one will be forced one way or the other. The Congress provinces if they are *wise* will get what they want.

Much will depend upon what the Constituent Assembly will do and what you as the Interim Government are able to do.[3]

[1] The superscription is in Hindi.

[2] In the House of Commons on February 20; for excerpts from it, *vide* Appendix I.

[3] The addressee was Vice-President, Member-in-Charge, External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, in the Interim Government.

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If the British Government are and are able to remain sincere the declaration is good. Otherwise it is dangerous.

Now about Sardar Niranjan Singh Gill. He has been to Bihar and has produced a report which somewhat reflects upon the Sinha Ministry.[1] You should see him and his report. It has gone to Suhrawardy and Sinha under my advice. He and Sardar Jiwan Singh have not hit it off. The whole thing is bad. I. N. A. seems to have split up. Probably you know all this.

In view of the above report I might have to go to Bihar. God knows. You may show this to friends.

Hope you are well.

Blessings from
BAPU[2]

[PS.]

I take it that you have a cable from Durban about orders against Drs. Dadoo and Naicker.[3] I trust you have taken prompt action. I have cabled F. M. Smuts.

BAPU

From the original : Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (M. O. Mathai). Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

11. LETTER TO J. B. KRIPALANI[4]

February 24, 1947

This is a very personal letter but not private.

Manu Gandhi my grand-daughter, as we consider blood-relations, shares the bed with me, strictly as my very blood . . .[5] as part of what might be my last *yajna*. This has cost me dearest associates. . . . You as one of the dearest and earliest comrades . . . should reconsider your position in the light of what they have to say. . . . I have given the deepest thought to the matter. The whole world may forsake me but I dare not leave what I hold is the truth for me. It may be a delusion

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXXVI, p. 446.

[2] The subscription is in Hindi.

[3] It had been reported that the Government of South Africa had refused passports to Yusuf Dadoo and G. M. Naicker and impounded their certificates of identity.

[4] (1888-1982); Principal, Gujarat Vidyapith, 1920-27; General Secretary, Indian National Congress, 1934-45; elected its President in 1946 but resigned in 1947; Member, Constituent Assembly; resigned from Congress in 1951

[5] Omissions are as in the source.

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and a snare. If so, I must realize it myself. I have risked perdition before now. Let this be the reality if it has to be.

I need not argue the point. I have simply conveyed the intensity of my thoughts.

I suggest your discussing it with X and Y. And then come to a conclusion and let me know. . . . Do not consider my feelings in the matter. I have none. All I want is to *do* the truth at all cost, as I see it.[1]

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 220-1

12. DISCUSSION WITH A. V. THAKKAR

HAIMCHAR,
February 24, 1947[2]

BAPA : Why this experiment here?

GANDHIJI: You are mistaken, Bapa; it is not an experiment but an integral part of my *yajna*. One may forgo an experiment, one cannot forgo one's duty. Now if I regard a thing as a part of my *yajna*—a sacred duty—I may not give it up even if public opinion is wholly against me. I am engaged in achieving self-purification. The five cardinal observances are the five props of my spiritual striving. *Brahmacharya* is one of them. But all the five constitute an indivisible whole. They are inter-related and inter-dependent. If one of them is broken, all are broken. That being so, if in practice I resile in regard to *brahmacharya* to please Mrs. Grundy, I jettison not only *brahmacharya* but truth, ahimsa and all the rest. I do not allow myself any divergence between theory and practice in respect of the rest. If then I temporize in the matter of *brahmacharya*, would it not blunt the edge of my *brahmacharya* and vitiate my practice of truth? Ever since my coming to Noakhali, I have been asking myself the question, 'What is it that is choking the action of my ahimsa? Why does not the spell work? May it not be because I have temporized in the matter of *brahmacharya*?'

B. Your ahimsa has not failed. Do not miss the wood for the trees. . . .[3] Just think what would have been the fate of Noakhali if you had not come. The world does not think of *brahmacharya* as you do.

[1] For excerpts from the addressee's reply, *vide* Appendix II.

[2] From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 27-2-1947. The source, however, has "February 25".

[3] Omission as in the source

G. If I accept your contention, then it would amount to this that I should give up what I hold to be right for me, for fear of displeasing the world. I shudder to think where I should have been if I had proceeded like that in my life. I should have found myself at the bottom of the pit. You can have no idea, Bapa, but I can well picture it to myself. I have called my present venture a *yajna*—a sacrifice, a penance. It means utmost self-purification. How can there be that self-purification when in my mind I entertain a thing which I dare not put openly into practice? Does one need anyone's approval or permission to do what one holds with all one's being to be one's duty? Under the circumstances, there are only two courses open to friends. Either they should have faith in me, in the purity of my motives and my *bona fides*, even though they are unable to follow or agree with my reasoning, or they should part company with me. There is no middle course. I dare not shrink from putting into action the logical implications of my conviction when I am launched on a sacrifice which consists of the full practice of truth. Nor must I hide or keep my convictions to myself. That would be disloyalty to friends. Let X, Y and Z, therefore, go the way they choose, but how can I run away from the test? My mind is made up. On the lonely way to God on which I have set out, I need no earthly companions. Let those who will, therefore, denounce me, if I am the imposter they imagine me to be, though they may not say so in so many words. It might disillusion millions who persist in regarding me as a Mahatma. I must confess, the prospect of being so debunked greatly pleases me. Thousands of Hindu and Muslim women come to me. They are to me like my own mother, sisters and daughters. But if an occasion should arise requiring me to share the bed with any of them I must not hesitate, if I am the *brahmachari* that I claim to be. If I shrink from the test, I write myself down as a coward and a fraud.

B. What if your example is copied?

G. If there is blind imitation or unscrupulous exploitation of my example, society will not and should not tolerate it. But if there is sincere, *bona-fide* honest endeavour, society should welcome it and it will be the better for it. As soon as my research is complete, I shall myself proclaim the result to the whole world.

B. I for one cannot imagine anything base in you. After all, Manu is in place of a grand-daughter to you — flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone. I confess, I had my mental reservations in the beginning. I had come

in all humility to press upon you my doubts. I did not understand. Only after our talk today have I been able to have a deeper understanding of the meaning of what you are trying to do.

G. Does that make any real difference? It does not and it should not. You seem to make a distinction between Manu and others like her. My mind makes no such distinction. To me they are all alike—daughters.[1]

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 224-6

13. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[2]

HAIMCHAR,
February 24, 1947

This being the last stage of the second part of his pilgrimage, Gandhiji thanked God for the happy ending of the second part. He referred to the intense wish that Bapa, whom he described as the chief priest and servant of the Harijans, had expressed that he should include Haimchar in his programme. He referred also to the origin of the distribution of workers in the villages that had suffered and how Bapa had instinctively selected the Haimchar area as the field of his service.

He then referred to the communications, telegraphic and otherwise, he had received for his opinion on Mr. Attlee's statement[3]. He said there were the Congress and the League, not to mention other associations, which would express authoritative opinions. He would however permit himself to say that the statement had put the burden on the various parties of doing what they thought best. It had declared that British rule would end before or during the month of June, 1948. It was up to the parties to make or mar the situation. Nothing on earth could overturn their united wish. And so far as he was concerned, he was emphatically of the opinion that if the Hindus and Muslims closed their ranks and came together without external pressure, they would not only better their political condition but they would affect the whole of India and probably the world.

It was an easy descent to what was uppermost in the mind of his audience composed mostly of *Namasudras*. He warned them against considering

[1] According to the source the conversation had an unexpected sequel. Manu told Gandhiji that she saw no harm in conceding to Thakkar Bapa's request to suspend the practice for the time being, provided Gandhiji agreed. Gandhiji readily agreed. *Vide* also pp. 63-4.

[2] Extracted from "Gandhiji's Walking Tour Diary"

[3] *Vide* Appendix I.

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themselves as fallen or untouchables. Those so-called higher castes were the guilty ones; they were responsible for what they had become. If they realized the fact, they would never make the mistake of imitating the evil customs and habits of the higher classes.

He was sorry to hear that there were child-marriages amongst them and that child-widows were compelled in imitation of the higher castes to abstain from remarrying. The result, he had learned, was that diseases which resulted from promiscuity were prevalent among them. Their betterment would not come from the legislatures or from any other outside agency. It depended on their own efforts. They should remember what the late Malaviyaji[1] used to say, that children of God should confine themselves to earning an honest cowrie and eat what it could procure. Then there would be happiness for them and untouchability would be a thing of the past. The higher castes so called would be ashamed of their sin against them.

Bapu pointed out the destruction that had been wrought. He was sorry for it but he would not shed a tear for it nor harbour ill will against the destroyers. Let them not bewail their lot. They were used to hard labour or should be. They might plead with the Government to do justice and that in time. But they would not give in if that assistance did not come. They must trust their hands and feet to set them up again in life. God always helped those who helped themselves. Their reliance must be on the living God and on the ever-toiling masses.

Harijan, 16-3-1947

14. FROM THE DIARY

February 24, 1947

After the morning prayer, tried to study the outline of Bengali numeral one and to improve the outline of the second numeral. Next struggled unsuccessfully for about ten minutes to understand the distinction between *nio* and *nao* (future imperative and present indicative respectively of the Bengali verb 'take'). In the meantime Manu brought orange juice. Put the same question to her. She too failed to give a satisfactory explanation. That accounted for another ten minutes. Sent for Nirmalbabu. Put the poser to him in turn. He fared a little better but in the end he, too, gave up perplexed. In between he handed Sardar Gill's file. That started a conversation about Gill. This

[1] Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946); President, Indian National Congress, 1909 and 1918; Member, Legislative Assembly; founder of the Benares Hindu University and its Vice-Chancellor from 1919 to 1939

went on till 6.35. Wrote a letter to A. Then lay down to rest for about ten minutes; got up at 7.25, inspected the trench latrine and set out on the day's march.

Mahatma Gandhi—Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 200-1

15. NOTE TO S. HAQ[1]

[After *February 24, 1947*][2]

I have your note. I am a simple man, no reader of visions. "Fear God and no other and love your neighbour as thyself" is my motto.[3]

From a photostat : C. W. 10231. Courtesy : Basant Apte. Also G. N. 11398

16. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

February 25, 1947

DEAR DAUGHTER,

Your two letters are lying with me. Owing to heavy work I was not able to write to you. Even this I am writing very early in the morning.

I have read your Bengali letter. I had a talk with Satis Babu[4]. You do not need money. This is not Borkamta.[5] Who are the spinners? Are they Hindus or Muslims? You have made no mistake in breaking the fast.[6] God alone knows if you have not got a new birth. If you can come just for a day in a jeep, do come. I will explain to you what you have to do. Satis Babu can bring you. I will be in Haimchar for six days. Don't be in a hurry. Come if you can stand the strain. I will explain fully. But don't mind if you do not like to travel by jeep. In that

[1] &[2] The addressee in a letter in Bengali dated February 24, 1947, had written to Gandhiji about a dream in which he had seen Gandhiji preaching Islam.

[3] This is followed by the instruction "Render this into Bengali and I shall sign it."

[4] Satis Chandra Das Gupta

[5] The addressee had worked in the Kasturba Seva Mandir, Borkamta from 1944 to 1946.

[6] Amtussalaam who had been working in Noakhali from October 1946, had undertaken a fast for the return of the sacrificial swords to Hindus. She broke her fast on January 20, the twenty-fifth day of the fast, on Gandhiji's advice. *Vide* Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 375-6.

case I will write and tell you what I wish to say. Jeep is also a temptation. I do not want to lure you into it.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

The *dhoti* that you have sent is very good. I wore it immediately. Today also I am wearing it. My blessings to the weavers.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 579

17. QUESTION BOX

[*February 25, 1947*][1]

Q. What is the difference between your non-co-operation and the non-fraternization of the Allies?

A. The answer is obvious. My non-co-operation was purely non-violent in conception as also in effect. This does not mean that its practice was always perfect. Theory and practice hardly ever coincide even as Euclid's line in practice never coincides with his theoretical definition.

The non-fraternization policy of the Allies led to disastrous results which he who runs may see, and the pity of it is that the disaster is not yet completed. No one knows where it will lead to.

Harijan, 16-3-1947, and *The Hindu*, 27-2-1947

18. TALK WITH DEB NATH DAS[2]

February 25, 1947

Netaji[3] will remain immortal for all time to come for his services to India.

The Hindu, 27-2-1947

[1] From *The Hindu*

[2] Secretary, Indian National Army Peace Committee. He met Gandhiji in the morning and apprised him of the work done by the Peace Committee camps in Tipperah and Noakhali.

[3] Subhas Chandra Bose (1897-1945); General Secretary of Indian National Congress, 1927, its President, 1938 and 1939; founded All-India Forward Bloc; organized the Indian Independence League and the Indian National Army

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19. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING[1]

HAIMCHAR,
February 25, 1947

Unity between Hindus and Muslims is the first thing to be achieved to facilitate the work of village reconstruction and no work will be done without this.

Gandhiji said that instead of making schemes of great projects they should start in a humble way the construction of good roads for peasants and destruction of water hyacinths in tanks. Cleanliness was the one thing necessary in villages in order to prevent diseases. If the officers engaged in village uplift task wanted to work in co-operation with the people they must let the latter know that they were their servants. Concluding, Gandhiji said that as he was a servant of the people he would be glad to render all possible help in this regard.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 28-2-1947

20. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[2]

HAIMCHAR,
February 25, 1947

Gandhiji drew the attention of the audience to the meeting[3] he was invited to attend by the Relief Commissioner, Nurannabi Chowdhury. He asked them to follow the advice he had given without waiting to know what others would do. He said that he wanted the Kingdom of God on earth. Surely we did not want to wait for anyone else to do so.

Then he dealt with the questions that were addressed to him.

Q. Do you not think that a strict enforcement of the purdah system would improve the moral condition of women?

A. He was warned by some Muslim critics against speaking on the purdah. He had therefore some hesitation in speaking about it. But he took heart when he turned round and saw that many Hindu women observed it and that numerous Malaya Muslim women among whom he had many friends did

[1] Held in the afternoon on the grounds of Haimchar Bazar, the meeting was arranged by the Rehabilitation Commissioner, Chittagong Division.

[2] Extracted from "Gandhiji's Walking Tour Diary"

[3] *Vide* the preceding item.

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not observe the purdah. He also knew many distinguished Muslim women of India who did not observe it. Lastly, the real purdah was of the heart. A woman who peeped through the purdah and contemplated a male on whom her gaze fell violated the spirit behind it. If a woman observed it in spirit, she was truly carrying out what the great Prophet had said.

Q. To those who had lost all their trade your advice is that they should voluntarily turn themselves into labourers. Who will then look after education, commerce and the like? If you thus dissolve the division of labour, will not the cause of civilization suffer?

A. The question betrayed ignorance of his meaning. If a man could not carry on his original mercantile business, it was not open to him but obligatory on him to take to physical labour, say, scavenging or breaking stones. He believed in the division of labour or work. But he did insist on equality of wages. The lawyer, the doctor, or the teacher was entitled to no more than the Bhangi. Then only would division of work uplift the nation or the earth. There was no other royal road to true civilization or happiness.

Spirit giveth life, the letter killeth. A Ganapati with an elephant's head was a monster but as a representation of *Om*[1] was an uplifting symbol. Ravana with ten heads was a fabled fool but if it meant a man who carried no head about him and was tossed to and fro by fleeting passions, he was a many-headed demon.

Q. How can the caste Hindus look after the interests of the untouchables? How can they realize the feelings of the classes who have suffered so long at their hands? Is it not then better to entrust the interests of the untouchables to men of their own caste?

A. He was of the opinion that the caste Hindus owed a sacred duty to the so-called untouchables. He must become a Bhangi in name and action. When that happened the untouchables would rise at a bound and Hinduism would leave a rich legacy to the world. If that happened, the system of cleaning closets would undergo a transformation. In England the real Bhangis were famous engineers and sanitarians. That could not happen in India so long as society was sluggish and slothful.

Harijan, 23-3-1947

[1] The sacred syllable or *Pranava*

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21. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

February [*26*][1], *1947*

The last week of March next is at present for me a far cry. If God wills He will find a way for me to attend the Conference.[2]

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 89

22. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

HAIMCHAR,
February 26, 1947

Referring to the news about the Union Government's refusal of passports and impounding the certificates of identity for Drs. Dadoo and Naicker, Gandhiji said:

The Union Government will not be able to sustain their anti-Asiatic policy by such an action.

He added that the action was wholly unwarranted and arbitrary if the facts stated in the cablegram he had received in this connection were correct.[3]

Gandhiji hoped that either there were some justifying peremptory reasons for the refusal and impounding or that second thoughts would convince the Government that it was a hasty step and therefore it would be cancelled.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 28-2-1947

23. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[4]

HAIMCHAR,
February 26, 1947

Q. When things are all going wrong at the Centre, what can common people do to restore unity?

[1] The source has "6", obviously a slip, since this letter was in reply to the addressee's letter dated February 24, soliciting Gandhiji's presence at the Inter-Asian Relations Conference which was to be held in New Delhi from March 23.

[2] Gandhiji ultimately did attend the Conference on April 1 and 2.

[3] *Vide* footnote 3, p. 13.

[4] Extracted from "Gandhiji's Walking Tour Diary"

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A. There was a law of science which enunciated that two forces were simultaneously at work: the centripetal and the centrifugal. He wanted to apply the law to life also. The centre, therefore, of the Government attracted us all to it and in good government we would respond to that centripetal force. Similar was the centrifugal force in obedience to which we, the villagers of Haimchar, attracted the centre. Thus, where these forces worked well there would be ordered and orderly government at the centre and the circumference. When, however, the centre was going wrong, it should be pointless to dominate the seven hundred thousand villages. On the other hand, the villagers would live in perfect amity if they were wise in leaving alone the centre to look after its so-called high politics?

Q. A man who sacrifices self-interest for the sake of his community is at least unselfish to that extent. How can the heart of such a man be affected so that he will sacrifice communal interests for the interest of the nation?

A. A man whose spirit of sacrifice did not go beyond his own community became selfish himself and also made his community selfish. In his opinion the logical conclusion of self-sacrifice was that the individual sacrificed himself for the community, the community sacrificed itself for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation and the nation for the world. A drop torn from the ocean perished without doing any good. If it remained a part of the ocean, it shared the glory of carrying on its bosom a fleet of mighty ships.

Q. In free India whose interest shall be supreme? If a neighbouring State is in want, what should free India do?

A. Gandhiji said that the first part of the question had been answered in the above. A truly independent free India was bound to run to the help of its neighbours in distress. He instanced Afghanistan, Ceylon and Burma and said that the rule also applied to the neighbours of these three and thus, by implication, they became India's neighbours too. And thus, he said, if individual sacrifice was a living sacrifice, it embraced the whole of humanity.[1]

Gandhiji gave to his ideal society the name *Ramarajya.*

Let no one commit the mistake of thinking that *Ramarajya* means a rule of the Hindus. My Rama is another name for *Khuda* or God. I want *Khudai raj*, which is the same thing as the Kingdom of God on earth.

The rule of the first four Caliphs was somewhat comparable to it. The establishment of such a *rajya* would not only mean welfare of the whole of the Indian people but of the whole world.

Harijan, 23-3-1947, and *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 189-90

[1] What follows is reproduced from *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase.*

24. TELEGRAM TO SUDHIR GHOSH

February 27, 1947

SUDHIR GHOSH
1 AURANGZEB ROAD
NEW DELHI

GOD BE WITH YOU.[1]

BAPU

Sudhir Ghosh Papers. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Also *Gandhi's Emissary*, p. 200

25. TALK WITH FAZLUL HUQ

February 27, 1947

GANDHIJI : Oh, don't stand up. You were the Chief Minister when I met you last !

HUQ: I shall be frank with you. It is no use saying one thing and having something else up your sleeve.

Gandhiji nodded complete agreement.

The Maulvi Saheb began: Gandhiji had not gone to Bihar; his place was in Bihar rather than in Noakhali; Noakhali Muslims, far from being aggressors, were the victims of police repression. Hindu police officers were harassing innocent Muslims and implicating them in false cases—they should be withdrawn; Muslims were not criminals, abductors of women, etc.; Islam never taught that.

Gandhiji again agreed so far as the teachings of Islam in the abstract were concerned.

HUQ: Very few understand Islam. They call it the religion of the sword. The minorities in the Muslim State were the special responsibility of the majority. The non-Muslims were *zimmis*[2].

The Maulvi Saheb's last point was that far from the Hindus having cause to be afraid of the Muslim majority in Noakhali, it was the latter, in fact, who were afraid of Hindu domination. The Hindus should shed

[1] The addressee had been appointed Public Relations Officer at the Indian High Commission in London.

[2] Who were required to pay a tax called *Jazia* for protection by the State

their fear and accept Pakistan. His Majesty's Government's statement[1] of 20th February, 1947, would only bring civil war to India.

G. (In a tone of light banter) : So, if I come to Barisal, there is only the *khal*[2] for me, is it not?

HUQ: No, no, Mahatmaji, you are always welcome. That was only a joke. I never can let go a joke—even at the expense of my father. That is my nature!

Gandhiji said that he had always asked Jinnah to convince him of the meaning and implications of Pakistan. His formula[3] was before the Muslim League leader and the country and so far as he was concerned the offer still stood. As regards withdrawal of criminal cases, it rested with the Bengal Government. Regarding Bihar, he continued:

I may shortly go there. But it will not be to oblige you.

He was awaiting Dr. Mahmud's[4] reply, he told the Maulvi Saheb, but if the latter could assure him that the majority community in Noakhali would stand guarantee for the safety and security of the minority community, he would feel free to leave Bengal immediately. Could he give that assurance?

To this the Maulvi Saheb gave no straight reply. Instead, he began to talk about a coalition Government in Bengal as the only remedy for Bengal's ills!

At this point one of Fazlul Huq's companions broke in: "I was a worker in the Khilafat movement[5]; you were the first leader who taught me politics."

G. If you had taken your politics off me, you would have given a much better account of yourself.

G. (TO HUQ) : What is this quarrel between you and Suhrawardy? I do not like it.

But the Maulvi Saheb again avoided the issue and talked instead of his profession and his chronic trouble—lack of finance! Gandhiji thereupon twitted him for his spendthrift nature and sent him away laughing.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 250-2

[1] *Vide* Appendix I.

[2] A canal. Fazlul Huq was reported to have said that as a non-Muslim, Gandhiji should not preach the teachings of Islam, for, instead of Hindu-Muslim unity, he was creating bitterness between the two communities. Had he been to Barisal, he would have driven him into the canal. *Vide* Vol. LXXXVI, p. 469.

[3] Presumably the Rajaji Formula. *Vide* Vol. LXXVI, Appendix VIII.

[4] Syed Mahmud, Minister for Development and Transport in Bihar

[5] Which was launched in 1919 "against the threatened dismemberment of Turkey and removal of the holy places of Islam from the Caliph's control"

26. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

HAIMCHAR,
February 27, 1947

Q. Can a man serve his immediate neighbours and yet serve the whole of humanity? What is the true meaning of swadeshi?

A. Gandhiji said that the question had been answered by him on the previous evening.[2] He believed implicitly in the truth that a man could serve his neighbours and humanity at the same time, the condition being that the service of the neighbours was in no way selfish or exclusive, i.e., did not in any way involve the exploitation of any other human being. The neighbours would then understand the spirit in which such service was given. They would also know that they would be expected to give their services to their neighbours. Thus considered, it would spread like the proverbial snowball gathering strength in geometrical progression, encircling the whole earth.

It followed that swadeshi was that spirit which dictated man to serve his next-door neighbour to the exclusion of any other. The condition that he had already mentioned was that the neighbour thus served had in his turn to serve his own neighbour. In this sense swadeshi was never exclusive. It recognized the scientific limitation of human capacity for service.

Q. The Government has been introducing schemes of industrializing the country for the maximum utilization of her raw materials, not of her abundant and unused man-power which is left to rot in idleness. Can such schemes be considered swadeshi?

A. Gandhiji remarked that the question had been well put. He did not exactly know what the Government plan was. But he heartily endorsed the proposition that any plan which exploited the raw materials of a country and neglected the potentially more powerful man-power was lopsided and could never tend to establish human equality.

America was the most industrialized country in the world and yet it had not banished poverty and degradation. That was because it neglected the universal man-power and concentrated power in the hands of the few

[1] According to "Gandhiji's Walking Tour Diary" from which this has been extracted, Gandhiji offered prayers in a temple which was destroyed during the riots and was rebuilt by the Government. The idol in the temple, however, escaped destruction because the resourceful priest had put it away in a safe place. Gandhiji hoped that the old and rusty tins used in rebuilding the temple would be painted so as to prevent further deterioration.

[2] *Vide* p. 23.

who amassed fortunes at the expense of the many. The result was that its industrialization had become a menace to its own poor and to the rest of the world.

If India was to escape such disaster, it had to imitate what was best in America and the other Western countries and leave aside its attractive-looking but destructive economic policies. Therefore, real planning consisted in the best utilization of the whole man-power of India and the distribution of the raw products of India in her numerous villages instead of sending them outside and rebuying finished articles at fabulous prices.

After the questions had been answered, Gandhiji touched upon the fact that he had a visit from some members of the Scheduled Classes. He had told them that his mission was to teach people how to be really brave. They need not be afraid for their lives because the so-called high-caste men had not yet returned to their places. If they shed their fear they would have no enemies. The Muslims would be their friends when they recognized bravery in them. Cowards were ever exposed to the enmity of all, whether Muslims or others. The way to the attainment of that courage lay not in the possession of the sword and the efficiency to kill one's opponent, but in the refusal to recognize in any other human being an enemy, along with the determination to lay down one's life and yet not surrender at the point of the sword.

Gandhiji then referred in detail to some of the abuses current in local society, like child-marriage, absence of widow-remarriage, etc., which resulted in the lowering of the moral stature of the people. If they could shed these weaknesses, they would gain the power to die for their faith and honour.

Harijan, 23-3-1947

27. TELEGRAM TO SHRIKRISHNA SINHA

[*February 28, 1947*][1]

DR. SYED MAHMUD AND OTHERS WOULD LIKE ME TO VISIT BIHAR. . . .[2] DO YOU FEEL LIKEWISE? PLEASE TELL ME WHAT YOU FEEL.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 253

[1] This was sent the day after Fazlul Huq's departure, i. e., February 27. *Vide* p. 29.

[2] Omission as in the source

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28. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

HAIMCHAR,
February 28, 1947

I have received a cablegram from the ex-Natal Indian Congress which says that the Congress, the Transvaal Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Organization and the African National Congress have decided on their part to refrain from taking part in or in any manner assisting in the celebrations in honour of the Royal visit to the Union of South Africa. They feel that in view of the disabilities imposed upon the Asiatics and Africans and other coloured people it would be improper on their part to share in the rejoicings of the white people of South Africa. The cablegram asked me to endorse the abstention which they describe by the name of " boycott". I take this opportunity of publicly endorsing the abstention as a natural and dignified step by any self-respecting body of people.

The Hindu, 1-3-1947

29. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

HAIMCHAR,
February 28, 1947

Gandhiji took up the thread of his remarks of the previous evening about the *Namasudras*. He had no time to refer to the question of education. The blame for the neglect of education among them must lie solely upon the so-called high-caste Hindus. It was preposterous to expect that those who were deliberately suppressed by Hindu society would themselves take to education. What he, however, deplored was that there were men among them who taught them not to accept good things from the so-called high-caste Hindus. He was of the opinion that it was mischievous propaganda. Therefore, he expected the *Namasudras* to give definite assurance about land [for school] and the attendance of boys and girls. In that case he had no doubt that there were enough penitent Hindus who would gladly take up the duty of educating these neglected children. He invited the *Namasudras* to send the required assurance to Thakkar Bapa who might be trusted by them to do

[1] Extracted from "Gandhiji's Walking Tour Diary"

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the rest and he hoped that there were enough local Hindus who would offer their money and ability for the performance of the honourable duty of educating these children.

He then referred to the prospect of his having to go to Bihar and to the atrocities that had been committed by the Hindus of Bihar before which the happenings in Noakhali or Tipperah paled into insignificance. He had enough pressure put upon him by the Muslims in Bengal to go to Bihar. He had refused to listen to the advice because he had the hope that he could work with equal effect among the Bihar Hindus without having to go there. But he had a visit from the secretary of Dr. Syed Mahmud. He had brought a long letter from Dr. Mahmud. They should know that Dr. Mahmud was a valued friend of his. He was himself Development Member of the Bihar Ministry. In answer to his question, Dr. Mahmud had written to him asking him to visit Bihar as soon as he could. He had said that all was not as rosy as it should be and that his presence in Bihar would ease the situation and reassure the Muslims that he was equally concerned about the welfare of the Muslims as of the Hindus. He could not resist Dr. Mahmud's letter. He had, therefore, sent an urgent wire[1] to Bihar and it was highly likely that he might have to hurry to Bihar. In that case, he would have to interrupt the tour in Noakhali and Tipperah. But the message he would leave for the Hindus and Mussalmans here, during the short period he expected to be absent, was that they should live with one another as brothers. This they could only do if they shed internal weaknesses and were prepared to lay down their lives without retaliation for the defence of what they considered sacred.[2]

Gandhiji said that he was in constant communication with the authorities concerned on the Bihar situation and had been speaking unequivocally against the madness of Bihar Hindus. He was sure that he was there where he could serve both the communities. He had come to Noakhali to serve both the communities and not to create bitterness between them.

He had come here to create fearlessness among the affected people. He asked them not to despair and told them that his associates would be working here as usual. People here must not quarrel among themselves. They must not antagonize Muslims but they must not also yield to threats. They should rather lay down their lives. Gandhiji emphatically said that he had decided to go to Bihar, not for the relief of Muslims, but to effect a change of mentality among the Hindus of Bihar. He hoped that Hindus and Muslims would live together in amity all over India.

Gandhiji then passed on to a question which had been referred to him that evening. It was with regard to the partition of Bengal into two provinces, one having a Hindu and the other a Muslim majority. Bengalis had

[1] *Vide* p. 27.

[2] The following two paragraphs are reproduced from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

once fought against and successfully annulled the partition of their province.[1] But according to some, he proceeded, the time had now come when such a division had become desirable in the interest of peace. Gandhiji expressed the opinion that personally he had always been anti-partition. But it was not uncommon even for brothers to fight and separate from one another. There were many things which India had to put up with in the past under compulsion, but he himself was built in a totally different way.

In a similar manner, if the Hindus, who formed the majority in the whole of India, desired to keep everyone united by means of compulsion, he would resist it in the same manner as before. He was as much against forced partition as against forced unity.

Gandhiji then proceeded to say that whatever might have been the history of British rule in the past, there was no shadow of doubt that the British were going to quit India in the near future. It was time, therefore, that the Hindus and the Muslims should determine to live in peace and amity. The alternative was civil war which would only serve to tear the country to pieces. One did not know what the future had in store for them. If the people really and sincerely, and with a pure heart, wished unitedly for a particular thing, speaking in human language, it could be said that God, being the servant of His servants, would Himself carry out that will.

Harijan, 23-3-1947, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 2-3-1947

30. A NOTE

February, 1947

Let Nirmal Babu examine my replies for the style as well as the manner. Are they satisfactory?

From a facsimile : *Mahatma*, Vol. VII, between pp. 384 and 385

31. NOTE TO DHIRUBHAI B. DESAI[2]

[*February 1947*][3]

Where is Madhuri[4]?

It should be done immediately.

I have never forgotten Bhulabhai's[5] ability. I know that he entered politics at my instance. The difference which arose

[1] The partition of Bengal in 1905 was annulled in 1911.

[2] Son of Bhulabhai Desai

[3] The note is written on the reverse side of a letter dated "February 1947".

[4] Addressee's wife

[5] (1877-1946); eminent lawyer; member, Liberal Party; joined Congress in 1930; Leader of Congress Party in Central Assembly

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between us was one of love. There are innumerable people who drink. There are many such in the Congress, too, and I could say nothing to them. But Bhulabhai's addiction pained me and I told him about it. Afterwards he even wept before me. I could not bear his being a slave to the drink habit. And it was with him that I first discussed the matter. Let me tell you that I had a great share in his being taken up on the Working Committee. I had to fight for his inclusion. I was behind his inclusion in the Constitution Committee also. Need I say more? I also knew about the proposal to appoint you ambassador. Calm down and acquit yourself well in your job with patience and self-control. Send me Madhuri's book.

[From Gujarati]

Bhulabhai Desai Papers. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

32. LETTER TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY

March 1, 1947

There was consternation among the Hindus yesterday when I announced my intention of immediately proceeding to Bihar. They said they were afraid of being molested as in October. I hope that the fear will prove groundless and that you will do all you can to allay the fear.

It is said that all aid in the shape of rations will be stopped from the 15th instant. If the information turns out to be true, there would be widespread, avoidable distress. The machinery provided for relief is very slow.

Sufficient material for building is not there. Weavers have got no yarn for weaving. Fishermen have got none for making nets. Carpenters have got no tools. Agriculturists have no bullocks. There are no seeds for sowing. Thakkar Bapa mentioned the difficulty of merchants in Haimchar for a loan in order to enable them to start business. . . .[1] I hope there will be no delay in granting the loan. I would strongly urge that interest should not be asked in such cases.

There is a strong belief that there is boycott by the Muslims of Hindus so far as labour for them is concerned. Of course I have said that no government can compel any community to labour for another. Critics have no difficulty in agreeing to my proposition against compulsion. They however suggest that the

[1] Omission as in the source

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boycott is approved, even encouraged, by your Government. I hope that my information is wholly wrong.

Mahatma Gandhi — The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 37-8

33. LETTER TO ALI HUSAIN[1]

March 1, 1947

I am surprised at your asking me to condemn the Bihar Ministry unheard. I am ashamed that at this time of day you should think of the application of Section 93. There are many honourable ways of exposing the corruption no matter where it exists. The application of Section 93 is not among them.

Mahatma Gandhi — The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 248-9

34. INTERVIEW TO WORLD YOUTH DELEGATION[2]

March 1, 1947

Gandhiji told the World Youth Delegation that youth in India was influenced by foreign ideologies too much. They had no living contact with the real life of India.

The Hindu, 3-3-1947

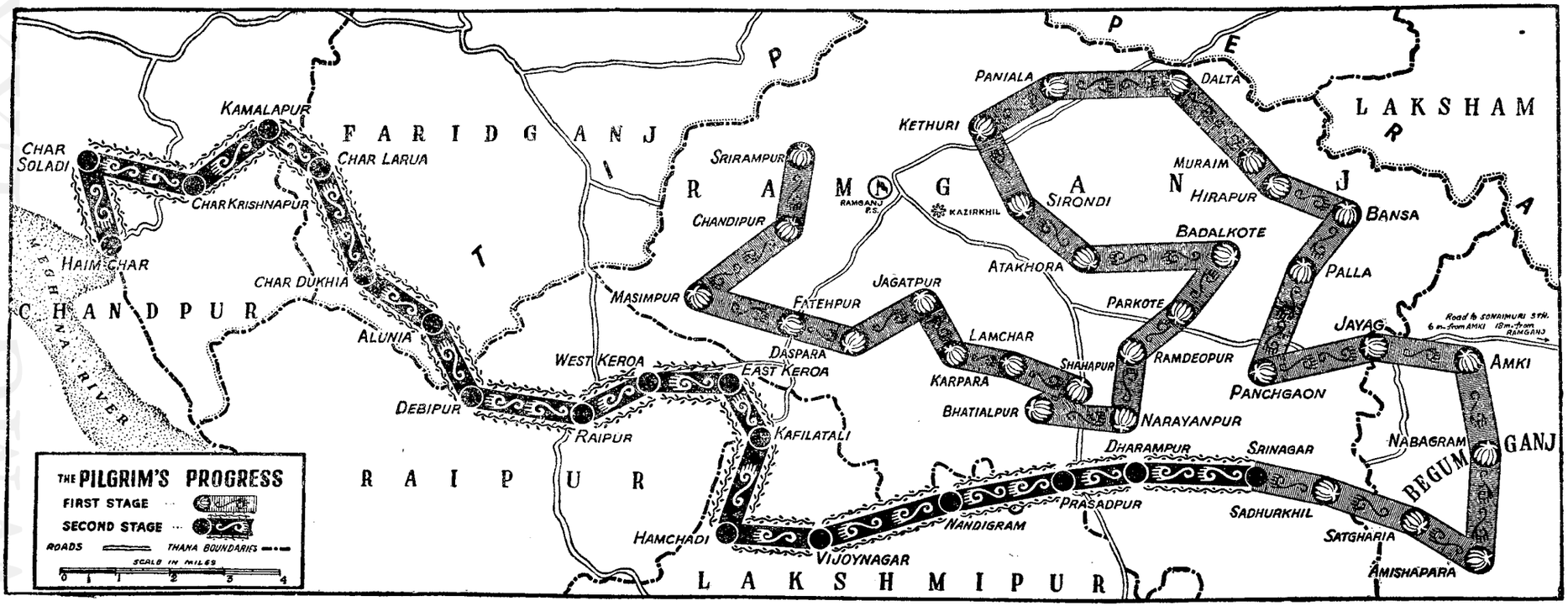
[1] This was in reply to the addressee's letter dated February 18, 1947, which read : "To save Bihar from further calamity I hope you will have the courage to declare that the Bihar Ministry should be dismissed, Section 93 be applied, and the present Governor may also be changed with this corrupt Ministry."

[2] The members of the delegation had asked Gandhiji the reason for differences in the youth movement in India.

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The map of Noakhali District in East Bengal, showing Gandhiji's walking tour is reproduced from *Harijan*, 23-2-1947. The map shows the first part of the tour completed on February 4, at Sadhurkhil and the second part ending with February 25 at Haim Char. The dates on which Gandhiji stayed in each village are given below:

Srinagar	5th February	Kafilatali	12th	Char Dukhia	19th
Dharampur	6th	East Keroa	13th	Char Larua	20th
Prasadpur	7th	West Keroa	14th	Kamalapur	21st
Nandigram	8th	Raipur	15th and 16th	Char Krishnapur	22nd
Vijoynagar	9th and 10th	Debipur	17th	Char Soladi	23rd
Hamchadi	11th	Alunia	18th	Haim Char	24th and 25th



Courtesy : *The Hindustan Standard*

35. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

HAIMCHAR,
March 1, 1947

Gandhiji said that he would try to cover Bajpati also on his return.[2] He could not fix the time. He was not leaving Noakhali or Tipperah without the establishment of heart unity. There was time for satisfying all reasonable expectations.

I hope to leave for Bihar tomorrow afternoon. I will leave Haimchar at about three in the afternoon. I will go to Calcutta and from there proceed to Bihar.[3]

He did not expect to stay there long. He would not be able to hold the prayer meeting [tomorrow] in Haimchar but would like to have it in Chandpur.

Q. You have referred to numerous social abuses prevalent among us. They are there; but then if the men are unwilling to effect the necessary social changes what can we women do about it?

A. Gandhiji said that there was no occasion for women to consider themselves subordinate or inferior to men. It was proclaimed that woman was half of man and by parity of reasoning man was half of woman. They were not two separate entities but halves of one. The English language went further and called woman the better half of man. Therefore, he advised women to resort to civil rebellion against all undesirable and unworthy restraints. All restraints to be beneficial, must be voluntary. There was no possibility of harm resulting from civil rebellion. It presupposed purity and a reasoned resistance.

Q. Those who have lost their dear ones, or the homes which they built up through years of patient care, find it extremely difficult to forgive and forget. How can they get over that feeling and look upon the community from which the miscreants came with a feeling of brotherhood?

A. The speaker said the one way to forget and forgive was to contemplate Bihar which had done much worse than Noakhali and Tipperah. Did they want the Muslims to take dire vengeance for the Hindu atrocities there? They could not. From this they should learn to forget and forgive, if they

[1] Extracted from "Gandhiji's Walking Tour Diary"

[2] People from Bajpati had complained that Bajpati had been dropped from Gandhiji's programme.

[3] This paragraph is from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*.

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did not wish to descend to the lowest depths of barbarity. Moreover, they must not harbour an inferiority complex. They should be brave. And forgiveness was an attribute and adornment of bravery. Let them be truly brave. True bravery refused to strike; it would suffer all infliction with patient cheerfulness. That would be the truest way of disarming opposition.

Q. Speaking about the proposed partition of Bengal, one of the proposals is that there should be only two separate administrative divisions without any exchange of populations taking place. This arrangement would keep each community in its place in peace. What is your objection to such a proposal?

A. Gandhiji considered two administrative divisions to be as impracticable as exchange of populations. That would result in an armed neutrality which was bound to kill all healthy growth. The leaders of both the communities must come together as friends and reduce their differences and suffer them. Any other way was the way of barbarism and subordination to a third power.

Harijan, 23-3-1947, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 4-3-1947

36. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

CHANDPUR,
March 2, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,[1]

I had a long talk with Sardar Jiwan Singhji[2]. If you think that his men are really required for service wanted, you should discuss the thing with him and do what you wish. If in your opinion they are not really required, you should pay them out to date plus Rs. 30 each for passage to their destination. Sardarji will show you the detailed [expen]diture[3]. He himself proposes to render service in every case. His case can be considered separately on my return or even by correspondence.

Blessings from
BAPU[4]

From a photostat : G. N. 8717

[1] The superscription is in the Devanagari script.
[2] Of the Indian National Army. *Vide* p. 36.
[3] The source is damaged here.
[4] The subscription is in Hindi.

37. NOTE TO MANU GANDHI

March 2, 1947

Bapa was pleased with you in Haimchar. He spoke to me about it. But what pleased me particularly was that, during my week's stay there, I could convince[1] him in regard to many things and he revised many of his views. He is a man of great self-sacrifice and humility. Didn't you observe that during all these days he took some of my time only on one day? On the other days he didn't come at all to take my time. Such is his consideration for others. He is a class by himself. If he realizes that he has made a mistake, he corrects it immediately without the slightest hesitation. I also felt happy that you could be of some service to him. That is why I encouraged you in your attempt. I have still to read the last two days' entries in your diary. Leave it with me tomorrow. I will go through it in the morning after prayer.

[From Gujarati]

Eklo Jane Re, p. 181

38. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[2]

CHANDPUR,
March 2, 1947

Gandhiji explained why he had to interrupt his work in East Bengal and hurry to Bihar. He had turned a deaf ear to pressing requests made to him by the Bengal Premier and Mr. Fazlul Huq to go to Bihar.

Their statements could not find an echo in my heart. I had flattered myself with the belief that I would be able to affect the Bihar Hindus from my place in Bengal. But Dr. Syed Mahmud has sent his secretary to me with a long letter which showed me that I should go to Bihar for the sake of the Muslims of Bihar.[3]

[1] *Vide* pp. 14-6.

[2] This was Gandhiji's last prayer meeting in East Bengal and was attended by over 30,000 people.

[3] The following paragraph is reproduced from *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase.*

He expected to return to his chosen scene of service—Noakhali—as soon as possible. Dr. Mahmud's secretary had said they would not detain him for more than a fortnight. Meanwhile Gandhiji hoped that the Muslims would belie the fears of the Hindu refugees that they would not be allowed to live in peace.

Gandhiji, in conclusion, appealed to Hindus and Muslims to live in peace as brothers and friends and exhorted the officials and the police to conduct themselves in such a way that the public would look upon them as their friends and servants who by their selfless service and tact helped the communities to act as friends.

The Hindu, 4-3-1947, and *Mahatma Gandhi–The Last Phase*, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 255

39. NOTE TO JIWAN SINGH[1]

March 2, 1947

I do not want to lose you personally.[2]

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 255

40. A NOTE

[*March 2/3, 1947*][3]

You should see to it that all who are on the steamer on our account pay the legitimate fare and expenses. Either they pay the Government or we collect and send. It looks ugly if we all travel free.[4]

Show it to Nirmal Babu. Let Mridulabehn[5] also see it.

From a facsimile : *Mahatma*, Vol. VII, between pp. 384 and 385

[1] According to the source Gandhiji's party boarded the steamer at 9.30 p. m. Col. Jiwan Singh was the last to take leave. His contingent of the I. N. A. could not fit into Satis Chandra Das Gupta's scheme. As Gandhiji scribbled out his orders that he should send away his men, Jiwan Singh felt hurt and unhappy, thinking it was a sort of dismissal for him. He was about to bid good-bye with a heavy heart when Gandhiji wrote this note on another slip of paper. *Vide* also p. 34.

[2] The addressee stayed on in Noakhali even after Gandhiji's death.

[3] From the reference to the steamer. Gandhiji boarded it at Chandpur on March 2 and reached Goalando the next day.

[4] What follows is in Gujarati.

[5] Mridula Sarabhai, daughter of Ambalal Sarabhai

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41. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

ON THE STEAMER FROM CHANDPUR,
March 3, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

I got your letter yesterday in Chandpur. I am not happy about your ailment getting worse. It was possible to check it in the past and it may be so still. If you do not think much of Dinshaw[1], I have other [naturopaths] in view. But who can persuade you ? You always do what you like. Do you realize how many people are dependent on you?

I understand about Sudhir. There was a wire from him. . . .[2]

I may not be able to convince you about the necessity of my work here, but I am sure it is of the utmost importance.

I leave today for Bihar. There was a letter from . . .[3] and now there is another from Dr. Mahmud. Both are shocking and so I am going. You are all stalwarts there and carrying on the work. In these parts I am something of a giant among pigmies. So let me remain here. If anything is accomplished, it will benefit the country. If nothing can be done, nothing will be lost.

I was pained to hear about Dr. Kanuga's illness. We should learn to live as God ordains.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—2 : Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 350

[1] Dinshaw K. Mehta
[2] & [3] Omissions as in the source

42. TELEGRAM TO J. B. KRIPALANI

CALCUTTA,
March 3, 1947

ACHARYA J. B. KRIPALANI
PRESIDENT, CONGRESS
NEW DELHI

YOUR WIRE[1]. REGRET INABILITY. SEND MESSENGER BIHAR.

BAPU

From the original : A. I. C. C. File, 1946-48. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

43. INTERVIEW TO UNITED PRESS OF INDIA

[*March 3, 1947*][2]

To a question whether Gandhiji's stay in Noakhali had improved the situation there, Gandhiji said :

This question should rather be addressed to the interested parties—people who have suffered. I worked among the people and preached my message of love and communal amity.[3] Personally I feel the situation has improved and there is more self-confidence among the people today, but the sufferers alone can tell you whether the situation has really improved. It is they who matter most.

Asked about the duration of his stay in Bihar, Gandhiji said :

I cannot exactly say how long I shall be there. I am going to Bihar after a long time. I shall be working among the Bihar sufferers and shall discuss the problem with the local leaders. I hope it will not be too long.

[1] Which read : "We all consider your presence here next Working Committee meeting sixth essential. Kindly postpone Bihar programme till ninth."

[2] *The Indian Nation*, 6-3-1947, reported that the U. P. I. representative had met Gandhiji in the "evening immediately on his arrival at Sodepur". Gandhiji reached Sodepur on March 3 at 9.30 p. m.

[3] Gandhiji had visited 40 villages in Noakhali district and seven in Tipperah during his walking tour, covering a distance of 116½ miles.

Gandhiji expressed his resolve to go back to Noakhali.

I shall continue my work there after my return.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 5-3-1947

44. TALK WITH AMIYA CHAKRAVARTY[1]

SODEPUR,
[*March 4, 1947*][2]

I am going to Bihar but my work lies unfinished in Noakhali and Tipperah. I am going back to the Noakhali furnace and if I come out alive I shall have something to tell the people. My mind is now entirely with the people of Noakhali and Bihar and I can think of nothing else. I am going to Bihar to find out what is happening there. I shall come back as soon as I am satisfied.

The Indian Nation, 6-3-1947

45. FROM THE DIARY

SODEPUR,
March 4, 1947

About Manudi. . . .[3] She has still not ceased to be childish in some ways. She must learn to behave like a mature girl. I am quite hopeful she will do that before long. She is very simple-hearted. She looks after me with the utmost devotion. She is wholly absorbed in that work. But she is not careful about her food and rest, and as a result her health suffers. I am very much pained by this. . . .[4] But otherwise I am quite satisfied with her work.

[From Gujarati]

Eklo Jane Re, p. 185

[1] Rabindranath Tagore's secretary, who, according to the source, met Gandhiji in the morning

[2] Gandhiji had reached Sodepur at 9.30 p. m. on March 3 and left for Patna in the evening of March 4.

[3] & [4] Omissions as in the source

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46. LETTER TO ARUNA ASAF ALI

ON THE TRAIN TO PATNA,
March 5, 1947

CHI. ARUNA[1],

I have your letter.

I am glad. What was there to mind in your not accompanying Asaf Ali[2]? Go on doing what you regard as true service.

Here I am learning the lesson of absolute non-violence. I do not know how far I shall succeed. Let us see what happens.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original : Brijkrishna Chandiwala Papers. Courtesy : National Gandhi Museum and Library

47. INTERVIEW TO RAJENDRA PRASAD[3]

PATNA,
March 5, 1947

Gandhiji told him that he was not yet ready with his plan. On one or two points, however, he had come to a definite decision. He would allow Muslim concentration under certain conditions but he would neither give arms nor Muslim military and police. Instead, he would give them effective protection. Dr. Rajendra Prasad agreed. . . .

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 260

[1] (b. 1909); Member, Congress Socialist Party; President, Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee, 1947; joined Socialist Party in 1948; elected first Mayor of Delhi in 1958

[2] Addressee's husband, who on being appointed Ambassador to the United States of America had left Karachi for Washington on February 8

[3] (1884-1963); joined Gandhiji in 1917 during the satyagraha in Champaran; President of Indian National Congress, 1939 and 1947; Member, Food and Agriculture in the Interim Government; President, Constituent Assembly; Minister, Food and Agriculture, Government of India; President of India, 1950-62

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48. INTERVIEW TO C. P. N. SINHA[1]

March 5, 1947

SINHA: Well, now that you have come, our burden is lightened.

GANDHIJI : I have come to lighten it. I have also wired Badshah Khan[2] to come.

S. What did Badshah Khan think of the work that is being done here?

G. He said that the Ministry were agreeable to everything he told them but the officers would not be able to cope with the problem. People alone can do it. He further suggested that there should be a committee for the purpose but it should be purely non-political. I also feel the same way.

S. There are many Hindus who did good work during the disturbances. Where there were such workers, very little damage was done. The Muslims still have faith in them.

G. All this should never have taken place.

S. People forgot themselves for a while. Where some care was taken, nothing happened. Congress workers did not check the disturbances at all places as they ought to have done.

G. That is the truth. Advantage lies in admission. Then alone can the remedy be applied.

S. At places Hindus did their best to protect the Muslims. But the problem calls for whole-hearted active co-operation of all sections. They are ready to give it.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 257

[1] Chandreshwar Prasad Narain Sinha, Vice-Chancellor of the Patna University

[2] Abdul Ghaffar Khan (b. 1891), popularly known as "Frontier Gandhi"; founder of the Red Shirt or Khudai Khidmatgar movement; Member, Congress Working Committees; was detained by Pakistan Government for demanding Pakhtoonistan

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49. *DISCUSSION WITH RAJENDRA PRASAD AND BIHAR MINISTERS*

March 5, 1947

We should make a public confession of our mistake. No commission of inquiry has been appointed to date. If we are not quick about the matter, it will lose its effect. If we do not appoint a commission, we shall be held to have admitted the League's case.

The Chief Minister, Shrikrishna Sinha, expressed the fear that the League would make political capital out of it. Gandhiji admitted that that was not improbable. But justice never paused to consider if it would be exploited.

[GANDHIJI:] My sixty years' experience has taught me nothing if not that. That is also the lesson of my three months of travail in Noakhali. I was groping in the dark but I said just what seemed to me to be the truth. Those who regarded me as their enemy could exploit it. But I had faith that sooner rather than later they would see their mistake. Be that as it may, my only strength lies in my ahimsa. The same applies to you also. If you grasp that, you will get over your fear and, undaunted by extraneous considerations, do justice.

Again and again Gandhiji tried to clear his old friend of unmerited suspicion.[1] Dr. Mahmud's letter which had brought him to Bihar was in reply to his (Gandhiji's) peremptory inquiries; the Doctor had not acted disloyally towards his colleagues. Dr. Rajendra Prasad explained that there was really no difference. The Bihar Ministers were never opposed to Gandhiji's coming earlier. But they had judged that the situation might call for the employment of drastic measures; how could they call Gandhiji in that context? The Chief Minister put in that they had never tried to "minimize" the atrocities.

GANDHIJI: From what I have been hearing, it seems to me that the Bihar massacre was like the Jallianwala Bagh massacre[2]. Dr. Mahmud's wife today brought some Muslim women to me. I had no reply to their tears.

[1] Dr. Syed Mahmud had incurred the displeasure of his colleagues by inviting Gandhiji to Bihar without consulting them.

[2] At Amritsar on April 13, 1919

Dr. Rajendra Prasad . . . repeated what he had already told Gandhiji that many Biharis thought that they had done well.

Gandhiji replied that it was to save them from that sin that he had come. He had told Nawab Ismail[1] that he would "do or die" in Bihar.

RAJENDRA PRASAD : I have full faith we shall succeed. Give us orders.

GANDHIJI: In Champaran nobody ordered anybody.[2] It was spontaneous loyalty. You saw the miracle. If that happens here, we shall win over even the League.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 258-9

50. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[3]

PATNA,
March 5, 1947

Gandhiji apologized for having come in a motor-car instead of walking to the prayer meeting. This was, he said, a reflection on the Biharis who should know the art of welcoming people in a quiet and dignified manner instead of the present embarrassing manner. They should have had consideration for his old age, he said, and spared him the shouts, however well-meant they were but which were too much for his ears.

He complimented the vast audience on their exemplary silence, but expressing his regret over their half-hearted participation in chanting the *Ramdhun*, he said:

An earnest prayer is very effective. If God is a Power, which indeed He is, then people must pray. Devotees of every religion pray according to their practices in their respective places of worship. It would be more beneficial if all of them prayed together in a common congregation.

It would be terrible if people shout 'Victory to India' and work for her annihilation. Such action will bring no glory to India. If we wish victory for India, we ought to work to that end. If we merely repeat '*Jai Hind*' or '*Sitaram*' without the appropriate

[1] Muslim League Member in Bihar Assembly

[2] Gandhiji had launched satyagraha in Champaran in 1917 to get the grievances of the peasants redressed. As a consequence the *Tinkathia* system under which peasants were required to grow crops on 3/20 of their holdings at the will of the landlords was abolished. *Vide* Vol. XIII.

[3] At the Bankipur Maidan where over one hundred thousand people had assembled. All the Ministers were present.

The Urdu version of the speech has been collated with the report in *Harijan* published under "Gandhiji's Bihar Tour Diary".

sentiments it would be mere parrot-like repetition. Please do not think that I do not want victory for India. In fact I have staked everything I possess for the sake of bringing glory to India.

I am visiting Bihar after many years. It is not as though I did not wish to come earlier. It was Bihar that made me known to the whole of India. No one knew me earlier. I had almost become a Negro after staying in Africa for twenty long years. Then I came to Champaran and the entire country woke up. Earlier I did not even know the location of Champaran; but when I arrived here I felt as if I had known the people of Bihar for centuries and they too seemed to know me.

This Bihar of ours has today committed a heinous crime. The atrocities perpetrated on a handful of Muslims have no parallel, so say the Muslims, in the annals of history. I too have read some history. I know that the world has witnessed greater brutality by man on man. But it is no use repeating them here. We must not compete in doing evil and that too against whom? Those who cry for avenging Noakhali in Bihar do not know the meaning of vengeance. Is it manliness to return barbarism for barbarism? We ought to overcome violence by love.

At present I have no evidence to say that Congressmen have committed these crimes. Tomorrow I may have to admit so. I must, however, say that Bihar has sullied the fair name of India. When I heard in Noakhali the reports of atrocities committed in Bihar, I decided to undertake a fast.[1] It had been reported to me that some Congressmen had a hand in these crimes. It would be wrong even today to say that there was not a single Congressman involved in the mad upheaval. In India the Congress has to accept the responsibility for the misdeeds of all communities and all individuals. I had claimed in London[2] on your behalf that the Congress represented the whole of India by right of service. Hence any sin committed by India comes to the door of the Congress. You who are listening to me may not have done any evil, yet you have to accept the responsibility. I have become hard-hearted now. I have not come here to shed

[1] In his appeal to Bihar is dated November 6, 1946 Gandhiji had expressed his intention to go on a fast unto death unless the madness in Bihar ceased. His appeal had an immediate effect on the situation in Bihar and the contemplated fast was not undertaken. His partial fast, however, as a penance for the Bihar tragedy commenced on November 6. *Vide* Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 81-2.

[2] At the Round Table Conference in December, 1931. *Vide* Vol. XLVIII, pp. 357-8.

tears or to make you cry. I would rather wish to steel your hearts. I could make you cry if I chose. But I do not wish to do so. We should not disown responsibility by saying that our hands are clean. India consists of many communities. We have the tribal people among us. We are responsible for them as well. If we disown responsibility for them, we have no right to claim that India belongs to us.

The way to achieve independence consists in all Indians saying with one voice that unless they gave to the whole world all that was good in them, their survival would be meaningless. Are we going to compete in [making] atom bombs? Are we going to match barbarism with even more barbarous acts? India has placed before the world a new weapon. I adopted the way of non-violence in 1920-21. We have been insisting that we will attain independence through non-violence. I do not claim that all Indians have accepted non-violence as a matter of creed. But even when we accept anything as a matter of policy, it becomes our duty to act upon it.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad told me today that some people believed that the Bihar riots had arrested the crimes in Noakhali, otherwise Hindus everywhere would have suffered a similar fate. This is not correct. If Hindus had to suffer similar atrocities everywhere I would say that they were a cowardly lot. Who can frighten a person who has shed all fear? While touring in Bengal I used to tell the people that Hindus as well as Muslims of Noakhali had admitted that the miscreant was a coward and the victim who feared him a greater coward. Those who are under the illusion that Bihar has saved other people by committing these barbarities are talking nonsense. This is not the way to attain freedom. If Muslims believe that they would annihilate the Hindus or if Hindus believe that they would annihilate the Muslims, I should like to ask them what they would gain thereby? Muslims will not serve Islam if they annihilate the Hindus; rather they would thereby destroy Islam. And if the Hindus believe that they would be able to annihilate Islam it means that they would be annihilating Hindu dharma.

I consider myself a follower of Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and every other religion because I am a true Hindu. All religions are equal and they are founded on the same faith. Various religions are like different leaves on the same tree, with slight differences in shades and shapes. Scriptures have said that one who condemns other religions, condemns one's own religion. I consider myself a representative of all the true religions.

We should not gloat over the massacre of Muslims by Bihar Hindus. There can be no greater shame for India. Dr. Syed Mahmud told me that this had brought humiliation to him and to all Congressmen. He wrote to me to come and see the madness in which the people of Bihar, who claim to follow me, were indulging and asked me to stop their madness. Earlier I had wondered, what I could do by coming here but Dr. Mahmud's letter compelled me to come here. The Hindus of Bihar have committed a grave sin. They will raise the head of Bihar much higher if they do honest reparations, greater in magnitude than their crimes. There is an English saying : "The greater the sin, the greater the saint." I went to Noakhali with the determination to do or die. I have come here with the same resolve. If our thoughts are not right our actions are bound to go wrong. As soon as there is an opportunity, we commit a crime. Why should all of us not unite? After all we are servants of the same God, by whatever name we may call Him. We may call him Rama or Rahim, Krishna or Karim.

I had also been summoned to Delhi. 'Come here', they said, 'what are you doing in Noakhali? We need you here'. But I did not leave Noakhali. But when I received Dr. Mahmud's letter regarding Bihar, I came over here. Muslim Leaguers used to abuse me and say ' go to Bihar'. It had no effect on me. But how could I ignore Dr. Mahmud's appeal? I felt that I would become worthless if I did not go to Bihar even now. When I came and saw the conditions here I realized that we had, indeed, committed a great sin here. It is our duty to atone for our sin and do reparations. Those who have committed these misdeeds have done great harm to India. Those who think that this massacre in Bihar has saved India are really mad. This is not the way to free India; such methods would delay the day of India's deliverance. May God grant us wisdom as Manubehn has just now sung before you :

ईश्वर अल्लाह् तेरे नाम ।
सबको सन्मति दे भगवान ।।[1]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—I, pp. 1-6, and *Harijan*, 23-3-1947

[1] Ishwar, Allah
both are your names,
Oh God, grant wisdom
to us all.

51. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

PATNA,
March 6[2], *1947*

Gandhiji began his post-prayer address by complimenting the audience as well as Bari Saheb[3], the President of the Provincial Congress Committee and his comrades for the orderliness which had been successfully maintained during the evening.[4] While the *Ramdhun* was being sung there were some beats out of time. His advice was that they should practise more until both the tune and the time were in perfect unison.

A note had been handed to him reminding him that Holi was on the following day and people would like to hear his opinion as to how it ought to be celebrated. Gandhiji began by saying that he had no doubt in his mind that a religious ceremony like the Holi should never be marked by wild revelry, but by a disciplined effort to put oneself in communion with God.

Holi will be celebrated tomorrow. If we wish to celebrate it in a religious spirit, we must meet and greet each and every Muslim in the true spirit. With our overflowing love we should reassure the Muslims that the Hindus are their brothers and that there can be no difference between us.

Dr. Mahmud is a Congress Muslim; but I have been meeting Muslims belonging to the League too. We meet one another with great affection and talk in the most friendly manner. Houses of Muslims have been burnt down and their fathers, brothers, sons, innocent children, womenfolk and friends have been done to death. We should not disclaim responsibility for these acts by saying that some other people are responsible for them. Whoever might have actually done it, we cannot escape the responsibility. Muslims say that they live in great terror here. Hindus in Noakhali also used to say that they lived in terror of the Muslims.

[1] The Urdu version has been collated with the report in *Harijan* published under "Gandhiji's Bihar Tour Diary".

[2] *Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar* has "7", obviously a slip, for Holi, which Gandhiji observed "will be celebrated tomorrow", fell on March 7.

[3] Abdul Bari

[4] On the previous evening, in their eagerness to go near Gandhiji and have his *darshan* a large section of the assemblage had become quite unruly.

We should not terrorize each other. If at all, we should overawe each other with our love and affection. Some Muslim friends say that the Ministry here may allot some houses or lands to the Muslims under political compulsion. But this will not do much good so long as the Hindus and Muslims do not sincerely love or trust each other. They say that Hindus and Muslims have been living together here for centuries, used to refer to one another as paternal or maternal uncles and attend wedding and funeral ceremonies. Today, however, they have turned into sworn enemies. How could the Muslims live here if this enmity persisted? I had to hang my head in shame when I heard this from Muslim friends.

I have heard that Hindus here start shouting and threatening when they see Muslims. They raise the slogans of *Jai Hind* and *Vande Mataram*. It is all very well to shout slogans; but we must make sure that they do not terrorize, or intimidate or upset other people. We are guilty of a great sin. Do we intend to announce through our slogans that we are proud of these acts? Or that we regard them as right actions? Hindus in Noakhali were also afraid of the slogan *Allah O Akbar* raised by Muslims. The slogan merely means 'God is Great' and no one need be afraid of this slogan. But when slogans are used for a wrong purpose, their meanings too are misunderstood and they become curses instead of boons.

Jai Hind does not mean victory to Hindus and defeat for Muslims. But nowadays the Muslims take it in that light because we have put it to wrong use and threatened them with it. When we hear the slogans shouted by another person we think that the other fellow is preparing for a fight, and we also start getting ready for it. If we go on fighting like this and wreak vengeance for one place upon another, rivers of blood will flow all over India and still the spirit of vengeance will not subside. Hindus should behave so affectionately that even if a Muslim child comes into their midst, they should wash and clean him, dress him well and shower him with such love that the child should feel entirely at home. Only when this happens will Muslims realize that Hindus have become their friends.

Gandhiji was firmly of the opinion that this could never be our fate if we were determined to have it otherwise. His hope lay more in women who, he had ever maintained, were the living embodiment of ahimsa and of self-sacrifice, without which ahimsa could never be a reality. Gandhiji wanted everyone to celebrate the Holi in such a manner that every single Muslim felt that the Hindus had not only repented what had been done to them

but had also gathered love for them to an extent which outdid their previous sentiments. If the Holi was marked by this revival of the old friendly relations then indeed it would be a truly religious celebration.

A gentleman remarked to me that they had always regarded Hindus as a very noble people, incapable of kidnapping anyone's wife or daughter, since it was immoral and barbarous to do so. But the Hindus had stooped to such things. Many Muslim girls are missing. That gentleman also stated that it was difficult to tell the exact number of such girls, because whole families were missing. Muslims think that many of their girls have been forcibly kept in Hindu houses. "If we say this," these friends say, "no one will pay any heed; but if you make an earnest appeal, it may produce a serious response."

I had made a similar appeal to Muslims in Noakhali and I repeat it here to the Hindus. If any Muslim girl is held by any Hindu, he should release her. If he is afraid of returning her to the court or to the Police Station, let him take her to Dr. Mahmud or to his wife or to me or to Dr. Rajendra Prasad. I can assure the abductors that no harm will come to them, if they approach me. In fact, they should not be afraid of suffering punishment for their crime. He is brave who confesses his crime and is prepared to suffer due punishment.

Another thing which the gentleman told me was that the Muslims were afraid that the Hindus did not want the Muslim refugees to return to their homes. I have heard the same story in Noakhali from Hindus and now I am hearing it from the Muslims in Bihar. Our behaviour should be so exemplary that even if an Englishman lives amidst us we should not let him feel that we are his enemies.

I repeat here what I said in Noakhali. As long as the Hindus and Muslims together do not assure me that their hearts have been cleansed and that I could leave them without any anxiety, I will not leave this place. I shall continue to stay here as long as the Muslims do not come to me and reassure me that the Hindus have become better than what they were in the past. I use the word "better" on purpose. In a way, all of us are filled with evil intentions. But every heart which has evil traits also possesses noble impulses. And now we have to overcome our evil traits with our nobler qualities.

You should contribute liberally to the funds raised for Muslim victims. But more than giving money, you have to cleanse your hearts. We have to win over the hearts of Muslims. We must realize that politics leads to all sorts of things. But even Muslim Leaguers have conceded that had Jawaharlal not arrived

in Bihar[1] the fate of Muslims would have been much worse. They have undertaken to tell the whole world that some Hindu Congressmen have at the risk of their lives saved the Muslim Leaguers.

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—I, pp. 9-12, and *Harijan*, 23-3-1947

52. *INTERVIEW TO NATIONALIST MUSLIMS*[2]

March 7, 1947

Gandhiji assured them that he would not leave Bihar until he felt that cordial relations between the two communities had been restored.

The Hindu, 9-3-1947

53. *DISCUSSION WITH KHAKSARS—I*

PATNA,
March 7, 1947

Gandhiji told them that while the Bihar Government would naturally welcome help from any organization which was willing to work on their terms, he could not advise them to abdicate any of their functions in favour of a private organization.[3] The Khaksar leader proceeded hyperbolically to praise their own past record of selfless service which was without the "slightest communal bias". Gandhiji told them to spare themselves that trouble, for they were not meeting him for the first time; he knew them well enough![4]

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 327

[1] Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel accompanied by Liaquat Ali Khan and Abdul Rab Nishtar had reached there on November 3, 1946.

[2] This was reported to the United Press of India by one of the members of the deputation which had met Gandhiji in the morning and discussed matters concerning relief and rehabilitation work.

[3] The Khaksars who had come to Bihar to render service to the riot victims stipulated certain demands which included that (1) *bona-fide* refugees attested to by them should be allowed a grant of Rs. 1,000 per man; (2) they should be empowered to settle disputed matters with Chief Minister; (3) resettling refugees should be at their discretion; (4) immovable properties belonging to settlers should be disposed of at the discretion of Khaksar Relief Committee; (5) they should create an organization of engineers and Bihar Government should pay for their services; and (6) their proposal for levy of cess to make relief scheme effective should be considered favourably by the Government.

[4] The source here adds: "The subtle irony was lost on the sturdy soldiers. . . . Their leader jumped at the remark and said that as Gandhiji knew them, he was sure he would stand guarantee for them and "compel" the Government to "accede" to their demands. . . . They met him again a few days later." *Vide* pp. 53-4.

54. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI[1]

PATNA,
March 7, 1947

You did notice, didn't you, that even a beggar made a specific donation to the Muslim relief fund instead of using it for himself. In my eyes his four annas are more valuable than four crores of rupees. This is true charity! These are the people of Bihar. Today is only the third day of my arrival here. A gesture of this kind so soon after my arrival has deeply moved me. It is God's grace that my voice has reached so far. The more pure and true we grow—the more God enables us to see these virtues reflected in others. Think deeply over this incident.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 15-6

55. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[2]

PATNA,
March 7[3], *1947*

Gandhiji began his address this evening by saying that just before starting for the prayer-ground he had taken a brief rest.

Today also I was wondering all the time whether we have realized that we had committed a great crime, a sin, and whether we had atoned for it. All my waking hours during the day have been spent in listening to the reports brought in by many Muslim and Hindu friends. All of them narrated the grievous wrongs done by us. None of them has been able to assure me that things have now settled down to complete normalcy. While I experienced the impact of these reports on me, I also wondered about the nature and intensity of the impact which these crimes

[1] A blind beggar had given four annas to Gandhiji for the Muslim relief fund. Gandhiji, patting him on the back, had asked him to give up begging, for even a blind person could do a lot of work—he could at least spin.

[2] The Urdu version has been collated with the report in *Harijan* published under "Gandhiji's Bihar Tour Diary".

[3] From *Harijan* and *The Hindu*. *Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar*, however, reports it under "March 6".

and atrocities must have produced on the hearts of those who witnessed them.

The ideal of the *sthitaprajna* (man of steadfast wisdom) described in the second chapter of the *Gita* was always before him and he was ceaseless in his efforts to reach that ideal. Whatever others might say of him, he knew he was yet far from it. When one really reaches such a state, his very thought becomes charged with a power which transforms those around him. But where was that power in him now? He could only say that he was a common mortal, made of the same clay of which others were made, only ceaselessly striving to attain the lofty ideal which the *Gita* held before all mankind.

While speaking yesterday, I had quoted an English proverb. It means the greater the sinner, the greater the saint he becomes if he really repents and decides to reform himself. Bihar has committed a monstrous sin. It must now make reparations of the same magnitude and become nobler. Bihar is a land where the verses of the *Ramayana* are always on the lips of the people. I have moved widely in Bihar and I know the people here very intimately. They live a simple life and their voice ever rings with the music of the *Ramayana.* Their misdeeds are of terrible proportions; but their capability for making reparations is also equally great. I have been a witness to this. Then why should they not confess their sins and atone for them? I do not know whether my voice does reach the people who have actually committed these crimes. Those who are sitting here in the audience and who had no hand in these crimes may also wonder how people could go berserk. I don't know whether or not I shall be able to reach those people who had done wrong to their Muslim brethren. But I want to reach them. They are unlettered; they do not read what appears in newspapers. I think I must go to their homes and stay with them.

I have heard that these people shouted *Mahatma Gandhiki Jai* while carrying out the massacre. I do not consider myself a Mahatma. But I cannot understand how people who consider me a Mahatma dragged in my name for committing such heinous crimes. I learnt of these terrible riots in Bihar while I was trekking the villages in Noakhali and attempting to unite the hearts of Hindus and Muslims. Now that I have come to Bihar, I think I must visit the scenes of actual massacre. I have not yet decided whether I should go to these places by car or whether I should travel there as in Noakhali, on foot. In any case, I must make myself heard by those people whom my

words do not reach and, even when they do reach, they do so in a distorted form.

I said it yesterday and I repeat today that all those Hindus who kidnapped Muslim women should return them. I am staying at the house of Dr. Mahmud. It will indeed be a brave thing if the miscreants come forward and openly confess their sins and are prepared to undergo due punishment. But if such courage is lacking, they can at least restore the girls to me without any fear of harm coming to them. I shall not hand them over to the police.

There was however one thing more he would like them to do. It had been reported that property worth about a crore of rupees had been looted or destroyed. It did not matter what the exact figure was. For, if a man was deprived of a couple of rupees when he had only that amount it meant that he had lost his all.

It is the duty of everyone who has looted the properties of Muslims to return the stolen goods. Many families have been completely wiped out. But some of their relatives may be alive. And even if no one is left behind, the return of stolen goods will convince the Muslims that the Hindus have undergone a change of heart and they will begin to trust the Hindus.

I shall once again appeal to you that those of you who have understood my message, should certainly co-operate in this noble work and convey my message to the culprits. I can say nothing more at present. But I have resolved to go to each and every affected village and to strive to reach the ears of every man.

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—I, pp. 6-8, and *Harijan*, 23-3-1947

56. DISCUSSION WITH KHAKSARS—II

[After *March 7, 1947*][1]

They said they wanted freedom to work in their "own way"—the Government should provide the finance.

Gandhiji was, however, clear that they had to work under the Government and carry out its policy. He reminded them that the Government had to consider other parties as well. For instance they were bound to try to secure the co-operation of the Muslim League in the first place. If the League refused to co-operate then only could it negotiate with other parties.

The Khaksars talked of the desirability of raising an "auxiliary force" drawn from the refugees for affording protection to those who returned.

[1] *Vide* footnote 4, p. 50.

Gandhiji was opposed to this also. Nor was he agreeable to the proposal for forming a trust of the properties of those who had left the province. He would instead advise the Government to declare their terms. Such refugees as returned should have all the protection and help which they needed, but the Government could not undertake any responsibility in respect of those who chose to stay away. [Gandhiji said:]

If in this way only five return and they are well treated, they are bound to draw another five after them. If the Government implements its trust fully, I am sure, all the refugees would return.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 327-8

57. INTERVIEW TO MOHAMMAD YUNUS[1]

March 8, 1947

Mohammad Yunus agreed that those who had prompted or taken part in the disturbances could be no friends of the Congress even though they might carry the Congress label.

GANDHIJI: Could Jinnah be left out of the picture? Was it not up to those Muslims who thought that he was going the wrong way to try to correct him?

MOHAMMAD YUNUS: Alas! That cannot be. Either you follow Jinnah or you get out of the Muslim League.

G. Then the future is dark indeed for Islam and for India —more for Islam than for India.

In reply to the question as to how long he expected to be in Bihar, Gandhiji said that he had set no time limit. Islam had not yet forgotten the Karbala[2], where brother's arm was raised against brother, although it had happened 1,300 years ago. How could he forget his Karbala that was Bihar?

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 262-3

[1] Chief Minister of Bihar before the Congress accepted office in 1937

[2] A town in Iraq, which was the scene of battle between the Sunni and the Shia Muslims in A. D. 680. As a consequence, Imam Hussain, the leader of the Shia sect, and his followers were put to death.

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58. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

PATNA,
March 8, 1947

Gandhiji said at the prayer meeting that he hoped the audience would forgive him for speaking always and exclusively on the theme which had brought him to Bihar. It had become his duty to listen to the tales of woe that the Muslim sufferers unfolded before him from day to day. One of them had come to him and complained that even so recently as two days ago, things were pilfered from the Muslim houses. If such was the case it was most unfortunate and it betrayed a lack of the spirit of repentance without which there was no possibility of concord between the two communities in Bihar, indeed, in the whole of India.

Whenever any new matter comes to my knowledge in connection with the work I have undertaken these days, I state it frankly before the public. Yesterday I referred to one matter. Today I heard something more about it. I shall report it to you frankly. "We had imagined that your arrival would put a stop to all mischief," I was told, "but it is now four days since you came here and yet the mischief goes on unabated." I am witnessing here what I saw in Noakhali. No one should say: 'Why should we not do what they are doing there? We are in a greater majority here.' Even if we have been wronged, does it mean that we should try to compete with each other in goondaism ?

We behave decently not for the sake of anyone else. An English scholar has said that one who does good deeds only performs his duty. If we do a good deed, we do nothing extraordinary. We do only what we ought to, and we shall be failing in our duty if we do not do so.

We have our newspapers here. It is their duty and that of the Chief Minister to remind the people constantly that they have committed a shameful crime, that Hindus and Muslims have to live together and all of us are Indians. Everyone of us is equally guilty of what anyone of us has done. We can achieve freedom only if we act in this spirit.

[1] The Urdu version has been collated with the report in *Harijan* published under "Gandhiji's Bihar Tour Diary".

Riots are raging in the Punjab.[1] The administration in that province is being run under Article 93. This is no fault of the British that it is under the Governor's rule. They have to run the government as long as they are here and no one else is prepared to undertake the responsibility. It is India's misfortune that we cannot co-operate amongst ourselves and act unitedly. It would be wrong for a Bihari to excuse himself on the plea that others have perpetrated greater crimes. Let us admit that we are the greater sinners. Only then can we hope to reform ourselves.

Let us try to tread the straight path. I have received a telegram from a Hindu brother. It says that I must not condemn the Hindus in Bihar. It warns me that due to my influence over them I may mislead them and prevent them from taking revenge. Look at the cheek of this gentleman who is trying to teach me my duty! He calls himself a Hindu but does not act like one. I claim to be a sanatani Hindu and therefore represent the best things of all the religions created for the worship of God. Every one of you, if you are honest, must feel likewise. We have committed a dirty crime and I have come here to cleanse the dirt and brighten the image of Hinduism. Am I going to flinch from my duty if someone beats me up or abuses me for doing it? It is my duty to speak out the truth and if I withhold it, I shall be disloyal to Hindus, to Muslims and to India. I shall therefore advise you not to listen to those who incite and misguide you.

I wish to tell you one thing more. It is now four days that I have been here. I have been collecting money for Harijans every day and I have already collected a lot. But today an idea crossed my mind. The Hindus in Bihar have committed a grave error, they have been very unjust to Muslims. Hence they should do their duty by contributing to a fund for the relief of Muslims by way of repentance. No one should think that he need not lift his little finger since there is already a Congress ministry with a Congress majority here, which will do everything that needs to be done. The ministers have to work under great stress in making use of public finances. You should realize that this is your responsibility. If you donate money to me, you will be giving it to a miser who has been on this job

[1] Following the resignation of the Coalition Ministry, Hindus and Sikhs staged "Anti-Pakistan" demonstrations in Lahore on March 4 and communal riots broke out in the province. The Governor of the Punjab promulgated Section 93 in the province on March 5.

for the past sixty years. I have collected lakhs of rupees; but no one can say that I misappropriated the funds. Otherwise no one would have entrusted his money to me. I shall therefore appeal to you to donate the money not for my use, not for any other cause, but for the sake of the Muslim sufferers. Give with an open heart. A wealthy landlord has promised to give land as well as money for the Muslims. He will look after all the Muslims who would be placed under his care. Many more people should come forward with such offers.

I did not beg for money in Noakhali because I received unsought about three lakh rupees. Today I thought I should hold out the begging bowl here and awaken the conscience of the people. I should take everyone's help. What can I do by myself? And this is indeed your work; I can only remind you of your duty. I cannot perform your duty. Hence you must contribute generously to the Bihar fund. A Muslim child must feel entirely safe in a Hindu locality and the Muslims should be convinced of this change of heart. A friend came to me and asserted that there was a time in Bihar when Hindus and Muslims lived together and called each other uncles. Today it is no longer like that. We must atone for this.

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar–I, pp. 13-6, and *Harijan*, 30-3-1947

59. INTERVIEW TO UNITED PRESS OF INDIA

PATNA,
March 9, 1947

When the United Press of India's special representative read out a message from New Delhi regarding Mahatma's contemplated fast, Gandhiji burst out laughing and said:

Of course, there is just a little bit of truth in it.

But he strongly disapproved of the practice of making a mountain out of a molehill.

Gandhiji told him that there was no present intention of fasting but circumstances might arise of which he had no present knowledge, which might compel him to undertake a fast.

The Indian Nation, 10-3-1947

60. DISCUSSION WITH BINODANAND JHA[1]

March 9, 1947

Binodanand Jha protested that the Government was falsely accused of slowness in dealing with the situation. Immediately after the riots broke out, the Chief Minister had sent him to Gaya and then to Bhagalpur. The disturbances were the result of a "joint conspiracy" between the political opponents of the Congress, . . . and the British officials in the services. In proof he produced a pamphlet issued by the Hindu Mahasabha and another by the zamindars. Still another pamphlet asked people to organize themselves and take revenge for Bengal as the Congress seemed to be unconcerned about the insult to Hindu women in Noakhali and Calcutta. In Bhagalpur, the Minister complained, the disturbances were precipitated by the Muslim League's propaganda. It was they who after getting the Muslims to congregate in large numbers had set the ball rolling. The Government had information that the arms they had allowed for Muslim defence had reached the Muslim National Guards.

GANDHIJI: I am against the giving of arms.

After the riots, the Minister continued, the League had deliberately implicated important Hindus. The League did not want things to settle down.

G. In the same way in Noakhali the Muslims complained that the Hindus were accusing wrong persons. I told them we should not be afraid of false cases. But we should not hide true ones. I do not want a single criminal to remain unpunished. The people should themselves come forward and confess their faults.

J. It was all a reaction against the happenings in Bengal.

G. We should not allow anything to deflect us from doing our duty.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 263-4

[1] Minister, Local Self-Government and Medical in Bihar

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61. DISCUSSION WITH P. C. C. MEMBERS

PATNA,
March 9, 1947

Gandhiji told them that the more he heard of the Government spokesman's apologia, the more he felt the need for turning the searchlight inward. He wondered if behind his earlier determination to stay on in Noakhali was not "sheer obstinacy" on his part.

ONE MEMBER: Tell us how we can wash off our sin. What are your orders?

Gandhiji replied that he was ever averse to issuing orders. In Noakhali he could not. In Bihar he could but did not want to. The very nature of the work precluded it. What he wanted was to awaken their conscience and win their reasoned co-operation. Since the advent of power, Congressmen had forgotten the path of duty. In a way Muslims had come to believe Jinnah's charge that the Congress did not belong to all, that the Muslims that were with the Congress were there as mere puppets of the Congress with an axe to grind to the detriment and ruin of Islam. If the Hindus were sincere and brave, even the few Muslims that were with them could give the lie to that calumny and enable the Muslim masses to see that they were being misled, and perhaps save them from being so misled.

He had served Bihar before. He had now come to them on what might be his last pilgrimage. If he died striving there, he would have done his duty. All things hung on truth, courage and knowledge. If none of these virtues was there, the future was dark indeed for Bihar and for India.

A Congressman got up to say that some Congressmen had taken part in the riot. He was interrupted by another Congressman who emphatically declared that no Congressman had taken any part in the riot. Gandhiji felt hurt. The gentleman, he cut in, did not seem to know what he was talking about. Even their own colleagues had admitted that some Congressmen had taken part [in the riot]. If their confession was half-hearted they would not gain anything by it. He had said enough. They were all responsible people. They should search their hearts.[1]

The Chief Minister explained the genesis of the trouble and how his Government had tried to do all they could before, during and after the outbreak. They were caught unprepared. The Governor[2] was absent. The Chief Secretary and the Inspector-General of Police, both Englishmen, had

[1] After this all except the Chief Minister and a few others left.
[2] Sir Hugh Dow

let them down. British officers were having their revenge for 1942. He was sure, the inquiry would fully vindicate the Bihar Government. Of course, they could not act with the strength of Pandit Nehru, who gave a thorough shaking to the officers. If it could be proved that the Government had intentionally allowed a single Muslim to be killed, said Chief Minister, they would have no right to remain in office.

Then, put in Gandhiji, it had to be admitted that there had been lack of foresight. They should not bring in the Governor or the English officers. The popular Ministers had to act as if the Governors did not exist. Granting that they (the Ministers) had not been guilty of any wilful neglect of duty, still something was owing for what had actually happened. That needed intelligence, courage and purity of heart. Never had he been confronted with such a stupendous task in his life. Everything turned on what he could do with Bihar and the Biharis. If he succeeded in Bihar, India would be saved, the situation in the Punjab would be controlled, and the Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan would come into their own.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 264-5

62. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

PATNA,
March 9, 1947

It is good that I have one day of silence in the week. How beautiful it would be if everyone could spend at least a few hours in the day in silent introspection if it were not possible for them to spend a whole day in complete silence. If people were accustomed to such spiritual exercise, then their hands could never have been stained by deeds which have actually taken place in Bihar. But this is not the occasion for dilating upon the benefits of the practice of silence.

Today I wish to indicate in brief the duty of those who did not personally participate in the shameful killings which took place in this province. Their first duty is to purify their own thoughts. When thoughts are not pure, one's actions can never be purified. Pure action can never come from imitation. If one tries to become good by merely imitating the good conduct of others, such conduct never succeeds in radiating any influence upon others; because it is after all not the true stuff. But one whose heart has become really pure along with his actions, can at once sense the true character of the thoughts

[1] It being Gandhiji's silence day, his written speech was read out.

which influence the behaviour of his neighbours. When thoughts and actions have both become pure there can be no repetition of the deeds which have marred the fair face of Bihar. But the world never progresses in a straight line. The thoughts and actions of men never follow a parallel and uniform course. For all men these two can never be completely purified at any single point of time.

Therefore, I would wish to indicate this evening only that ideal of duty, which the workers should keep before themselves. If workers are available in sufficiently large numbers, it should be their first duty to explain clearly to the miscreants the full consequence of their misdeeds. It should be explained to the wrongdoers that such deeds can never be of any good to them personally, nor can they serve the cause of Hinduism or that of the country in general. It should be explained to them that they have not been able to serve those whom they intended to serve. They should also be induced to come forward and make a clean breast of their misdeeds before the public. They should also restore looted property and abducted women to the proper quarters.

A change of heart can never be brought about by law. It can only be effected through conversion of one's thought. When that is accomplished, there is no longer any need of compulsive laws.

I had asked you to help in the relief of Muslim brothers and sisters who have suffered during the last riots. Yesterday you did not come prepared for that purpose. I expect of you today to contribute to your fullest extent in this noble cause.

The Indian Nation, 11-3-1947

63. FROM THE DIARY

PATNA,
Sunday, March 9, 1947

Explained to Manudi her duty quietly. She must learn to do everything in an orderly fashion. I would never abandon her as long as I am alive. This is the assurance I gave her at Shrirampur. But she is at liberty to leave me. It seems sinful to me that she should neglect her health for the sake of my work. One who desires to follow the path of service must first look after one's own health. It was 1 a. m. by the time she finished counting

the fund money, and yet she did not sleep a wink in the afternoon. This hurt me and I had to make her cry.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 24

64. A LETTER[1]

PATNA,
Monday, March 10, 1947

CHI. . . .

I have just received your pathetic letter[2]. Luckily today is my silence day. Why should you cry? It is your duty to resist. Crying should be totally forbidden. Fight as hard as . . . did. I have already said that . . . is not putting up a tough fight and is feeling miserable. Why this misery? Let . . . abandon me if I have come to regard *adharma* as dharma. If there is the slightest room for doubt, let me have the benefit of your opinion and see what happens. I am not big, nor are you small. We are all fellow-workers working in the same field. . . . My ideas are becoming firmer. How can I know whether it is [my] good sense or bad sense? In my view it is good sense. But it is similar to "appearance of silver in the mother of pearl"[3].

To conclude, do not despair. Carry on your work without giving any room to despair. By all means, leave me. Right now I am in the midst of the sacred fire. I would either be burnt or saved. Though you are far away from me, pray for me that I may have good sense. May you all be well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 28-9

[1] Omissions in the letter are as in the source.

[2] Dated February 22

[3] A verse by Tulsidas which means : "Appearance of silver in the mother of pearl and that of a sheet of water in the mirage, though non-existent at all times, are yet perceived. Such is this illusion which none can dispel."

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65. LETTER TO HARSHADABEHN

PATNA,
March 10, 1947

CHI. HARSHADABEHN,

I got the cheque for Rs. 55 sent on the occasion of Hemendrabhai completing 55 years. My blessings to you both. The way you celebrated Ba's anniversary was but expected. Send the yarn, etc., at your convenience. These days I am wandering from place to place. With God to protect me, what more do I need?

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI HARSHADABEHN
RASIK VILLA
15TH ROAD
KHAR
BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C. W. 10431

66. LETTER TO VINOBA BHAVE

PATNA,
March 10, 1947

CHI. VINOBA,

I have your frank letter.[1] Somehow I am not convinced by your argument. Nowadays Manu does not sleep in my bed. It is her own wish and is due to a pathetic letter from Bapa.[2] But according to my view it does not make any difference in the situation even if I am practising *adharma*. But at the moment I am not going to take any more of your time. In my daily prayers I earnestly pray to God to lead me from untruth to truth. Isn't the same idea conveyed in "Lead kindly light"[3]?

Carry on your Bhangi work at Surgaon.

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXXVI, p. 453.
[2] *Vide* also pp. 14-6.
[3] A hymn by Cardinal Newman

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Take care of your eyes. Let someone read out [Dr.] Agrawal's book to you. Haven't you heard of it?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : C. W. 10546. Courtesy : Vinoba Bhave

67. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

March 10, 1947

CHI. ANAND,

I read your letter addressed to Dr. Mahmud. Don't worry if you have not been able to write to me.

Gangi[1] will not be able to do anything here. It is enough if she looks after you and does whatever she can from there. I think I have already written to you.

May you both be happy.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI ANAND HINGORANI
7 EDMONSTONE ROAD
ALLAHABAD

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

68. LETTER TO CHANDRANI

PATNA,
March 10, 1947

CHI. CHAND,

I got your letter only today. Dev is all right and does a lot of work. He is not physically strong but he will become so. He is learning quite a few new things.

Do you get any news from Amritsar? Are Father and Mother still there?

Mehboob[2] is to be married on the 15th. He is still like a fakir. He wanted to invite you but I told him you would not

[1] Addressee's wife

[2] Syed Mehboob, eldest son of Dr. Syed Mahmud; *vide* also p. 81.

be able to come, though he could send you an invitation if he so desired.

I am all right so to say. Touring is inescapable even here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: Chand Rani Papers. Courtesy : Gandhi National Museum and Library

69. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

PATNA,
March 10, 1947

As the audience took some time to settle down during this evening's prayer, Gandhiji remarked at the beginning of his address that it would be difficult for him to tell them all that he wanted to if they continued to behave in that manner. He expected that they had come to the prayer-ground with an earnest desire to pray and then do the work of God, not for mere sight-seeing.

I have been accused of utilizing the prayer meetings for the propagation of my political ideas. My detractors will continue to criticize me and those who have made it a habit to abuse me will continue to indulge in their pastime. I speak of political matters in a religious spirit. A person who leads a religious life cannot divide it into different compartments. An unscrupulous person who accumulates huge wealth through fraud and deceit, and thinks that he can wash off his sins by chanting the name of God at home, is deceiving himself. God is not such a simpleton.

Indeed, it might even be said, continued Gandhiji, that the Law which held together the universe was indistinguishable from the Law-maker. Speaking in human language, one might even go so far as to say that God Himself was subject to the wheel of the Law. We were used to the saying that "the king can do no wrong". But in God's universe even such a distinction was hardly permissible. One could only say that 'there could be no wrong in the Law, for the Law and the Law-maker were one and the same'. There was no scope for even the least little blade of grass to be free from the operation of God's laws.

God is Himself the Law and the Law-giver. He does not transgress the Law laid down by Himself nor does He allow

[1] The Urdu version has been collated with the report in *Harijan* published under "Gandhiji's Bihar Tour Diary".

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others to transgress it. You should understand that in our prayers we do not merely remember Him but also undertake to do His work. If you realize this, then the meaning of my words will be easy to grasp.

A friend has written to me a frank and honest letter and that is why I like it. He wonders why I cannot see that the quarrel between Hindus and Muslims is not on account of religious differences but is essentially political in origin. The Hindus want a united India. The Muslims want Pakistan so that Muslims will rule in Pakistan and Hindus in Hindustan. I really do not understand its implications. One thing is very clear. Religious or political differences should not lead to a total war.

But what he wanted to impress upon the audience was that supposing it were only a so-called political struggle, did it mean that all rules of decency and morals should be thrown to the winds? When human conflicts are divorced from ethical considerations, the road can only lead to the use of the atom bomb where every trace of humanity is held completely in abeyance.

It is wrong to imagine that, in political warfare, one could slaughter men, women and children, innocent and guilty alike, without compunction. This is sheer brutality. Will forty crores of human beings descend to the level of beasts? Will such brutality secure us freedom? This is absolutely impossible.

We do not know what is actually happening in the Punjab. As long as we do not get full and reliable reports, let us hope that they have not descended to the beastly level of slaughtering innocent women and children. But even at present we must admit that brutality is very much in evidence in the Punjab. But to what extent, will be known later on. Brutality can neither secure Pakistan nor preserve India. It will destroy both Pakistan and India, leaving abject slavery behind. I used to regard Punjabis as a brave people. I can no longer regard them as such. Those who are burning houses, looting properties and slaughtering the innocent, do not even know why they are perpetrating these crimes and atrocities. In a regular war both the sides know what they are fighting for. We are all slaves and our civil war will harm only ourselves. We should realize the teachings of our religions and act according to them. Our politics also should be consistent with our religion.[1]

You should contribute generously for the relief of Muslims. I shall stand up myself and collect the money. If you ask me

[1] At this stage the audience near the dais became rather noisy and Gandhiji had to cut short his speech.

whether Muslims in Noakhali contributed funds for the sake of Hindus, I have to confess that I did not get much. The reason is I am now looked upon as an enemy by the majority of the Muslims. Even then, some Muslims and Christians in Comilla had contributed more than Rs. 800 along with a box containing vermilion and conch-shell [bangles] for distribution among women who had been forcibly deprived of these auspicious symbols.

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—I, pp. 18-20, and *Harijan*, 30-3-1947

70. A LETTER

PATNA,
Tuesday, March 11, 1947

I listened to your long letter to the end. I liked it, but it pained me none the less. We must be hard and sharp with ourselves but generous with others. Let us not take the view that all three . . .[1] of them are at fault. No one is without fault; so who can blame whom? Should I write to them about those faults of theirs which you have mentioned? It is your duty to talk with these people politely. Look within. When pride enters the mind of a *sadhaka*[2], his progress is hampered. This is what I fear from the way you have written. Go deep into the matter and write to me. This will do for the present.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 32

71. A LETTER

PATNA,
Tuesday, March 11, 1947

. . .[3] I have your affectionate letter. I would have been happier if I had found in it as much knowledge as affection. My relationship with Ba was not merely physical. For me, Ba is alive even today. She is by my side. Ba was aware of everything I did. Nobody could have known Ba as intimately as I did. . . .

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 32

[1] Omission as in the source
[2] Seeker
[3] & [4] Omissions as in the source

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72. A LETTER

PATNA,
Tuesday, March 11, 1947

I have your letter. Now you and Shantilal have to worry about Panchgani. I don't think I can leave this place in the near future. I must do or die. God alone knows the final result. I understand about Bhangis. As regards village industries consult Kumarappa[1].

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 33

73. A LETTER[2]

PATNA,
Tuesday, March 11, 1947

I have your letter. Why should I feel hurt when you have stated facts? Write if you know something more. . . .[3]

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 33

74. LETTER TO B. G. KHER

PATNA,
March 11, 1947

BHAI KHER[4],

I don't think I can leave this place in the near future. It is either "do or die".

[1] J. C. Kumarappa, Secretary, All India Village Industries Association

[2] This was addressed to a student who had complained against a girl studying in his college who was known to Gandhiji.

[3] Omission as in the source

[4] (1888-1957); Chief Minister, Bombay, 1937-39 and 1946-52; member Constituent Assembly; High Commissioner in Britain, 1952-54; Chairman, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, 1956-57

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What are you doing about Hindustani? I hope the Government will clarify its policy regarding it. Today we are falling from our stand. Someone ought to remain steady in the circumstances.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original : B. G. Kher Papers, File No. 26. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

75. TALK WITH MUSLIM LEAGUE MEMBERS

PATNA,
Tuesday, March 11, 1947

In your own interest please do not exaggerate. I admit that whatever has happened here is really deplorable. But in Noakhali also [the Hindus] are full of fear. Volunteers amongst you should go there and convince the people that we haven't yet attained independence and ask them why they are fighting with each other. You should go and declare that even a little Hindu girl or boy is just like your daughter or son and that they [Hindus] should not worry at all. If you go and do this much, peace will automatically return to the Punjab and Bihar. At the same time your name will shine forth in the world. Everyone is liable to make mistakes; but if they are rectified in time with a sincere heart, they will be forgotten.

[From Gujarati]
Biharni Komi Agman, p. 35

76. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

PATNA,
March 11, 1947

Gandhiji began his address by saying that that was perhaps his last evening prayer for the time being in the city of Patna, because his tour was going to begin on the following day. For the next few days, he would tour with the city as the centre and return to it every night for rest, the prayers being naturally held elsewhere. He expected, however, that the spirit in which the previous evening's contributions to the fund for the Muslim

[1] The Urdu version has been collated with the report in *Harijan*, published under "Gandhiji's Bihar Tour Diary".

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sufferers had been made would continue unabated. The collections had amounted to nearly Rs. 2,000, besides some ornaments which yet remained to be auctioned. He was glad that women had given their ornaments, and he reminded them in this connection that the true ornament of woman was a pure heart, the place of which could never be taken by any physical adornment.

A friend said to me today that what the Hindus had done was no doubt very wrong, but that they had acted under great provocation. How could they remain peaceful after such incitement and provocation? Well, we should not try to minimize our guilt. The above argument would mean that if someone abuses or beats you, you will also return the abuse and hit back. Is it good to do the very thing which angers you? You in your turn will provoke further anger. The world has reached the stage of atomic warfare in returning violence for violence. Let us pray to God that He may save us from this atom bomb mentality. I have been persuading everyone to observe silence in reply to abuse or violence.

The whole world tries to suppress the coward. Even God does not help the coward. He says, ' A person who is afraid of anyone except me, lacks faith in me.' The brave man who has learnt the lesson of non-violence does not return abuse for abuse, nor does he slaughter innocent children and women under any provocation.

If I am starving and you feed me, the contentment in my eyes will brighten your face too. But take another instance. Suppose I am starving and demand food from you by abusing you. You will drive me away, saying : 'Go and starve yourself to death.' My abuses will not get me food. They will, however, make me feel that I am a brave man. Again, if you ask your gate-keeper to beat me up for my abuses, that will sow the seeds of hatred against you in my heart. I will say, 'You may deny me food if I abuse you; but why did you beat me?' The next day I shall gather a few friends and retaliate. Or, if you manage to kill me, it will create among my relations and friends a feeling of revenge against you. This will aggravate the quarrel. I look upon all this as cowardice. Even if the Muslims had incited the Hindus, they should have remained peaceful.

An evil returned by another evil only succeeded in multiplying it, instead of reducing it. It was a universal law, he said, that violence could never be quenched by superior violence but only by non-violence or non-violent resistance. But the true meaning of non-violent resistance had

often been misunderstood or even distorted. It never implied that a non-violent man should bend before the violence of an aggressor. While not returning the latter's violence by violence, he should refuse to submit to the latter's illegitimate demand even to the point of death. That was the true meaning of non-violent resistance.

I shall now discuss Pakistan. Jinnah Saheb is my friend. I have gone to his house many a time. If Jinnah Saheb says to me: 'Concede Pakistan or I will kill you,' I will reply : 'You may kill me if you like; but if you want Pakistan, you should first explain it to me. If you convince me that Pakistan is a worthy ideal and Hindus are maligning it for no reason, I shall proclaim to the Hindus from the house-tops that you should get Pakistan.'

But if the demand was backed by force, then the only course open to the non-violent man was to offer non-violent resistance against it as long as he was not convinced of its justice. One was not to return violence by violence but neutralize it by withholding one's hand and, at the same time, refusing to submit to the demand. This was the only civilized way of getting on in the world. Any other course could only lead to a race for armaments interspersed by periods of peace brought about by exhaustion, when preparations would be going on for violence of a superior order. Peace through superior violence inevitably led to the atom bomb and all that it stood for. It was the complete negation of non-violence and of democracy which was not possible without the former.

The non-violent resistance described above required courage of a superior order to that needed in violent warfare. Forgiveness was the quality of the brave, not of the cowardly. Gandhiji here related a story from the *Mahabharata*: one of the Pandava brothers[1] was accidentally injured while living in disguise in the home of King Virata. The brothers not only hid what had happened, but for fear that harm might come to the host if a drop of blood touched the ground, they prevented it from doing so by means of a golden bowl. It was this type of forbearance and courage which Gandhiji wished every Indian to develop, whether he was a Hindu, Mussalman, Christian, Parsi or Sikh. That alone could rescue them from their present fallen condition.

A friend has written to me eulogizing the sword. The Muslims came here, says he, hurling abuses and unfurling Muslim League flags. We tried to dissuade them, continues the friend, but they did not listen. When, however, we pulled out the swords, asserts the friend, they came to their senses and became our friends. I tell you this was no true bravery. The persuasion was backed by the threat of the sword. Threats do not produce true friendship. If you were honest, you should have told the

[1] Yudhishthira

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Muslims : 'Look here, you are only a handful and we are in a vast majority. You are abusing us. You want to unfurl your flag. And yet we shall not say anything to you nor return your abuses. But we shall not allow you to unfurl the flag nor shall we salute the Pakistani flag.' If the Muslims had seen that, in spite of your vast majority, you do not wish to fight them, but that on the other hand you wish to be friendly with them, their conscience would have awakened and they would have become your true friends. The weapon of non-violence is mightier than the weapon of violence. The last Great War also proves this truth.

The lesson of non-violence was present in every religion but Gandhiji believed that perhaps it was here in India that its practice had been reduced to a science.

Hindu religion prescribes great *tapashcharya*[1] for the realization of ahimsa. It is said that innumerable Hindus had shed their blood in the cause of ahimsa until the Himalayas became purified in their snowy whiteness by means of that sacrifice. The Hindus of today pay only lip service to ahimsa. You must demonstrate true ahimsa in this land of Ramachandra and King Janaka. True bravery consists in true ahimsa. At the moment you are guilty of committing very cowardly acts.

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—I, pp. 20-2, and *Harijan*, 30-3-1947

77. CABLE TO "CAVALCADE"[2]

Unrevised *March 12, 1947*

RECEIVED WIRE. REGARD DECISION WITHDRAWAL BRITISH POWER AS PERFECTLY SOUND.[3] NO ORGANIC PEACE POSSIBLE WITHOUT COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE INCLUDING WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH TROOPS AND INFLUENCE FROM INDIA. IMPOSED PEACE DISTURBED HUMAN RELATIONS. HENCE ESTABLISHMENT OF ORGANIC PEACE IN INDIA INEVITABLY INVOLVES SENSELESS STRIFE AS IN BENGAL, BIHAR AND NOW PUNJAB. THIS WILL END QUICKER WHEN NO PARTY IS ABLE TO

[1] Penance

[2] The British news magazine had sent a cable asking for Gandhiji's message.

[3] Here follow the words "When perfect severance British", which appear to have been struck off.

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LOOK TO BRITISH POWER FOR PROTECTION. FORCED EMASCULATION OF A GREAT NATION WAS BOUND TO HAVE THIS SAD RESULT. NO DOUBT MUCH WILL DEPEND UPON INDIAN WISDOM FOR MINIMIZING MISCHIEF. WHILE CONNECTION [REMAINS][1] HONESTY AND SAGACITY OF BRITISH STATESMEN AND BRITISH RESIDENTS IN INDIA [EQUALLY][2] NECESSARY. MUST REGRETFULLY SAY THAT DISTRUST OF BRITISH STATEMENTS AND PROMISES HAS GONE TOO DEEP AND THAT PERHAPS LEGITIMATELY. THEREFORE BRITISH DEALINGS HAVE TO BE STRICTLY FRANK AND ABOVE SUSPICION AT THIS CRITICAL MOMENT. GIVEN THESE CONDITIONS I EXPECT NO DIFFICULTY ABOUT HEALTHY ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. PLEASE REGARD THIS AS MY INDIVIDUAL OPINION. ENDS.

GANDHI

From a photostat : C. W. 10560. Also a facsimile : *Mahatma*, Vol. VII, between pp. 416 and 417

78. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[3]

PATNA,
March 12, 1947

Gandhiji referred, in the beginning of his address, to the decision of the British Government to quit India. The British were a nation with a strong sense of reality: and when they realized that it did not pay to rule, they did not hesitate to withdraw their power over a country. This had been the course of British history in the past. If the British were going, as they surely were, what should be the duty of Indians at the same time, asked Gandhiji. Were we to return blow for blow among ourselves, and thus perpetuate our slavery, only to tear up our motherland, in the end, into bits, which went by the name of Hindustan and Pakistan, Brahministan and Achhutistan? What greater madness could there be than what had taken place in Bengal and Bihar, or what was taking place in the Punjab or the Frontier Province?

Today I visited a village where Hindus had caused great damage. An old Muslim showed me his own house and those of his relations with broken door-frames where bricks were removed from the door-sill. I was shocked and shaken to see that the Hindus had caused these depredations. I had wept when

[1] & [2] Illegible in the source

[3] The Urdu version has been collated with the report in *Harijan* published under "Gandhiji's Bihar Tour Diary".

I saw the ruins caused by Muslims in Noakhali. Today also I might have wept. But my tears cannot render any succour to the sufferers. What I witnessed today does not behove human beings. We are all responsible for this vandalism so close to the city of Patna. Even if you did not participate personally in the loot, you cannot escape the charge of abetting the marauders. A mosque was also damaged in the village Kumarahar. This also I consider to be a devilish deed. It is no justification to argue that the Hindus damaged the mosque because the Muslims were desecrating the temples. Hindus worship idols, while the Muslims do not. But every human being does worship something or other.

God resides everywhere; not only in the Bible and the Koran, in a mosque or a temple, but in the nose, ear, nail or even a single hair of the body of man. I have been taught ever since my childhood that God resides everywhere. He is subtler than the air. It is one and the same thing whether one worships Him in a mosque, a temple or a church. I am as much an idol-worshipper as an idol-breaker. Still when I go to a temple, I am happy if I find it neat and clean.

Those who desecrated the mosque were not men but devils; because mosques, temples or churches are all houses of the Lord. I have come here today to convey to you my grief. You may perhaps be smiling and thinking that whatever happened was all very good. But I assert that this is potent injustice. I am grieved when I hear that Muslims have desecrated a temple. Should I retaliate by damaging a mosque? How can such damage save the temple or benefit the Hindu religion? If Muslims are about to desecrate a temple, it becomes my duty to prevent them from their vandalism, irrespective of my not being an idol-worshipper. I should hug the idol and request them not to demolish the temple. I should lay down my life to protect the idol but refuse to hand it over to them. My entreaties will impress them, they will realize that I mean no harm to them and then they will become my friends.

Muslims are demanding Pakistan. They should therefore explain its advantages. No one will oppose it if he sees its advantages. But if they want to establish it forcibly, it will be a *Napakistan* (impure-land) instead of Pakistan (pure-land).

Badshah Khan is sitting by my side. He is a fakir by nature. But people, out of affection, call him Badshah[1] because he rules the hearts of his people through love. He comes

[1] Emperor

from a tribe whose tradition is to return a blow for a blow, and blood feuds are handed down from sire to son. But Badshah Khan has full faith in non-violence. I asked him how an expert swordsman like him came to believe in non-violence. He said that they had come to realize non-violence as the only road to their national freedom. If the Pathans do not give up the policy of blow for a blow and do not adopt non-violence, he said they would perish in their internecine feuds.

When he took to non-violence, he realized a kind of transformation coming over the Pathan tribes. It did not mean that every Pathan had undergone the transformation or that Badshah Khan had himself reached the highest goal of non-violence. As far as he, the speaker, knew, he (Badshah Khan) was every day nearing the goal because he realized the truth of it. It was this type of brave non-violence which Gandhiji wished the audience to imitate.

If we continue to fight among ourselves, the shackles of slavery will never be removed. The British are bound to quit this country. They are a nation of businessmen. They calculate the profit and loss from every transaction. They have realized that it is no longer profitable to rule India. But what good will that freedom be to us if we continue to fight among ourselves after the British leave?

Gandhiji continued that he had come to Bihar in order to make the people realize the extent of the madness to which they had stooped. His object was to induce them to repent and thus undo the wrongs which had been perpetrated.

I have been told that a storm is still raging in the hearts of the citizens of Patna. I wish to remind you today that Bihar is the hallowed land of Lord Buddha and King Janaka. Lord Ramachandra had also once walked on this soil. It will be a great shame if this sacred land continues to witness the devilish dance of violence. You can retrieve the ancient glory of Bihar by means of non-violence. I do not want the bravery of swords or words. Today we need that non-violence which was exemplified by the people of Champaran in 1917.

Gandhiji added that, in his opinion, the departure from the straight path of non-violence they had made at times in 1942 was very probably responsible for the aberration to which he had referred. He instanced also the spirit of general lawlessness which had seized them inasmuch as they dared to travel without tickets, pulled chains unlawfully or in senseless vindictiveness, burnt zamindari crops or belongings. He was no lover of the Zamindari system. He had often spoken against it; but he frankly confessed that he was not an enemy of the zamindars. He had no enemies. The best

way to bring about reform in the economic and social system, whose evils were admittedly many, was through the royal road of self-suffering. Any departure from it only resulted in merely changing the form of the evil. Violence was incapable of destroying the evil root and branch.

Lastly, Gandhiji referred to a letter he had received from the Harijans, asking him to visit their quarters and to live with them. He would have loved to do both the things; but he had to restrict himself to the mission that had brought him to Bihar. But having made himself a Bhangi in thought and deed, he could never forget the Harijans. He was sorry to say that the latter were still suffering from disabilities and that they did not get ready redress of their grievances.

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—I, pp. 23-5, and *Harijan*, 30-3-1947

79. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

PATNA,
March 13, 1947

CHI. MUNSHI[1],

I got your note. I was sure that you would be able to win over Panditji[2]. He admires hard work and intelligence. You have both in good measure. And you have got work in which you can shine.[3] May your heath be preserved and may you go on serving all your life.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I cannot say how long I shall have to stay here. According to me, the Bihar and Bengal problems are really one problem. It is going to be "do or die". Let God's will prevail.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

[PPS.]

This paper is made from linseed reeds.

From the Gujarati original : C. W. 7702. Courtesy : K. M. Munshi

[1] (1887-1971); lawyer, educationist and man of letters; member Constituent Assembly; Food Minister, Government of India, 1952; Governor, Uttar Pradesh, 1953-58; resigned from Congress in 1960 and joined Swatantra Party; founded Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan

[2] Jawaharlal Nehru

[3] The addressee was on the Experts Committee appointed by the Congress Working Committee in July 1946, to prepare the material and draft proposals for the Constituent Assembly.

80. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

March 13, 1947

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

I have your long letter. It is good that you wrote in detail. What shall I write to you? I don't have full information of what is happening in the Punjab. In my view what I am doing is right. I am trying to transform both [the communities] from beasts to human beings. It is in God's hands to grant success. We have to do our duty. I have no time to write more.

How is it that you have written nothing about your treatment?

I have not received your earlier letter.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 2505

81. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

PATNA,
March 13, 1947

Today too I was a witness to heart-rending scenes. This seems to be my destiny. We have indeed committed a great sin. We had lost our sanity. Even now we are not aware of its root cause. You can ask me whether you should not retaliate for what happened in Calcutta or Noakhali. But I have told you that this is not a healthy reaction. We should never think in terms of retaliation. If the sequence of retaliations goes on snowballing, India will be in ruins. Why should Muslims in Bihar be killed because some Bihari Hindus were killed in Calcutta?

If we seek freedom, it should be for the whole of India. It is not proper to seek separate freedom for Hindustan, Pakistan, Achhutistan or Sikhistan. For, such a mentality may even lead a person ultimately into demanding freedom for his own village above everything else. This tendency is wrong. We are all Indians and an evil deed committed anywhere in India is the concern of every Indian. I shall stick to my pledge

of "Do or Die" so long as the whole of India does not become free.

We should not spread poison; on the other hand we should try to prevent it from spreading. If someone commits murder, we should be sorry because the murderer after all is our own brother. There must be something wrong in us; that is why our brother could stoop to such a sin. We should not become murderers to put an end to the murderer. If our hearts are filled with ill will, we must not hide that fact. We must openly confess it. We should think over our sins and repent for them. Sincere penitence reduces the incidence of sin. If we do not realize this truth, freedom of India will recede still further.

The British are leaving India; but if we continue to hate one another even after they leave us, then that freedom will bring us no benefit; someone else will come and snatch the freedom from us. If we look upon everyone as our brother, then only can we reap the full gains of freedom. Whatever is happening in the Punjab or the Frontier today is a matter of grave concern and regret. But we should not try to imitate the gangsterism of the Punjab. People say that Bihar has made enough amends for its sins and the Government here is also very alert and that I should now go to the Punjab. But what shall I do? I can go to the Punjab only when the Hindus and Muslims of Bihar tell me with one voice that they need me no more and that I may safely go to the Punjab. That will also give me strength enough to tackle the Punjab. It lies with you to strengthen my hands. If you do not give me strength, how can I go? You will yourself accuse me of running away from my pledge of "Do or Die". God is the source of all strength. If He commands me, I shall go to the Punjab. I am only an humble instrument in His hands. If my voice can reach the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of the Punjab, I would tell them that the happenings in their province are doing good to no one. If the wild fire that is raging in the Punjab is not controlled, it will vitiate the climate in the whole of India.

Today I visited the ruined and deserted villages in the neighbourhood. I hung down my head in shame. The people who perpetrated these crimes should also feel ashamed. Those who have looted Muslim properties should return them. If they dare not surrender to any authority, let them come to me or to Dr. Mahmud. They should not apprehend punishment. We will not tell the police. But one should not be afraid of undergoing punishment for one's sin. It would be praiseworthy indeed if

you confessed your guilt even when there is fear of punishment. Those who have caused damage to others should pay compensation for the same.

While I was returning from my tour today, the villagers of Siparah stopped my car and presented me with a purse. The purse also contained a letter which stated that the villagers were sorry for what they had done. They assured me that they would try to resettle their Muslim brothers in the village. I appeal to all of you to atone for your sins as honestly as the brothers at Siparah. The amount which that small village has contributed and the manner in which they have expressed their sentiments deserve praise. It will be yet more commendable if they come forward to return the looted property.

I shall report to you something which I saw in a village today. One of your Ministers, Anugraha Babu[1], is sitting here. I wish to report to him also and to ask him why there is so much delay in atoning for that sin. Why are these villages still wearing a forlorn look? You will say this is a job which the Government ought to do. I am asking you, why should the Government do this job? Did you seek Government's permission while ruining the villages? It is your responsibility to rebuild the villages. You must remove the debris and clean the villages. The Government will be thankful to you and will send you experts who can guide the work of sanitation. This is a job wherein even women and children can participate. You should help the Government and the Government will help you.

The village I visited today was more unclean than the one I visited yesterday. Rains will make it even worse. Someone has recorded that India is strewn with excrement. One cannot contradict him if one visits the villages. Every corner in the village we visited was dirty. The lanes were very filthy and the roads were in a shabby state. I would call upon you to clean up these villages so that they reflect the cleanliness of your hearts. Besides contributing money you should be prepared for the work of sanitation. If you do not clean up the villages, how can I ask the Muslims to return to their homes? It is your duty to start the cleanliness drive from today. If your hearts are clean, the Muslims will surely return. I myself wish to undertake sanitation work. I have done this work in my time; but now I do not have the physical strength to do it. You must make your villages clean and beautiful. You should grow flowers and main-

[1] Anugraha Narayan Sinha, Minister, Finance, Labour, Supply and Price-Control

tain a garden where women and children can walk about. The lanes should be spotlessly clean. The roads even if they are narrow, should be so well-maintained that even a blind man should be able to walk on them. This alone can turn the villages of India into heaven on earth.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—I, pp. 27-9

82. LETTER TO PRESIDENT, SAIVA PARIPALAN SANGAM

PATNA,
March 14, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

The draft you have sent will be used as suggested by you. Though I am in Bihar at present, the headquarters for Noakhali continue to be Kazirkhil, Noakhali.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

PRESIDENT
SAIVA PARIPALAN SANGAM
BADULLA, CEYLON

From a photostat : G. N. 779

83. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

PATNA,
March 14, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

There has been no letter from you and none from Pyarelal or others. What is the reason? How is everything going on there?

I gather from Rajagopalachari's letter[1] that we will not be able to get yarn from that source. How are you managing at present? What will you do about obtaining yarn?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 8963

[1] C. Rajagopalachari, who was member Industries and Supply, in the Interim Government, in his letter dated March 5, 1947, had written: "Your telegram about 1,900 bales per month came as a surprise. It is unlikely that we shall be able to secure more than about 100 to 200 bales of yarn for this purpose. It would not be possible for the Government of India to arrange for a regular monthly quota of yarn to Noakhali."

84. LETTER TO GANGI A. HINGORANI

PATNA,
March 14, 1947

CHI. GANGI,

I have your letter and also Anand's telegram. You and Anand can come over just to see me but you will not be able to go with me wherever I go. In this tour the fewer the people the better it is. So my advice to you is not to come. I shall not be in Patna after Monday. What is the use of just meeting me?

Blessings from
BAPU

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

85. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

PATNA,
March 14, 1947

DEAR DAUGHTER,

I am unable to forget the last day of our meeting[1]. I do not find any mistake in my observation. If there is, tell me.

There is no letter from you. How is the work going on? How is your health?

I am well. The task is a difficult one.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 580

86. BLESSINGS TO SYED MEHBOOB[2]

March 14, 1947

I would give you anything you like just for the asking.

The Hindu, 16-3-1947

[1] The addressee, at Gandhiji's instance, had come to see him at Haimchar on February 26. *Vide* pp. 18-9.

[2] On the eve of the addressee's marriage Gandhiji presented him with two yarn garlands, one for him and the other for his bride.

87. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

KHUSROPUR,
March 14, 1947

I wish that whatever I tell you now should touch your hearts. The scene I witnessed today after my tour of two days was very painful. I do not suggest that my visits to villages earlier were not painful. Large houses of Muslims have been razed to the ground. Women and children had been slaughtered. I just cannot describe it in detail. Although I have hardened my heart, I am incapable of describing all the details even if I wish to do so. Muslims were your brothers and they are so even now. I have been hearing that Muslims in Bihar were particularly gentle. There used to be occasional disputes between Hindus and Muslims. But such disputes are bound to occur as long as the world lasts. But they should not tear heart from heart. Unfortunately this has happened now. I am fated to witness worse scenes than what I have seen during the last three days. What is happening in the Punjab is heart-rending. God alone knows how long such riots will continue. The people who are fighting in the Punjab do not even know what are the likely consequences of their action. If we go on fighting among ourselves in this manner, a third party may impose itself on us as an arbiter, and all sorts of witnesses, honest or dishonest, may come forward. It is better to have an arbitrator from among ourselves rather than allow an outsider. But the best thing is that the need for arbitration should not arise at all. I wish that Hindus and Muslims should cleanse their hearts and live like brothers.

Those who have committed crimes should come forward and confess their guilt with God as witness. No one should do so in a spirit of bravado. If someone has misbehaved in imitation of others, he too should own his mistake. I want a genuine feeling of repentance and an honest atonement for the atrocities committed by thousands of Hindus on a handful of Muslims.

Referring to the method of violence, Gandhiji said that some sort of peace might perhaps be established in the province by means of force. He

[1] The Urdu version has been collated with the report in *Harijan* published under "Gandhiji's Bihar Tour Diary".

would hope, but it could never be said with confidence, that the evil would not spread throughout India, as it happened in the case of 1857. Similar things, as we know, had happened during the Sepoy War when it was quelled by means of superior arms. Outwardly, things quieted down but the hatred against an imposed rule went deep underground with the result that we were even today reaping the harvest of what was then sown. The British Government took the place of the East India Company. They established schools and law courts and Indians took to these with enthusiasm; they even co-operated in the diffusion of Western culture; but, in spite of all this, they could never bear the insult or the degradation involved in political subjugation. Similarly, but in a worse manner, if the Punjab quietened down by reason of superior force used against the people of the Punjab, the seed of further conflict and bitterness between brothers that the Hindus and the Muslims were, would go still deeper. Violence, continued Gandhiji, thus could never be ended by counter-violence. The only effective answer to it was the way of non-violence.

People had adopted ahimsa in Champaran at my instance. I now feel that it was the ahimsa of the weak. The British, who were our adversaries, were a mighty power. That is why we seem to have adopted non-violence in facing them; but we could not remain non-violent in our dealings with one another. We should feel sorry that we resorted to violence in dealing with our brothers. The mothers and sisters of Muslims are like our own mothers and sisters. If we have behaved with them like devils, it is our duty to atone for that sin.

Hindus and Muslims in Bihar should come closer than ever before. The followers of the two religions should never be afraid of one another. We should be afraid only of being overpowered by one another's love and affection. It is for you to consider whether you prefer to live in amity or wish to convert the whole of India into a boiling cauldron like Bihar or the Punjab.

Women have had a great hand in the growth of ahimsa. They can, if they choose, play a big role in Bihar. The events in Noakhali, Bihar and the Punjab are most unfortunate. If you have made up your mind to torture Gandhi, I cannot complain. In spite of my services to the country and to you, you have every right to say that Gandhi has cheated you and, but for him, you would have slaughtered all the Muslims—although you could not have done so. I would plead with you to pay attention to what I have to say. I do not wish anyone to be swayed by my personal influence; I want you to think calmly and act on my advice only if it appeals to your head and heart.

The Secretary of the Provincial Muslim League who had been good enough to come to him had complained that although the Government had made arrangements for repatriation, the mental attitude of the Hindus was not sufficiently reassuring. Gandhiji firmly said that the reality had to be faced and a determined effort made by every one of them to root out the least trace of the feeling of hostility and make it possible for their Muslim neighbours to live in brotherly love once more.

Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs are all engaged in a bitter feud in the Punjab. Sikhs have always claimed that one Sikh is equal in fight to a lakh and quarter of men. They arm even their children with *kirpans*. Many people are embracing Sikhism, lured by the *kirpan*. If you sincerely think that the way of the Punjab is the proper answer to the challenge of the times, you are free to follow it. I plead with you in all earnestness to tell me frankly that you do not approve of my way. I will not be hurt by your honesty.

Gandhiji would rather not live than see the day when the weapon of non-violence was given up. It did not matter where he laid down his life for achieving his cherished aim; anywhere in India would still be India for him. But he still hugged the hope that non-violence would surely be crowned with victory in the end; for in the example which Bihar might set in this line today lay the hope of peace and progress for our unhappy land.

I shall not say that Bihar has ignored my past services. I do not want you to do anything for my sake. I want you to work in the name of God, our Father. Confess your sins and atone for them with God alone as witness.

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—I, pp. 31-4, and *Harijan*, 30-3-1947

88. DISCUSSION WITH RELIEF COMMITTEE MEMBERS[1]

March 15, 1947

QUESTION: Will you advise Muslims to return to their villages in the prevailing disturbed conditions?

ANSWER: If you have the courage and if you have the requisite faith in God, I shall advise you to return to your villages. I do realize that it is a difficult task. If I had undergone such harrowing experience, perhaps I myself would not have

[1] Some members of the Muslim League Relief Committee had met Gandhiji and asked him several questions on behalf of the Muslim refugees of Phulwari Sharif.

been able to go back; it would have made me a raving lunatic. The memory of murdered men and women would have haunted me. But I aspire to reach a stage when I shall have such abiding faith in God that I would go and stay in the midst of people who had become my enemies.

Q. If there is no change of heart in the majority community, what should the suffering minority do? Should they live in small pockets or leave the province for ever?

A. If you do not return and since it was the fault of the Hindus, the Government is bound to compensate you for the loss of your property. But I do not understand your demand that the Government should allot land somewhere else. Well, if you can arrange mutual exchanges, no one can prevent you. But if the Government arranges this, it will not lead to a purification of hearts. Many people are talking of pockets. I simply do not understand this. If those villages where the Muslims are in majority welcome you, who can prevent you from going there? Similarly, no one can prevent you from leaving the province if you decide to go in spite of my promises of affection. There is a law in the U. S. A. that anyone wanting to migrate from that country has to obtain Government's permission. I do not approve of such a law.

Q. Should or should not those who have committed murder, rape, arson and other heinous crimes receive appropriate punishment? If you think they should, how will you advise the Government of Bihar?

A. Of course, those responsible for devilish deeds must be punished. The Government of Bihar has not abjured the principle of punishment. There is no such government anywhere in the world today. When such a government comes into being, I shall listen to their argument. But a government which believes in the theory of crime and punishment but does not punish the criminal has no right to call itself a government.

Q. Should the Government of Bihar make adequate provision for the relief of orphans and widows who have no one to support them? If some organization has undertaken such work, what will you advise the Bihar Government on this?

A. They are the responsibility of the State. If some organization wants to render relief in its own manner, it will not be justified in expecting assistance from the Government. This work has to be done either by the Government itself or in a manner approved by the Government.

Q. How will it be possible to make good the historical, cultural, social and religious damage done by the madness of the majority?

A. This has been a cruel and terrible tragedy. Such holocausts have shaken the world earlier and will do so even in the future. Only when we are reformed and tolerant enough to realize that all religions lead to the same God called by various people by various names, will the world change for the better. Till then the earth shall not be a habitable place. Till that change comes about, it is impossible to prevent such barbarity and the irreparable losses resultant from it.

Q. What should be done with those officers who openly helped the rioters and deliberately helped one side against the other?

A. Those officers against whom such charges can be proved can have no place in the government.

Q. What do you propose to do to prevent the repetition of riots at places where the Muslims have suffered? Even now the houses and properties of Muslims are being damaged.

A. I am doing my best to prevent a repetition. I shall continue to stay here till I succeed in my effort. I have already declared that I shall do or die. God will either grant me success or put an end to my life. I believe that a change of heart is essential if I am to succeed. As I have been telling the Hindus in Noakhali, this is not a work where the army or police can be of much help. You must gather courage and fear no one except God. I shall advise the Ministers to frame a law making Hindus responsible for the safety of the Muslim minority. Such laws will not in fact be needed where hearts have been purified.

Q. Can the cruelties and injustices meted out to us detain you for long in Bihar? Your prolonged presence is needed for the help of the refugees.

A. You need not worry on that account. I shall not leave Bihar so long as Hindus and Muslims do not jointly allow me to do so on the basis of their brotherly feelings.

Q. Will you call them Congressmen who organized and led the recent riots? If not, what action will be taken against them to preserve the prestige of the Congress?

A. How can those who participated in riots be called Congressmen? Before condemning them, I must listen to their version of the story. I am a devotee of truth and shall lay down my life in serving truth.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—I, pp. 35-8

CWMG - LXXXVII

89. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

PATNA,
March 15, 1947

I have been absent from here for the last three days. During these three days I visited a few villages. The villagers there have contributed their mite for the relief of Muslims. They gave more small coins than notes. Rich and wealthy people live here. You donated one thousand rupees on the first day and two thousand on the next day. When the gathering is large, it becomes very difficult to collect the donations.

When Gandhiji began his address he first referred to his visit[2] and said that people might naturally be interested to learn why he had gone there. For him it was a courtesy call because he could not go expecting any favours or services from the Governor as of yore. Under a responsible government, which theirs was, services and favours he could expect only from the Ministers who were the representatives of the people. The Governor had undoubtedly powers with reference to the minorities but these too he could exercise only with great restraint. What they discussed it was for the Governor to communicate to his Ministers. One thing, however, the speaker was free to tell them. To his agreeable surprise, the Governor had said that those who were responsible to the people had to begin with themselves. If they did not begin with their individual lives and show relative perfection, they could not be real reformers or servants of the people.

Gandhiji wanted the people also to disabuse themselves of any thought that they had usurped any power from the British. Non-violent non-co-operation did not admit of any such assumption. What they performed was a simple duty. The result undoubtedly was that the British naturally and voluntarily divested themselves of much authority and power and it was up to the people to do their duty along the lines of non-violence, if they were to have complete power as and for the people.

We have only partly recovered what we had lost through our folly. There is no doubt that we shall regain the power

[1] The Urdu version has been collated with the report in *Harijan* published under "Gandhiji's Bihar Tour Diary".

[2] Gandhiji had gone to meet the Governor about an hour before prayer time and had returned five minutes late for the prayer.

in full measure. I have already explained to you the way to complete freedom.

The recent events in Bihar were a departure from that right conduct and, if the truth was not recognized and if the infection of the Punjab spread, he had not a shadow of doubt that they would lose what was within their grasp. He, therefore, expected Bihar to recognize the fact and do its duty honourably and well.

You must not fight among yourselves and should not kill women, children and old men. You must put a complete stop to these internal feuds. If you think that these feuds will bring freedom, you are sadly mistaken. The belief that through internal fight we will attain freedom is like expecting a barren woman to give birth to a child.

During the last three days I saw that houses had been razed to the ground, roofs pulled down and a lot of destruction had been caused. I hear that old men, children and women had been slaughtered. Our first duty therefore is to repent for our misdeeds. We should resolve not to commit these horrors again and to prevent others from doing so. The same thing applies here also. We must first reform ourselves and then try to reform others.

It was painful for him to find the houses in the same condition in which the rioters had left them. If they wanted their Muslim neighbours to come back, it was necessary that proper conditions should be restored and the debris completely cleared. Every individual who felt it was his duty to make the return of the refugees smooth, could at once lend a hand in rendering the broken homes habitable once more.

Some poor Muslims had also come to see me today. I advised them to return to their homes. I assured them that the Ministers were looking after their interests. I have given them an assurance on your behalf and asked them to return to their homes. The Muslims can be safe amidst you, if it is your wish. You should now start living together as before and always remember that I gave the assurance to the Muslims in your name and on your behalf. I have assured a flourishing Muslim merchant that he should not be afraid of restarting his business in full confidence, for I am sure that the Bihari Hindu would honour that pledge.

I am confident that the recent tragedy will never be repeated. I shall appeal to the Ministers to keep the interests of Muslims at heart. I cannot order them. I have never ordered anyone in my life. I only wish to appeal to everyone.

When non-violence finds expression through a person, it influences other people too. I am not a great man. I am just the same today as I was when I came to Bihar for the first time. Of course there has been one change. My heart has been steeled now. I have assured the Muslims on your behalf that no Hindu will abuse them or hurt them or think of doing any such thing. Bihar should set an example of ahimsa which could be followed by other provinces. Rather than imitating Bengal or the Punjab, you should build a Bihar which Bengal and the Punjab would like to emulate. I have come to Bihar from Noakhali, but my heart is still in Noakhali. I used to say there that I was working for Bihar in Noakhali. Similarly, I have not lost sight of the work in Noakhali while I am in Bihar.

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—I, pp. 39-41, and *Harijan*, 30-3-1947

90. FROM THE DIARY[1]

March 15, 1947

Talked with . . . for an hour. Received . . . 's letter. Since I took time to explain why I was not moved by . . .'s letter though it was very loving, I could go to bed only at 11 o'clock. Got up at 2.30 to visit the toilet. The rest of my time was spent in deciding how I could convince him about my point. Still, I do not feel exhausted.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 53

91. DISCUSSION WITH SWAMI ANAND AND KEDAR NATH

[*March 15/16, 1947*][2]

QUESTION: Why did you not, according to your wont, take your co-workers into confidence and carry them with you before embarking on this novel practice[3]? Why this secrecy?

[1] Omissions in the item are as in the source.

[2] According to *My Days with Gandhi*, Swami Anand and Kedar Nath came to Bihar on March 14, 1947. Their discussion was entirely private and continued the next two days. *Vide* also footnote 1, p. 103.

[3] Gandhiji's experiment in *brahmacharya*, involving Manu Gandhi. *Vide* pp. 103-4; also Vol. LXXXVI, p. 420.

GANDHIJI: No secrecy was intended. Everything was fortuitous. Previous consultation with friends was ruled out by the very nature of the thing. Besides, I hold that previous consent was unnecessary. At the same time I should have insisted on ventilating the matter thoroughly at the very start. If I had only done that, much of the present trouble and commotion would have been avoided. The omission was a serious flaw. I was asking myself as to what would be an appropriate penance for it when Thakkar Bapa came[1]. You know the rest of the story.

Q. The irreparable harm, if you weaken the foundation of the moral order on which society rests and which has been built up by long and painful discipline, is obvious. But no corresponding gain is apparent to us to justify a break with established tradition. What is your defence? We are not out to humiliate you or to score a victory over you. We only wish to understand.

G. No moral progress or reform is possible if one is not prepared to get out of the rut of orthodox tradition. By allowing ourselves to be cribbed by cast-iron social conventions, we have lost. The orthodox conception of the ninefold wall of protection in regard to *brahmacharya* is in my opinion inadequate and defective. I have never accepted it for myself. In my opinion even striving after true *brahmacharya* is not possible by keeping behind it. For 20 years I was in closest touch with the West in South Africa. I have known the writings on sex by eminent writers like Havelock Ellis and Bertrand Russell and their theories. They are all thinkers of eminence, integrity and experience. They have suffered for their convictions and for giving expression to the same. While totally repudiating institutions like marriage, etc., and the current code of morals—and there I disagree with them—they are firm believers in the possibility and desirability of purity in life independently of those institutions and usages. I have come across men and women in the West who lead pure lives although they do not accept or observe the current usages and social conventions. My research runs somewhat in that direction. If you admit the necessity and desirability of reform, of discarding the old, wherever necessary, and building a new system of ethics and morals suited to the present age, then the question of seeking the permission of others or convincing them does not arise. A reformer cannot afford to wait till others are converted; he must take the lead

[1] On February 24, 1947; *vide* pp. 14-6.

and venture forth alone even in the teeth of universal opposition. I want to test, enlarge and revise the current definition of *brahmacharya*, by which you swear, in the light of my observation, study and experience. Therefore, whenever an opportunity presents itself I do not evade it or run away from it. On the contrary, I deem it my duty—dharma—to meet it squarely in the face and find out where it leads to and where I stand. To avoid the contact of a woman, or to run away from it out of fear, I regard as unbecoming of an aspirant after true *brahmacharya*. I have never tried to cultivate or seek sex contact for carnal satisfaction. I do not claim to have completely eradicated the sex feeling in me. But it is my claim that I can keep it under control.

Q. We are not aware of your ever having put before the people at large these ideas of yours. On the contrary we have all along known you to have put before the public ideas with which we are familiar, and which we have associated with your striving. What is the explanation?

G. Even today, so far as the people in general are concerned, I am putting before them for practice what you call my old ideas. At the same time, for myself, as I have said, I have been deeply influenced by modern thought. Even amongst us there is the Tantra school which has influenced Western savants like Justice Sir John Woodroffe. I read his works in Yeravda prison. You have all been brought up in the orthodox tradition. According to my definition, you cannot be regarded as true *brahmacharis*. You are off and on falling ill; you suffer from all sorts of bodily ailments. I claim that I represent true *brahmacharya* better than any of you. You do not seem to regard a lapse in respect of truth, non-violence, non-stealing, etc., to be so serious a matter. But a fancied breach in respect of *brahmacharya*, i. e., relation between man and woman, upsets you completely. I regard this conception of *brahmacharya* as narrow, hidebound and retrograde. To me truth, ahimsa and *brahmacharya* are all ideals of equal importance. They all call for an equal measure of striving on our part, and lapse in respect of any of them is to me a matter of equal concern. I maintain that my conduct in no way constitutes a departure from the true ideal of *brahmacharya*. As against it, *brahmacharya* which reduces itself to a system of prescriptive do's and don'ts and which is in vogue amongst us today has a baneful effect upon society; it has lowered the ideal and robbed it of its true content. I deem it my highest duty to put these prescriptive conventions and taboos in their

proper place and to release the ideal from the fetters that have been put upon it.

Q. One last question. If your attitude and practice constitutes such an advance in the cultivation of true self-restraint, why does not its beneficial effect show in your surroundings? Why do we find so much disquiet and unhappiness around you? Why are your companions emotionally unhinged?

G. I know well the shortcomings as well as virtues of my companions. You do not know their other side. You jump to hasty conclusions from superficial observation, which is unbecoming in a striver after truth.

I am not so lost as you seem to think. I can only ask you to have faith in me. I cannot give up at your bidding what to me is a matter of deep conviction. I am sorry, I am helpless.

Q. We cannot say we have been convinced. We feel unhappy. We cannot leave the matter here. We shall continue to strive with you. Should you again feel prompted to go against the established rules, just think of your sorrowing friends.

G. I know. But what can I do when I feel impelled by duty? I can imagine circumstances when I may feel it my clear duty to go against the established rules. In such circumstances I cannot allow myself to be bound down by any commitment whatsoever.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 226-9

92. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

PATNA,
March 16, 1947

MY DEAR KU.,

I have your letter[1]. I have seen the power of attorney which I enclose herewith. I suppose you know that it displaces your Chairman and other members of the Board[2] and enables you to play ducks and drakes with the assets of the Board. So long as you know and realize the immensity of the power you are taking, I feel quite safe.

I see from the papers that you have become a member of the Congress Working Committee. There is much to be cleaned

[1] Dated February 1, 1947
[2] Of Management of the All-India Village Industries Association

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in those stables. I have no doubt that you will count no cost too dear to perform the cleansing operation. I shall watch your career with considerable interest.

Send my love to Bharatan[1] wherever he is. Do you ever hear from Sita[2] ? Or, has she entirely disappeared from the village life such as it was?

You will pass on to me all the tit-bits that you may consider I should be aware of.

It is just discovered that you do not need my signature at all. I had thought that I was the President of the Association. But if I am not, I am glad of it because so much burden is off my shoulders.[3]

Love.

BAPU

SHRI J. C. KUMARAPPA
MAGANWADI
WARDHA

From a photostat : G. N. 10188

[1] Addressee's brother

[2] Bharatan Kumarappa's wife

[3] On March 26, the addressee replied : "Thanks for the power of attorney which reached me at Madras. You are still our President but not a Trustee. Only the Trustees have to sign it. We shall not leave you off so easily from the Association. . . ."

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93. LETTER TO SOLOMON ALEXANDER

PATNA,
March 16, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

Of course I knew your brother very well indeed. But I plead with you to spare me at the present moment. I must not divide my attention for things great or small. It will be time for me to consider others if I come out safe from the fire which I am trying to quench. The odds are so great that the fire may quench me, instead of my quenching it.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SOLOMON ALEXANDER, ESQ.
BARRISTER-AT-LAW
25 RUE TALAAT HARB
ALEXANDRIA
(EGYPT)

From a photostat : G. N. 8037

94. LETTER TO T. R. VENKATARAMA SASTRI

PATNA,
March 16, 1947

DEAR VENKATARAMA SASTRI,

I have your precious letter about the proposed Sastriar Memorial[1].

Let me tell you that I have not identified myself with the Malaviyaji Memorial although I am deeply interested in the doings of the Kashi Vishwavidyalaya.

As for the proposal, whilst I am deeply concerned with everything about Sastriar I wonder if it is necessary to have an institution in memory of the deceased for political education. Isn't that function performed by the Servants of India Society for which he gave his life? Political education is today being given by so

[1] In memory of V. S. Srinivasa Sastri who had died on April 17, 1946

many parties in which I may mention the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. However much one may differ from their way of thinking, it is not possible to withhold admiration from them for drawing to their fold people of learning, industry and self-sacrifice. I intensely dislike destructive criticism unless it is accompanied at the same time with constructive suggestions. I claim no exemption for my criticism. Strictly speaking mine is no criticism. I have simply thrown out a thought for your consideration. As at present equipped I would say that it might be a good thing to make an appeal for sustaining and expanding Sastriar's last and best beloved institution. That it needs expansion I have no doubt. I haven't thought out how. I will add however that the donors should earmark their donations for the object to be particularized in the general appeal. At this juncture when everything is in the melting-pot and institutions are undergoing rapid transformation it may be necessary to take the precaution. If you think that my suggestion is worthy of consideration you will have to consult the present President[1] of the Society.

The fact that I have taken deep interest in your project should not be taken to mean that I shall identify myself with that or any other project. My views about memorials have undergone change for some years and experience is daily strengthening them. But this is not for engaging you in considering them.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI T. R. VENKATARAMA SASTRI
"KAUSTUBHA"
EDWARD ELLIOTS ROAD
MYLAPORE
MADRAS

From the original : T. R. Venkatarama Sastri Papers. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

[1] Hriday Nath Kunzru

95. LETTER TO TARABEHN JASANI

PATNA,
March 16, 1947

CHI. TARA,

It is a great calamity for Manu, you and other members of the family. I learnt about it only from Satish's wire. I never expected such an end to Mohanlal. But do we not see every day that the most unexpected things happen? He who is born must die. Knowing this, we should learn to remain calm.

What more need I write. Write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 8788

96. ADVICE TO MUSLIM REFUGEES[1]

PATNA,
Sunday, March 16, 1947

You have my sympathy in your misery. What has happened should never have happened. But I believe that everything is futile unless there is a change of heart. I would suggest that you should go to Noakhali. Go there and find out for yourself if the Hindus have not been oppressed. If you are convinced about it, engage yourselves in relief work and service in that place. Impress upon the minority that they are your brethren, that they cannot leave the country, and that they may do so only over your dead bodies. Tell even the oppressors—let me say they are the members of the [Muslim] League—that such tyranny would neither bring any benefit to their party nor would it protect it in any way. And if the tyrants still continue to oppress, you must lay down your lives to protect your brethren. You must courageously tell them that they should first strike you before striking the innocent. Even if there is one such person among you, your fame would be matchless in all the world and God

[1] The refugees, accompanied by S. N. Maulvi, Dr. Azad Hussain and Hakim Tasadduq Hussain, called on Gandhiji at 2.15 p. m.

would shower flowers over you, and that fragrance would spread in the entire country. I am merely showing you your duty, since you have come to seek my advice. I would be the happiest man to see you rising high and to see Pakistan becoming really *pak*[1]. And, if you do this people would come to you to learn the lessons of non-violence and love.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 63

97. ADVICE TO MUSLIM WOMEN[2]

PATNA,
Sunday, March 16, 1947

You should have faith in God. He is the one who looks after everyone. I am only striving [to do my duty]. You mix with the Hindu women. Tell the children in your families things which promote love [among the two communities]. What you can do, men can never do. Tell your husband, son or father, or whoever is there, that he should rush to the rescue of the Hindus if they are terrorized by the Muslims anywhere in the country. Protect the Hindu women and inspire confidence in them that they are your own sisters. I have described women as the very embodiment of non-violence. God has given to woman a loving heart which man does not possess. You should put it to good use. It is as clear to me as daylight that as long as women do not acquire qualities of refinement and do not realize their duty, the country can make no progress. Women from numerous such Muslim families have come to me. So many of them are just like daughters to me. One of them is right in Noakhali. Amtussalaam is just skin and bones, but she is putting up a brave fight. She undertook a number of fasts. Raihana who comes from the family of Abbas Tyabji is just as brave. She is a devotee of Krishna. She reads the *Gita* and the Koran together. She understands the meaning of the *Gita* as much as she understands the meaning of the Koran. I believe that she has more Hindus than Muslims among her friends. There are many girls who have given up distinctions of caste and creed. My advice to you is that you should forget distinctions

[1] Pure

[2] The Muslim women came clad in *burqas*. Gandhiji asked: "Why do you observe purdah from me? Women do not observe it with me. The real purdah should be of the heart." The women then removed their *burqas*.

of caste and community if you want to be happy. It is one God who has endowed us with human life. We are all human beings, all men and women belonging to the same country. Let us justify our religion as human beings.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 64

98. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

PATNA,
March 16, 1947

I did not find time to write my speech for this silence day. I had told you yesterday itself that Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan would speak to you today. He will therefore address you today instead of I.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—I, p. 42

99. FROM THE DIARY[1]

PATNA,
Sunday, March 16, 1947

Today I was wide awake as it struck two. I did not seem to get sleep. Then all at once I heard Manudi reciting the *shlokas* of the morning prayer. I was startled. I called her a couple of times. Then she was quiet. She did not say anything, but she was frightened. She lifted my mosquito-curtain and held my hand. I stroked her for a few minutes and asked her to be calm. Now she became conscious and withdrew her hand. I asked her to go to sleep without worrying. I told her not to worry about the prayers and assured her that I would wake her up [in time]. That girl is worrying so much about me! She is just like an innocent child. It is only because of that quality in her that she has remained with me in such a trying *yajna*. I started thinking about it. I am not happy about the bleeding from her nose. I have asked her to keep a mud-pack on the back of her neck. I started thinking about . . . I did not like the manner of . . . 's questions and the grin on his face. I started thinking about my dharma and it was already 3.30 a.m. I started cleaning my teeth and then woke up Manudi. . . Got the prayers started at 3.55 a. m.

[1] Omissions in the item are as in the source.

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Held talks between 7.30 and 9.30 a. m. I explained to them my point of view. In the light of my present views about *brahmacharya* I felt that their ideas about *brahmacharya* were faulty and imperfect. It is very necessary for them to improve those ideas along my line. I have never sought the company of a woman with a view to satisfying my passions. Of course I mentioned one exception. I have made progress by my actions and expect to advance further. I am not in any way bound to . . . They may continue to write letters. I shall try to reply. It would be better if only one of them wrote.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 60-1

100. LETTER TO SIR HUGH DOW

PATNA,
March 17, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I was so struck by your reference (strange for a bureaucrat) to individual conduct that I referred to it on Saturday at my after-prayer speech.[1]

Yesterday evening I met your Ministers and gave them the purport of our talk of last Saturday. I told them that

1. you considered them to be dilatory about placating the Muslims who were so much the injured party;
2. permanent officials interpreted this to mean that the Ministers did not want them to be prompt in taking energetic action to restore confidence among the Muslims;
3. the guilty ones were not properly dealt with;
4. the League demands were turned down not on merits but because they were League demands.

The Ministers present totally refuted all these imputations and the Chief Minister expressed considerable surprise. The Chief Minister said that he and his colleagues had often differed from you on several questions including the minorities. He added, however, that on behalf of himself and his colleagues he had given you the assurance that in their handling of the minority question they would readily accept your advice even though there were differences between you and them.

[1] *Vide* pp. 87-9.

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I am showing this to the Chief Minister to check up my version of what the Ministers had said.

My only reason for writing this is not to advertise differences between you and your Ministers but to remove misunderstandings and to assist, wherever I can, in promoting goodwill between the retiring British official world and the Indian politicians who are, and are becoming growingly, responsible for the well-being of the people whom they guide and serve.

I casually referred to the condition of the working men in the mica industry. But I shall await your promised note before I can pursue it fully.[1]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE GOVERNOR OF BIHAR

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 228-9

101. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

PATNA,
March 17, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

Please read the enclosed papers about Paul and do what is necessary. I am sorry to have to put you to all this trouble but I cannot help it. However, if you can find no time at all to read them, forget about the matter and return the papers. If you do anything about it, you need not send them back.

Nathji and Swami had been here. We talked at great length.[2] They themselves will write to you.

Sushila writes that you are not keeping good health; please be careful.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 351

[1] For the addressee's reply, *vide* Appendix III.
[2] *Vide* pp. 89-92.

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102. A LETTER[1]

PATNA,
Monday, March 17, 1947

You seem to believe that after thousands of years I am the one born (as an incarnation of God). But I don't think so. I claim that all those who work with the same earnestness as I do can certainly do what I have been able to. It should be possible for everyone to be always vigilant and go on trying ceaselessly. But if what you believe is true, should I not be able to realize even the physical impurities in me?

Our definition of *brahmacharya* is imperfect. I am trying to make it perfect. Even the sharp intelligence of . . . is incapable of [understanding] *brahmacharya.* It was clear from the conversation between us that . . . also does not know the meaning of *brahmacharya.* I cannot express the pain I feel as I write these words. I am steeling my heart to write this. . . . I claim that except on one occasion I have not been a victim of passions and that is why I write the harsh words above.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 67-8

103. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

ON THE TRAIN,
March 17, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I have your letter. Write and tell me how the whole work is going on. I understand about Sardar Jiwan Singh. I had written that the accounts should be checked first.[2] But it does not matter if the money has already been given. Now the balance should tally. Sardar Jiwan Singh must be staying with you. If he needs special diet, arrange for it. He requires meat and fish. Let him have these. Everything will be set right with love.

[1] Omissions in the letter are as in the source.
[2] *Vide* p. 34.

Now how do you manage for the cloth? Could you get hand-spun yarn? Do the weavers weave it? They are our true support.

Where is Hemprabhadevi[1]? How is she? She should not worry.

Nathji and Swami had come. They discussed Manu with me at length.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 8964

104. NOTE TO NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE[2]

March 17, 1947

You may post it if you wish. There are errors of facts in the letter. There are other defects to which I would draw your attention. I would therefore advise you to wait till you have seen my opinion. But do just as you please.[3]

My Days with Gandhi, p. 175

[1] Addressee's wife

[2] According to the source, after their discussion with Gandhiji, Kedar Nath and Swami Anand asked the addressee his views since Gandhiji had mentioned that "his immediate personal associates did not see anything wrong in his acts". The addressee stated his views in a letter and gave it to them for communication to other friends. Afterwards he placed before Gandhiji a copy of the letter along with the post-script. As Gandhiji was observing silence, he wrote this note in reply. For extracts from the addressee's letter, *vide* Appendix IV.

[3] *Vide* also the following two items.

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105. LETTER TO NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE[1]

March 17, 1947

CHI. NIRMAL BABU,

Your letter is full of inaccuracies and unwarranted assumptions. I had asked you to discuss the thing with me. You could not do it. The result is bad. I do not mind what opinion you hold, only it must be well fortified.

You should have ascertained my views from me before accepting second-hand evidence however honest it might be.

I go beyond the orthodox view as we know it. My definition does not admit of laxity. I do not call that *brahmacharya* that means not to touch a woman. What I do today is nothing new for me. So far as I know myself, I hold today the same view I held when about 45 years ago I took the vow. Without the vow in England as a student, I freely mixed with women and yet I called myself a *brahmachari* for the period of my residence there. For me, *brahmacharya* is that thought and practice which puts you in touch with the Infinite and takes you to His presence.[2] In that sense Dayanand Saraswati[3] was not. Most certainly I am not. But I am trying to reach that state and, in accordance with my belief, I have made substantial progress in that direction.

I have not become modern at all in the same sense you seem to mean. I am as ancient as can be imagined and hope to remain so to the end of my life. If this displeases you, I cannot help it. Let me appear to you and others as naked as I can.

You have not done justice to A, B or C. You do not know them fully. Have you any right to judge them before you have taken the trouble of knowing them as fully as possible? That you may not want to or that you have no time, I would appreciate. But that very fact should prevent you from passing judgement on them.

I am amazed at your assumption that my experiment implied any assumption of woman's inferiority. She would be, if I looked upon her with lust with or without her consent. I

[1] This was written on the train to Masaurhi and handed over to the addressee who was accompanying Gandhiji.

[2] *Vide* also p. 108.

[3] Founder of Arya Samaj

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have believed in woman's perfect equality with man. My wife was 'inferior' when she was the instrument of my lust. She ceased to be that when she lay with me naked as my sister. If she and I were not lustfully agitated in our minds and bodies, the contact raised both of us.

Should there be difference if it is not my wife, as she once was, but some other sister? I do hope you will acquit me of having any lustful designs upon women or girls who have been naked with me. A or B's hysteria had nothing to do with my experiment, I hope. They were before the experiment what they are today, if they have not less of it.

The distinction between Manu and others is meaningless for our discussion. That she is my grand-daughter may exempt me from criticism. But I do not want that advantage.

"Experiment" or *prayog* is an ill-chosen word. I have used it. It differs from the present in the sense that the one could be stopped by me, the other being dharma could not be. Now comes the stop.

That I should take the public in my confidence before I do anything new is [not] novel to me. In the present case there is nothing new.

BAPU

My Days with Gandhi, pp. 176-8

106. NOTE TO NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE[1]

March 17, 1947

When must you go? There is no immediate hurry, is there? Let us wait till the three days' tour is over.

My Days with Gandhi, p. 178

[1] After receiving the letter dated March 17, *vide* the preceding item, the addressee told Gandhiji that he "might have to leave him earlier than by the end of the month". *Vide* also p. 109.

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107. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

MASAURHI,
March 17, 1947

It is not necessary, perhaps, to tell you that I have undertaken this tour not for pleasure but out of sorrow. I visit only those places where Muslims have suffered in some way or the other at the hands of Hindus. Everywhere I appeal to Hindus to atone for their sins.

A large number of Hindus attacked a handful of Muslims and killed women and children. This is not bravery but cowardice. It is cowardly to kill a person even under an apprehension that he is likely to kill us. We have to show true repentance for whatever has happened. If a brother of ours commits a crime, we cannot escape the responsibility. I include myself when I say "we". No one should think that he has committed no crime and this old man is unnecessarily implicating him. When one man commits a crime, all mankind becomes responsible for it. Hence even if a single Hindu has misbehaved here, all the Hindus will be put in the dock.

What the Muslims have done in Noakhali or what the Hindus have done in Bihar brings no benefit to India; on the contrary it is an obstacle to India's independence. I have been told that people shouted *Mahavirjiki jai* and *Gandhijiki jai* while committing these heinous crimes. Such people have not understood me. I am appealing to Hindus here that whoever has committed a crime should confess it. Those who have committed robbery, arson or murder should come to me and make a confession. I am no police officer; nor have I come here to prosecute you. You should not hesitate to make a confession before me at any rate. I shall not report the names of the criminals to the Ministers here, even though they are my friends. You should display your courage by confessing your guilt and ennoble your soul by atoning for it.

Hindus have written to me that they have indeed committed the crimes; but they plead that they have had enough

[1] The meeting was attended by more than thirty thousand people. A very large number of people participated in the *Ramdhun* for which Gandhiji congratulated them.

provocation. According to them, the Muslims took the offensive and the Hindus retaliated in self-defence. Now, I pose this question before you. Suppose a man speaks ill of me or abuses me, should I retaliate by abusing him and soil my own tongue? If a man turns into a devil, should I confront him by becoming a devil myself? One who attacks another person is a coward, but it would be an act of bravery to refuse to be provoked even in the face of an attack. One should realize that if the aggressor commits a shameful act one should not oneself commit a similar act.

I know the people of Bihar very well and I have visited this province very often. I had built great hopes on Bihar but this time the people here have dashed them to the ground. The only thing left to us now is to confess honestly that we are guilty of a serious crime. We should atone for the crime and declare that it would never be repeated. A Hindu friend has said, "I agree that you should have fought with those Muslims who had provoked you; but what is the justification for thousands of Hindus killing innocent women and children? Even if you had resorted to violence, you should have done it in a brave manner."

Muslims complain that the Provincial Government's hands are also not clean and the Ministers participated in the atrocities committed on the Muslims. It is difficult for me to believe this; I cannot also believe that the Chief Minister had a hand in this. Hindus accuse the Government of harassing them. Innocent Hindus, they say, are being arrested and tortured. It is likely that some innocent persons may have been arrested, but if they are really innocent they will certainly be released. An Inquiry Commission is being appointed here presently.[1] It will be impartial. Every one will get an opportunity to place his or her complaint before the Commission which will examine it and announce its verdict.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, pp. 1-3

[1] Shrikrishna Sinha had announced on February 13 the Government's decision to appoint a Commission of Enquiry to report on the communal disturbances in Bihar. *Vide* also Vol. LXXXVI, p. 460.

108. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

PATNA,
March 18, 1947

CHI. AMRIT,

I had your letter. I wanted to write to you at once but never got the chance. It is a very strenuous time I am having here. But do not worry.

You remember those two note-books containing rich treasures from the Bible and other Christian literature. If they have not taught you and me to be anxious for nothing and nobody, they have taught nothing worth learning, for our faith in the living God is to be measured by the extent of freedom from anxiety of any kind whatsoever and full faith in God requires an accurate knowledge of His laws and corresponding obedience thereto. This is the sum total of nature cure. The supreme law, making others superfluous, is heart-assimilation of Ramanama in every fibre of our being. The truth of this is verified in everyday experience.

I note what you say about your suffering and about Dr. Jacob's treatment. I hope to be able to learn some day that you have shed all your illnesses.

Tell Shummy[1] that he belies the teaching of the Bible which among our company he seems to know best.

Sardar[2] must not have any swelling whatsoever. But his obstinacy is very great.

I have asked you to pay me a brief visit. You might be of some use in the work that is being done here. That means your sparing a fortnight at the most. But I do not want you to neglect the duty you have undertaken, of course with my full consent.

Who told you that I had consented to take some rest? That rest must certainly come some day. Meantime I am learning day by day, though little by little, that all work, without any the slightest trace of anxiety, is true and living rest.

Jajuji[3] has sent me a copy of your letter about the Secretaryship.

I want you to give me a full and accurate account of the big tragedy that is going on in the Punjab.

[1] Shumshere Singh, addressee's brother
[2] Vallabhbhai Patel
[3] Shrikrishnadas Jaju, Secretary, A. I. S. A.

Surely you cannot be called "Her Highness" as Catlin calls you.

Lastly about myself. I had an affectionate but mournful visit from Nathji and Swami Anand. I gave them as much time as I was capable of giving. Our discussions were full, frank and cordial. You will have no difficulty in accepting at its face value my statement that not one of our company knows the full value and implications of *brahmacharya*, and that among these ignoramuses I am the least ignorant and the most experienced. With one solitary exception I have never looked upon a woman with a lustful eye. I have touched perhaps thousands upon thousands. But my touch has never carried the meaning of lustfulness. I have lain with some naked, never with the intention of having any lustful satisfaction. My touch has been for our mutual uplift. I would like those who have felt otherwise, if there are any, truly to testify against me. Even the one solitary instance referred to by me was never with the intention of despoiling her. Nevertheless my confession stands that in that case my touch had lustfulness about it. I was carried away in spite of myself and but for God's intervention I might have become a wreck.

My meaning of *brahmacharya* is this:

One who never has any lustful intention, who by constant attendance upon God has become proof against conscious or unconscious emissions, who is capable of lying naked with naked women, however beautiful they may be, without being in any manner whatsoever sexually excited. Such a person should be incapable of lying, incapable of intending or doing harm to a single man or woman in the whole world, is free from anger and malice and detached in the sense of the *Bhagavadgita*. Such a person is a full *brahmachari*. *Brahmachari* literally means a person who is making daily and steady progress towards God and whose every act is done in pursuance of that end and no other.

You say K.[1] and N.[2] had agreed to withdraw their boycott. From the letters I have, such is not my impression. Nor did I gather that impression from N[athji] and S[wami].

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3702. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6511

[1] & [2] Kishorelal Mashruwala and Narahari Parikh; *vide* Vol. LXXXVI, p. 452.

109. LETTER TO NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE[1]

March 18, 1947

CHI. NIRMAL BABU,

If you must leave today I must not stand between you and your duty as you conceive it. You have made me so used to you that I shall miss you. Pyarelal I cannot have just now. He must be in his place. If you leave today, I suppose you have arranged to hand over all papers in perfect order. The only one who can take charge is Dev.

Your explanation does not give me satisfaction. But I must not argue. If you want me to do so, I could do it through correspondence which perhaps better suits your nature. Of course you are at liberty to discuss the whole of me and my writings with anybody you like. This applies equally to the three letters[2]. I simply drew your attention to what appeared to be a hasty decision and that too in order to see as much perfection in you as possible.

"Haste is waste".[3]

BAPU'S
blessings

My Days with Gandhi, p. 181

110. LETTER TO VINODINI

PATNA,
March 18, 1947

CHI. VINODINI[4],

How is it that you have still not sent to Chi. Jaisukhlal the letters regarding Pyarelal? He is perturbed and is drawing unfavourable conclusions against you both and Pyarelal. Pyarelal of course has written to say that all the letters should be

[1] This was in reply to the addressee's letter written after a long discussion with Gandhiji. For extracts from the letter, *vide* Appendix V.

[2] *Vide* pp. 103-4; also Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 441-2.

[3] The addressee explains: "At a quarter to three in the afternoon I bade good-bye to Bapu. . . . He blessed me and said, "You have taken your decision in haste."

[4] Daughter of Jaisukhlal Gandhi

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sent. What objection can you have, then? And that, too, when you have to show the letters to your own father? I would advise you to send the letters immediately to Jaisukhlal and apologize to him for the delay.

I trust both of you are well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

For the present I shall have to stay on in Bihar. I shall be touring the different parts, but the headquarters will be at Patna. Manu is well. She also is angry with you, but will of course calm down.

BAPU

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

111. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

PATNA,
March 18, 1947

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

I got your letter. I have written to Vinodini again.[1] There must be some misunderstanding. That she would deliberately withhold the letters is not the impression I have of her. However, I have written quite strongly to her.

Manu is getting on quite well. She wins everybody's heart by her spirit of service. I am quite hopeful that her health will become perfectly normal. She is being treated with my remedies only—earth, water, ether, fire and air. If Ramanama sinks deep into her heart, it will be easy enough for her to benefit from these five elements. She is quite regular, of course, in her lessons.

You need not worry at all regarding Pyarelal. I do not see the slightest need for Manu to give up her lessons, etc., owing to this. Manu's good will be Pyarelal's good. Manu is firm in this matter. There will be reason for fear only if I am proved mistaken.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

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112. DISCUSSION WITH MUSLIM REFUGEES

MASAURHI,
March 18, 1947

REFUGEES : Please give us an assurance that our lives, property and honour will be protected.[1]

GANDHIJI: Efforts are being made in this direction. I shall advise the Government to hold all the Hindus in a village responsible for any harm to its Muslim minority and to punish them strictly according to law.

R. Securities should be taken from gangsters and influential people in the locality so that they may not foment riots again.

G. Those persons who had led the riots should be held responsible for law and order in the locality to prevent recurrence of riots. As it is not right to hold everyone responsible for the riots, it would not be right to punish everyone for the riots; nor would it be easy to do so. But if you can recognize and prove anyone's participation in the riots, the law will certainly punish him.

R. We should be issued licenses to possess arms for self-protection.

G. It is strange that I am hearing the same arguments here which I used to hear in Noakhali. I shall certainly oppose this. I can never understand why some or all of you should be given arms. This is not the way of creating an atmosphere of friendship. I had told the Hindus in Noakhali that they could not live there nor could the local Government protect them if the entire Muslim population was hostile to them. Should the Government kill 80 per cent of the population to protect them? No government can do this today. I would like to tell you that my ways are different. I believe that a man should become brave but bravery consists not in killing but in getting killed and that too without hatred for the killer. Muslims were no cowards, but they are terrified today and that too on account of us—this makes me hang my head in shame. If my staying here has any meaning, you should shed your anxiety. I shall

[1] Most of the houses in Masaurhi were razed to the ground during the riots and all but 25 out of a population of 1,000 had fled from the village.

not go away till you yourself ask me to go, and assure me that Hindus and Muslims are living like brothers again.

R. There should be some arrangement so that all Muslims can live together.

G. This talk of 'pockets' is not new to me. As soon as I arrived in Bihar, I went to see the leader of the Muslim League, Barrister Abdul Aziz of Patna. He explained to me everything. Earlier I used to oppose the idea of 'pockets'; but now I understand the logic behind the demand. I can very well understand that one just cannot stay at a place where one's relations and friends have been massacred. Hence if people want to shift to villages where there is a large number of Muslims, they can migrate there with mutual consent.

I have advised the Government to build houses for displaced persons or give them funds for the purpose if they so choose. If you demand, however, that the Government should provide you everything, it may not be in a position to do so because it would mean acquisition of some people's lands. And this would lead to all sorts of complications. If there is any vacant piece of land and you can settle there, you may certainly do so. A big landlord from North Bihar was ready to take as many Muslims as would like to stay on his lands. If you agree I shall write to him.

R. We should receive compensation for whatever we have lost.

G. Even the Government would go bankrupt if it agreed to this. Some people claim they have lost lakhs, some others claim they have lost crores. How can we evaluate the actual loss? I think the Government would not be in a position to pay even one-fourth of the claims. It can only provide shelter or give money to enable people to stand on their own feet. In Noakhali, many weavers and fishermen had practically nothing to support themselves. There I had suggested that the local Government should advance them loans which could be repaid in easy instalments. Money alone has no value. You are all farmers, a hard-working lot. If you take courage in both hands, you will forget in no time what you have undergone. Moreover a commission is being set up. Its object is not only to record whatever has happened, but also to examine the steps that are being taken and to recommend measures for the future.

R. 50 per cent of us should be taken in the police force.

G. I am totally opposed to such demands. I told Hindus in Noakhali : "I will not put in a word for a Hindu police officer. Does it make any sense that an officer is removed just

because he is a Muslim? Of course, he should certainly be removed if he is inefficient. And after all, the officers are going to carry out only what the Chief Minister of Bengal, Shaheed Suhrawardy Saheb, wants them to do. If Shaheed Saheb is good, the officers will be good; but if he himself is bad, how can they remain good?''

R. The Government or the Congress should pay us compensation or loans in proportion to the size of our business.

G. The Government should only advance loans and not pay compensation.

R. Stolen goods are being recovered. This work should be done swiftly and firmly. Aid should be given to those who want to buy looms and yarn. They should be given free rations as long as they do not earn enough for their sustenance.

G. All efforts must certainly be made to recover looted property. To those whose tools and properties have been totally destroyed Government must provide shelter and food till they can stand on their own feet. But if someone argues that the Government should go on providing everything free, then that will not be feasible. It will mean the Government should provide everything free to an ex-millionaire until he starts earning his millions. This is a ridiculous proposition.

R. Adequate arrangements should be made for recovering abducted girls.

G. Certainly. Please give the names and addresses of such girls to me. I shall immediately try to trace them. Hindus have been writing to me to let them know even if there is one such girl; and they will move heaven and earth to recover her.

R. We should have complete freedom to practise our religious rites, as we used to enjoy before the riots.

G. Certainly, it should be so.

R. The Government should make early and adequate arrangements to repair or rebuild before the rainy season such houses as were damaged during the riots.

G. Certainly, this work should be finished early.

The following decisions taken at the meeting of the refugees were placed before Gandhiji for his comments :

1. The relief camps should be situated near police stations instead of inside the towns. Gandhiji should be requested to depute two special workers for each camp.

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G. I agree.

2. We shall, besides Government help, raise volunteers with the co-operation of Hindus for our protection, clearing of our houses and so on.

G. Right.

3. Panchayats will be formed which will perform such functions as scotching false rumours, settling internal disputes, returning mortgages and striving to recover stolen goods and so on.

G. Formation of panchayats is welcome. If people co-operate among themselves, I shall help them in every possible way.

4. The loans for relief should be advanced in a spirit of mutual help.

G. Right.

5. Women volunteers should also be recruited from among the Muslims as well as Hindus and they should, in addition to other work, strive to recover abducted women.

G. Right.

6. After constructing the houses, essential things like utensils, cots, small tables, etc., should also be provided.

G. Right.

7. Licences for arms should be issued on the recommendations of the panchayat. They should not be issued to persons who do not need them or who want them for sport.

G. That's right.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, pp. 4-9

113. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

BIR,
March 18, 1947

I saw today the wreckage caused by us at Masaurhi. I had read in newspapers the Muslim League version of the happenings at Masaurhi, and I confess that I thought the version was grossly exaggerated. I did not believe that man could be so depraved or that Biharis could stoop so low. But today I witnessed it with my own eyes. When Muslims fled you either looted their property or destroyed it. They had not harmed you in any way. I have come here with the resolve of serving the Muslims. I

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am a servant of God and therefore consider it my duty to serve all human beings.

It is very unfortunate that our hearts have not yet been cleansed. I concede that the Muslims behaved very viciously in Calcutta and Noakhali. But how can that be avenged in Bihar? It was a very wrong decision to observe a Noakhali Day here.[1] Had I known it, I would never have allowed such an observance in Bihar. I am very sorry that my name was falsely dragged into this affair and I was maligned.

My statements were presented to the public in a twisted and distorted form. When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru constituted the Provisional Government at Delhi,[2] people wished to celebrate the occasion like Diwali. When I heard this, I said we should do no such thing because Jawaharlal and his colleagues had put on a crown of thorns.[3] The Muslim League had not joined the Government and it was a pity that riots had broken out in Noakhali. But my statement was distorted and people were told that Gandhi wanted them to observe a Noakhali Day. I had never even dreamt of this. And when the Noakhali Day was observed, people were so much excited that they thought they were expected to settle the Noakhali scores with the Muslims.

Hindus and Muslims used to live here as good neighbours. They had mutual love and affection. They might have quarrelled occasionally, but that did not affect their relations. They used to become friends again soon. It is an altogether different story now. Today celebration of any Day leads to fratricide. I have said that this must not happen while I am alive. I can never be a witness to fratricide. If this thing is repeated in Bihar I shall perish in that conflagration. I have heard that the Muslims here are panic-stricken over the Punjab Day to be observed on the 23rd. I hope this is a false alarm. I assert that we must not observe a Punjab Day. If we do this, it will lead to dreadful consequences. The freedom of our country will become a distant dream. I pray to God that He must never let me live to witness that day. I am awakening the whole of Bihar through these words addressed to you.

While I was coming to the village of Bir, the residents of two villages stopped me on the way and handed over to me two letters. The first letter was addressed jointly by the Hindus and Muslims of Sain. They also contributed Rs. 55 for the relief of distressed

[1] On October 25, 1946
[2] On September 2, 1946
[3] *Vide* Vol. LXXXV, p. 243.

Muslims in Bihar. I wish to read out to you their letter. They write:

> We the residents of Sain are pained to see you in anguish which has been caused by our foolishness. We are extremely sorry for what has happened. Here, however, we Hindus and Muslims lived like brothers despite the prevailing lawlessness and we are happy and proud to tell you that we are living as brothers even today. We seek your blessings that we may continue to live in love and affection.

The other letter was given to me by the residents of Barni. They write :

> When the riots were going on all around we formed a peace committee. No one was harmed here and no disturbance was caused in our area. There is absolutely no difference between Hindus and Muslims. We are working on the same lines even today, and we assure you that we will always continue to live like brothers.

The residents of this village also were not involved in any riot; and yet they are feeling sorry. This has made me very happy.

Some of our Muslim brothers have said that they are afraid of returning to their homes. Thieves and dacoits have carried away their goods. According to me, even the thieves and dacoits are our brothers. It would be ideal if they gave up their profession. But if that is not possible, they should at any rate not rob the innocent people whom we have beaten away from their homes.

Now you should contribute as much as you can for the relief of the Muslims in distress. I cannot collect the donations myself, because that exhausts me, besides I shall have to work during the night also. Volunteers are going round for collection. Please donate the maximum amount you can and thereby earn the merit for it and at the same time atone for your sins.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, pp. 10-2

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114. TELEGRAM TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

PATNA,
[*March 19, 1947*][1]

SATISCHANDRA DASGUPTA
KAZIRKHIL
RAMGANJ

IF YOU CAN SPARE BISEN[2] AND IF HE WISHES HE CAN JOIN ME PATNA IMMEDIATELY.

GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 7713

115. LETTER TO NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

BIR,
March 19, 1947

CHI. NIRMAL BABU,

Now that you are gone, I must say I did not like your abrupt departure. Manu was disturbed and Y asked if she had been the cause of your sudden departure. I told her I did not think so; but there was an uncertain ring about my 'no'. If you went without any other cause than the call from the University,[3] I have nothing to say.

What is Freudian philosophy? I have not read any writing of his. One friend, himself a professor and follower of Freud, discussed his writings for a brief moment. You are the second.

I do not want to emphasize my impression[4] that you jump to hasty conclusions. You ought to know the three more fully. You are not just to them.

Have you in the light of my letter[5] and discussion accepted my position that I am not guilty of modernity? If you hold on

[1] From the reference to the telegram in the letter to the addressee; *vide* p. 128.
[2] Shiv Balak Bisen
[3] As stated by the addressee in his letter dated March 18; *vide* Appendix V.
[4] *Vide* p. 109.
[5] *Vide* pp. 103-4.

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to the view you have expressed in your letter[1] to K. you owe it to me to explain your standpoint and enable me to understand myself more fully than I do.

Blessings from
BAPU

My Days with Gandhi, p. 183

116. DISCUSSION WITH CONGRESS WORKERS[2]

BIR,
March 19, 1947

Shah Uzair Munimi, President of the District Congress Committee, described the devastation in Patna district. According to him the district of Patna was the worst-hit in Bihar. After listening to his report, Gandhiji said :

What should we do now? Have you thought of something?

Shah Saheb replied that if they could get even a few honest men, things could be set right. Thereupon Gandhiji asked:

Is it or isn't it a fact that quite a large number of Congressmen took part in the disturbances? I ask this question because people are making this allegation. But the Congressmen assembled here can themselves tell the truth. How many of the 132 members of your Committee were involved ? It would be a very great thing if all of you assert that none of you was involved. But this assertion cannot be made. These 132 are supposed to be the elected representatives of the people. But I learn there is a lot of fraud involved in this. There are many in the Congress who register bogus members by paying four annas from their own pockets and thus become elected representatives. I have also worked in the Congress. Today I am not even a four-anna member. But there was a time when I was a member of the Working Committee and I was virtually all in all. Hence I know the Congress inside out. This Police Station has jurisdiction over 300 villages which have elected 132 representatives. They can do substantial work if they so choose.

I wish to ask you, how could you live to see an old woman of 110 years being butchered before your eyes? How could you tolerate it? I do not wish to talk about anything else. I have vowed to do or die. I will not rest nor let others rest. I would

[1] *Vide* Appendix IV.
[2] This was held in the morning.

wander all over on foot and ask the skeletons lying about how all that had happened. There is such a fire raging in me that I would know no peace till I have found a solution for all this. You know what happened when I reached Sodepur[1]. I had not gone there for rest. Hence I left for Kazirkhil and Chaumuhani. Chaumuhani is a big Station. What was the use of waiting there? Kazirkhil had been devastated. But the station-master there had transformed it into some sort of an ashram. So I requested him to take me to some place where there were no amenities. Hence I proceeded to Srirampur[2]. It was a predominantly Muslim area with only a sprinkling of Hindu houses which had been burnt down. The Muslims welcomed me. Even then I hurried from there and wandered from village to village. I am afraid I will have to go through the same ordeal in Bihar. If I find that my comrades are deceiving me, I will be furious and I shall walk barefoot on and on through hail or storm. I would throw away the soft seat and other amenities which you have offered me. After all, it was in Bihar that I had renounced similar comforts earlier. When I came to Champaran in 1917, though Rajendra Babu and other leaders were my friends, they used to have their meals in separate kitchens. I asked them why we should eat separately when we were all engaged in rendering service. Then I set up a common kitchen. My wife Kasturba, Mahadev Desai's wife Durgabehn, and Narahari Bhai's[3] Manibehn all of them together used to cook and all of us had our meals together. I would never get more loyal and hearty co-operation in the whole world than what I got from Rajendra Babu, Brijkishore Babu, Janak Babu, Dharani Babu and Gorakh Babu. As a result of this there was a transformation in Champaran. The British indigo planters lost their hold. But I am told the Indian planters today have become even more powerful. The lesson we learnt in Champaran was the result of the hardships undergone by the people of Bihar. Without them I could not be what I am nor could my achievements be worth much. I am a bird of passage. God has not allowed me to stay at one place. We have to work in the same spirit today with which Brijkishore Babu had worked. Today I do not find that honesty or loyalty. I once again appeal to you to work only if you can do so truthfully. My words may sound harsh, but you must realize that even if you forsake me, I shall not leave Bihar. It is

[1] On October 29, 1946
[2] On November 20, 1946
[3] Narahari Parikh

difficult to force me out of Bihar. During the Champaran satyagraha, the Commissioner of Tirhut notified me that I, being an outsider, should leave the area.[1] I told Brijkishore Babu and Rajendra Babu that I wished to challenge the Government and that they would have to give up their legal profession and become my clerks or interpreters if they decided to back me up. I gave them a night's time to think it over. Rajendra Babu had been offered a judicial post. But the next morning itself he and Brijkishore Babu announced that they had decided to give up their legal practice and to become my clerks and interpreters. The Bihar of today is the result of the transformation of their hearts. It is now for you to decide whether I should go in the car or travel on foot. Of course I prefer walking. When Muslims in Noakhali taunted me to go to Bihar, I used to feel hurt. Some Muslims look upon me as an enemy of Islam. Some people expressed doubts whether I could achieve what I wanted to in Noakhali. But I had no doubts. Even today I believe that I can work for Noakhali and the whole of India from Bihar. The non-violent fight which I had launched against injustice and oppression in Champaran had sent new life pulsating throughout India. The work in Bihar this time is far more difficult and significant. This time it seems I will have to strive to the utmost to prove that Hinduism and Islam can exist side by side. This is being put to test today. Many people believe that they cannot and one will have to remain subordinate to the other. I do not think so. If the Hindu Mahasabha insists that Muslims should remain subordinate to Hindus or if the Muslim League insists that Hindus should subordinate themselves to Muslims, this will not do. No one need live as subordinate to another. All have to live together as equals. Even Jinnah Saheb has now declared that the minorities will be shown greater consideration in regions where Muslims constitute the majority.

Q. All people lived like brothers in Bihar before the trouble started in Bengal. Later on Noakhali turned everyone's head. The events in the Punjab are also casting their shadows. It is necessary that we go and live among the people to prevent the outside evil influence from spreading and to maintain cordial relations. But today many Congressmen do not wish to serve the people; they want power for themselves. They join the Congress for their own selfish ends and indulge in intrigue and groupism. How shall we get out of this mire? If we strengthen the Congress in Bihar we can check the evil. The people of Bihar have behaved badly, we have become vicious, the whole atmosphere

[1] *Vide* Vol. XIII, pp. 367-9 and Appendix IV.

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has been vitiated. In this atmosphere, many Congressmen kept quiet and could not stem the tide, and some of them were carried away by it.

A. It was easy to wrest power from British hands but it is very difficult to overcome our own weakness and to set up an efficient administration. You should tell me whether you can co-operate with me in this work or not. If you cannot, I request you to leave me. There are people today who declare that I am out of date and that I should give up all politics. I do not agree with this. This region is teeming with Hindus. We will not rely upon the police for our work although they are our police. We must do this work ourselves. Suhrawardy Saheb had deployed the police in Noakhali to protect me from Muslim fanatics; but I made friends with Muslims there. The Government here have also deployed the police. I ask them, what is the police for? Muslims are not going to kill me here; the Hindus may probably think of doing so. That is why I wish that the task of establishing peace should be undertaken by you all and not only by the Government although it is our Government. You should either achieve success in your mission or die in the attempt.[1]

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, pp. 13-6

117. TALK WITH VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVES[2]

BIR,
March 19, 1947

Great care should be taken while constituting the panchayats, otherwise gangsters may get into them. The British Government by appointing revenue and police functionaries for every village has strengthened the hands of the goondas. This has undermined the authority of the village panchayats. While exercising centralized power over the country, the British Government has polluted the atmosphere in the villages. The petty village officials have become masters instead of being servants. So great care has to

[1] According to *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Gandhiji was visibly agitated. In a low, impassioned voice he shared his anguish with Badshah Khan, who sat listening with a grave face. Soon Badshah Khan also left and only one of Gandhiji's secretaries remained in the room. Sadly Gandhiji turned to him and remarked: "You see where I stand!"

[2] Shah Uzair Munimi had reported that, from among the representatives, an eleven-member committee had been formed and it had agreed to ameliorate the conditions in the six affected circles as also to form volunteer corps and panchayats.

be taken to ensure that these gangster elements do not get into the panchayats. It will be a good procedure to elect the panchayat by ballot. Let everyone secretly write on blank pieces of paper five names of persons whom he or she may like to form the panchayat. The first five persons who get the maximum votes should be elected to the panchayat.

Those who have committed murders and taken part in riots, or those who are suspected of such acts, should be debarred from membership of the panchayats. They should themselves keep out of these bodies. If we are not able to cultivate this spirit we shall not be able to do anything well. Even a government cannot function unless the people are organized. The committee that has been formed will wield real power and do some useful work if it works honestly.

At this stage, Gandhiji was asked: "Can those Congressmen who have allegations against them remain office-bearers in the Congress?"

Suppose I am innocent but the Muslims suspect my *bona fides* and want me to stay out of it, I shall stay out but still I will continue to serve them. I shall advise even leaders like Jagat Babu and Murli Babu to keep out if they have been so accused. This is the convention in Britain too. If there is a false accusation against you even when you are absolutely innocent, you should keep out of any committee and continue to serve the Muslims. If you work in good faith, believe me, the Muslims who are suspicious today will give up their suspicion and co-operate with you.

There are many thugs in the Congress. Thugs are in the ascendance everywhere today. Those Congressmen who are suspect should leave the Congress and serve the Muslims if they so choose. But one should never carry a dagger in one's sleeve while pretending to chant the name of Rama. Some people ask how any work can be done where there are a number of gangsters. The volunteers can tell the gangsters that they are not afraid of them and continue to work. If they say this and courageously go ahead with their work, no one dare displease them. We have to be brave and honest. Wherever there are goondas there are good people as well and they should tell the goondas that they would rather die than run away in the face of an attack. Today there are more goondas than honest people in a village. The problem is how to remedy the situation.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, pp. 17-8

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118. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

GORIAKHARHI,
March 19, 1947

I shall say after the prayers the few things that I wish to tell you. Since there is some time yet for the prayers to commence, I wish it to be utilized for collecting money for the relief of afflicted Muslims. We have committed a great sin by killing and robbing innocent Muslims. We can do some atonement through such donations. Hence I appeal to you to contribute your maximum.

After the prayers Gandhiji continued :

I have seen sign-boards put up at the prayer ground to indicate separate enclosures. Some of them are in English and some in Hindi. I was amazed to see the English boards. For whom are they written? The newspaper correspondents are all Indians and they can read Hindi. Are the English sign-boards then intended for Badshah Khan? Or did you think that I had stayed away from India for many years and had therefore been denationalized?

This is very objectionable. I am not an enemy of the English language or script. But I believe that a thing in the wrong place is ugly. I can be honoured only by being kept in my proper place. Similar is the case with the English language and script. They are not appropriate for the Indian people. I have said it time and again, and I repeat it, that Hindustani alone can become the common language of all Indians. Neither Hindi nor Urdu can take that place. I do not claim to be proficient in Hindi; but I do understand Hindi well and to some extent Urdu also. I used to attempt conversation in Urdu with my friend Maulana Abdul Bari of Firangi Mahal, Lucknow and other friends; and even now I try to speak chaste and correct Urdu with Muslim friends.

Till all the Hindus and Muslims in our country willingly accept one language and one script, it is essential that we learn both Hindi and Urdu. Whether or not the Muslims learn Hindi and Devanagari, we must learn the Urdu language and script. At the moment we have also to atone for our crimes against the Muslims. Hence it is all the more necessary that we demonstrate our affection and sympathy for them by learning their language and script. From tomorrow onwards I wish to see sign-

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boards in Hindi and Urdu wherever I go. Brijkishore Babu and Rajendra Babu who accompanied me during those early days in Champaran normally used to write in Urdu only.

We should try our utmost to rehabilitate the Muslims who used to live in our neighbourhood. We should appeal to them to forget the past. We should bring them back to their homes. We should tell them that they can kill us if they want to, but must come back to their homes. The volunteers should become *Khudai Khidmatgars*[1]. They should respectfully appeal to the people to follow the dictates of their religion which taught them that their outward behaviour should be in keeping with their conscience and that they should tread the path of truth. Those who have committed crimes should honestly confess them and atone for them. All those who have taken part in the riots are sinners and they should atone for their sins.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, pp. 19-20

119. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU[2]

March 20, 1947

I would like you . . . to tell me what you can about the Punjab tragedy. I know nothing about it save what is allowed to appear in the Press which I thoroughly distrust. Nor am I in sympathy with what may be termed by the old expression of "hush hush policy". It is amazing how the country is adopting almost the very measures which it criticized during the British administration. Of course, I know the reason behind it. It makes no appeal to me.

* * *

I have long intended to write to you asking you about the Working Committee resolution[3] on the possible partition of the Punjab. I would like to know the reason behind it. I have to speak about it. I have done so in the absence of full facts with the greatest caution. Kripalani said in answer to a question in Madras that it was possible that the principle might be applied to Bengal also. I was asked by a Muslim Leaguer of note . . . if it

[1] Literally, servants of God

[2] Omissions in the letter are as in the source.

[3] Passed at its meeting held in New Delhi on March 6, 7 and 8. For the text of the resolution, *vide* Appendix VI.

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was applicable to the Muslim-majority provinces, why it should not be so to a Congress-majority province like Bihar. I think I did not know the reason behind the Working Committee's resolution, nor had I the opportunity. I could only give my own view which was against any partition based on communal grounds and the two-nation theory. Anything was possible by compulsion. But willing consent required an appeal to reason and heart. Compulsion or show of it had no place in voluntariness.[1]

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 34-5

120. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

MASAURHI,
March 20, 1947

You know I have returned after a two days' stay at Bir. I could see within these two days the damage wrought by us.[2] Today also I saw a village[3] which had been deserted, and where a large number of women and children had been killed. I cannot narrate the whole story, because my heart is so full that I might burst into tears if I tried to tell it. One who wants to see things for himself can still go there. We have not been able to do anything by way of reparations during all these months. The devastated villages continue to wear a deserted look. Even now thieves and dacoits haunt the place and carry away goods since no Muslim stays there. And how can the Muslims stay at a place where their brothers and sisters, parents and children have been slaughtered? The mere memory of the massacre will stun them. I myself, perhaps, could not have stayed

[1] The addressee on March 25, replied, "About our proposal to divide the Punjab, this flows naturally from our previous decisions. These were negative previously, but now a time for decision has come and mere passing of resolutions giving expression to our views meant little. I feel convinced and so did most of the members of the Working Committee that we must press for this immediate division so that reality might be brought into the picture. Indeed this is the only answer to partition as demanded by Jinnah. I found people in the Punjab agreeable to this proposal except Muslims as a rule. For the present it means an administrative decision without any change in law."

[2] Gandhiji had visited Andari and Garriakhari the previous day. Out of 168 there was not a single Muslim in Andari. At Garriakhari out of 400 Muslims 119 were killed, 11 injured and 12 were missing. The houses were all in ruins.

[3] Harla

there. You might argue that the Government should rebuild or repair the damaged houses. But I ask you, 'Did you seek permission from the Government, when you resorted to murder, loot and arson?' You have to atone for the sins, not the Government, because, after all, the Government is your own and not imported from England.

If you rebuild Muslim houses and clean up their villages, they may think of returning to their homes in the confidence that Hindus had become their brothers, forgetting and forgiving the death of their relatives, who, after all, had to die one day or other. But this can happen only if you rebuild their houses with your own hands, clean their wells, sink new wells to replace the old ones filled with corpses of massacred Muslims. Muslims will trust you only when you do all this; and then they will return to their villages on their own. I appeal to every Hindu brother and sister to participate personally in undoing the damage. Those who are convinced that this is their duty should enter their names in the list with me or with Mridulabehn. Those who cannot come to me here or at Patna, should send their names by post. Much work remains to be done at Masaurhi too. You should render service wherever necessary, preferably in your own neighbourhood. There is no need for outsiders to come over to Masaurhi for the work of resettlement. Put up beautiful houses in place of the debris so that one who looks at them will hardly believe what ruins were there. When you do this it is bound to influence the other provinces too and its fragrance will spread all over India.

I would request you not to think of celebrating a Punjab Day. Never make the mistake of avenging the Punjab in Bihar. Just as the Muslims here are in panic, so are the Hindus trembling in fear in Noakhali at the talk of a Pakistan Day. I wish to reach the ears of Janab Suhrawardy Saheb, the Chief Minister of Bengal. I wish to remind him that he had called upon me, as a Hindu, to go to Bihar where Hindus had perpetrated many atrocities, and that I came to Bihar at his bidding. The Hindus here have indeed committed many sins which need to be atoned for. I am myself undergoing penance. That is why I am here in Bihar although I have many tasks awaiting me at Sevagram and in Delhi. If Suhrawardy Saheb wishes that I should remain in Bihar, he should prevent the observance of a Pakistan Day in Bengal. I do not want to prevent the Muslims from demanding Pakistan; but they should do so by explaining the advantages of Pakistan. Even if they want to observe a

Pakistan Day, they should do so by convincing the Hindus so that they don't get nervous.

Hindus have been writing to me and confessing their guilt. I am also receiving letters written by Hindus and Muslims that because of the fraternal feeling there had been perfect peace in their villages and that they will never turn into each other's enemies. Such sentiments make me happy. I am also happy that people are contributing generously for the relief of afflicted Muslims. But now I would appeal to you to donate not merely money but also your own hard labour; take up the trowel and get down to reconstructing the homes of Muslims which you have destroyed.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, pp. 19-20

121. TELEGRAM TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY

Confidential *March 20, 1947*

CHIEF MINISTER, BENGAL

KHADI PRATISTHAN REPORTS THAT CASES ARSON LOOT ETCETERA INCREASING. FURTHER STATES THAT IT IS RUMOURED THAT 22ND INSTANT TO BE OBSERVED AS PAKISTAN DAY AND THIS HAS CREATED CONSTERNATION. I EXPECT RUMOUR BASELESS. I HAVE MADE PUBLIC APPEAL ALSO AT THIS EVENING'S PRAYER MEETING. I SUGGEST YOUR PERSONAL ATTENTION AND COMING IN TOUCH WITH SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA. I AM PLUNGED INTO THE WORK HERE, THEREFORE DO NOT WANT RUSH NOAKHALI AND EXPECT YOU TO ACT NOBLY AND CORRECTLY.[1]

GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 8967

[1] The addressee in response to this "issued orders prohibiting the holding of 'open air meetings, demonstrations and processions' in areas in which prohibitory orders were already in force and sent one of his colleagues to Noakhali to restore confidence."

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122. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

PATNA,
March 19/[20][1], *1947*

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I must dictate this to save time. The dictation can only be in English because Rangaswamy is not an efficient Hindustani writer.

The first thing is to give you the sad news that Nirmal Babu abruptly left yesterday. He had prepared me for the news two days ago. He was wanted by his University. He had some private work too. And so he was to leave. But he suddenly took it into his head to leave yesterday. I had not the heart to detain him against his will and to come between him and what he thought was his dharma at the time.

Kakasaheb[2] wrote to me three days ago that he would like me to have Bisen by my side. I was thinking what to do and though I know that he could not in any way be a substitute for Nirmal Babu the latter's absence has made me come to a hurried decision that if Bisen is not wanted by you he should join me. He is a handy man who knows Gujarati as well as his mother tongue. He is a willing worker. So if you can spare him and he wants to come you can send him. Let him go to Patna and report himself at Dr. Mahmud's place. I sent you a telegram today about sending Bisen here.[3]

I am here touring in Patna district and looking at the awful scenes of destruction wrought by human beings gone mad. I had hoped that I would be able at the outside, in a fortnight, to go back to Noakhali and its velvety earth and soft grass. I very much fear that I must now do Noakhali work from here as I had flattered myself while in Noakhali that I was also doing Bihar work. Having come here I see how vitally necessary it was for me to come. I do not know that I

[1] From the reference to the telegram to Suhrawardy in the post-script it appears the letter was completed and despatched on March 20; *vide* the preceding item.

[2] D. B. Kalelkar (1885-1981); Educationist, litterateur and a close associate of Gandhiji; Vice-Chancellor of Gujarat Vidyapith, 1928-36; Principal, Gujarat National College; President, Hindustani Prachar Sabha

[3] *Vide* p. 117.

won't have to undertake a pilgrimage on foot here also. Probably I shall not be able to do so on foot. But everything is in the lap of God.

It is quite clear to me that whatever be my fate you should all, including the Sevagram party, stick to your posts.

How is Sardar Jivan Singhji shaping himself?

Blessings from
BAPU[1]

[PS.]

I had your wire. I have sent a wire to Suhrawardy.[2] Sent . . .[3] also a wire.

SHRI SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA
KAZIRKHIL
RAMGANJ P. S.
NOAKHALI

From a photostat: G. N. 8966

123. FROM THE DIARY

MASAURHI,
March 20, 1947

It was 1 a. m. when Manudi completed counting the money. She should have gone to bed soon after the collection. She could have written the *shlokas* some other time. Or, I should relieve her of some of my work. It distresses me very much that she is not getting enough sleep. I wonder what I should do about it. Let her tell me if she can think of something. She can help me a lot in this matter if she wishes to. But she is unwilling to free herself from any work whatever. The collection was a thousand.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 80

[1] The subscription is in Hindi.
[2] *Vide* the preceding item.
[3] Illegible in the source

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124. LETTER TO SIR HUGH DOW

PATNA,
March 21, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your three letters for all of which I thank you. As you know at present I am touring in the affected parts of Bihar. But I shall bear in mind your kind offer about making use of your beautiful garden to rest a little from the din and noise that surround me.

The word "bureaucrat" was used[1] by me in its original sense. You do not represent autocracy. Certainly not democracy. But, as I hold, you essentially represent bureaucracy. Several English friends, some holding as high a place as you do, told me frankly that, representing as they did a big corporation of bureaucrats, they were unable to give effect to the full man in them. With this thought at the back of my mind I could not help admiring your remark that experience had taught you that after all the true reformer must begin with himself.

As to the rest of your letter of March 17 which you were kind enough to send so promptly, I gladly accept your correction and the presentation of your position.[2] I am hoping that something will come out of this frank interchange of views.

I got your letter of the 18th instant only this morning. It was delivered some time yesterday. But it came into my hands only today. The note[3] referred to in your letter to the Prime Minister of Bihar has not yet come into my hands. I suppose

[1] *Vide* p. 99.

In his reply dated March 22, the addressee about this said : "I suppose, I am a bureaucrat in the sense used by you : it is not a term that I resent. The complexity of modern life ties most rulers to their desks more than they like, and this must be true even of yourself. But I look forward to the early day when neither half of this word will have much application to me."

[2] *Vide* Appendix III.

[3] The addressee had prepared a note on the plight of child labour in mica factories, a topic which had cropped up during his talk with Gandhiji. The note said that the Bihar Government had recommended strict enforcement of the Employment of children (Amendment) Act of 1939, and that "in no circumstances should children below the age of twelve be employed in mica factories."

it will be received by me tomorrow when I hope to reach Patna if I do not receive it earlier.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. SIR HUGH DOW
GOVERNOR OF BIHAR
PATNA

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 233-4

125. LETTER TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY

March 21, 1947

DEAR SUHRAWARDY,

Pardon the somewhat familiar style. I hope you got my wire[1] [of] yesterday and that there was no justification for the fears expressed to me. I have a right to expect you to act on the square. The heart is too full to enable me to say more.

I am just now in a little village in the devastated area.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 8968

126. TALK WITH MUSLIM REFUGEES[2]

HANSDIH,
March 21, 1947

I have been constantly trying to make everyone understand that they should give up fear. There is no fear in my heart and I advise you to fear no one but God. But how can people go and stay in houses which have been burnt or destroyed? I shall be glad if the Government builds houses for them or advances money for the purpose. When a man turns into a devil, he is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim.

I do not know what arrangement has been made regarding rations. I believe it should not cause anyone any inconvenience. People should remove every trace of fear from their hearts. Who can protect man better than God? We should

[1] *Vide* p. 127.

[2] Who had come to meet Gandhiji from the neighbouring villages

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have full faith in Him and muster up courage. He is not brave who perpetrates atrocities. That man is brave who boldly faces any calamity. I wish to reassure you. I have been unequivocally saying that any Hindu who harms or as much as touches a Muslim, would be causing my death. I am going everywhere. Patna district has been the worst-affected. Hence it may take a little more time. Subsequently I shall tour other districts; but I shall not go out of Bihar. Badshah Khan had planned to go to the Frontier, but he has postponed his departure and will remain here for some time. He believes that the climate all over India will improve if Bihar improves its ways. Shah Nawaz Saheb[1] has also arrived. His presence will be a great help. Mridulabehn has been accompanying me. She may go to Delhi for a couple of days, but will return immediately. She is working very hard, and she does not discriminate between a Hindu and a Muslim.

I have thrown in my lot with you here. I do not get time even to read the newspapers. Friends read out some news to me. I have written to Pandit Nehru and sought information about the general conditions.[2] From what we hear, neither the Punjab nor Noakhali is yet entirely peaceful. But I shall stay on in Bihar till you are satisfied and until Hindus and Muslims on their own reassure me and tell me that I can leave without any anxiety.

Only tents have been erected at Masaurhi; the camp will start functioning soon. But it would be better if you built your own houses, because the whole atmosphere is reeking with corruption and black-marketing and the contractors are after unlawful gains. You should therefore try to build your own houses. I have been calling upon Hindus to help Muslims in every possible way, by cleaning their houses, streets, and removing the debris. I am going to make the same appeal to Hindu Congressmen and representatives of villages today.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, pp. 24-5

[1] Shah Nawaz Khan of the Indian National Army

[2] *Vide* p. 124.

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127. TALK WITH VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVES[1]

HANSDIH,
March 21, 1947

Q. Is it [not] difficult to stop riots so long as the system of zamindari continues? The landlords are the persons who incite riots and will continue to do so.

A. I think it is foolish to connect riots with zamindari. The problem of zamindari is very old. How is it rational to kill Muslims to solve that problem? And many of the zamindars are themselves Hindus. The Maharaja of Darbhanga is a very big zamindar. Should he and his wife be killed? I am very friendly with him. He respects me like a father because his late father was a good friend of mine. A Hindu zamindar from North Bihar has promised to provide land to the Muslims. It is not proper to link the problem of Hindu-Muslim riots with the zamindari system. The latter is an altogether different problem and we have to consider ways and means of abolishing the system.

Then Gandhiji was informed of the talk that the property lost by the Muslims here would be restored to them only when what was lost by the Hindus in Noakhali and the Punjab was restored to them. There would be friendship only when cases in Bihar as well as in Bengal were withdrawn simultaneously.

Has the time arrived when the Muslims in Bihar must obey the dictates of Hindus? Must they stop going into mosques or reciting the Koran if Hindus prohibit it? No one has yet shown the courage to say this. But the demand that Muslims should live at the mercy of Hindus boils down to this. Those who are demanding Pakistan also seem to think on these lines. I ask those who see no harm in imitating the Punjab and Bengal whether Hindus should also turn ruffians if Muslims choose to do so. After all, how should a Hindu devoted to ahimsa or *brahmacharya* carry himself ? I do not intend to suggest that nothing untoward happened in Noakhali. But there women, children and old persons were not murdered the way it happened here, nor was it on such a large scale. As it is Satis

[1] The meeting was held at 2.30 p. m.

Babu has again invited me to Noakhali. But I think if I have to die in the attempt to restore communal harmony, it is better to die here than in Noakhali.

Nor is it right to demand withdrawal of prosecutions. Our non-violent methods are altogether different, but the Governments functioning today are based on the theory of punishment. Why then should they not arrest and punish the culprits? If the culprits in Noakhali are not being arrested, it is the fault of the Government there, which is not following the tenets of Islam. If the present trends continue there, Bengal will not become free, nor will Muslims there be free. Your proportion in the population is much greater here. In Bengal, the proportion of Muslims to Hindus is 51 to 49. Here, only 12 persons in 100 are Muslims. What sort of bravery is it to kill the 12? The *Ramayana* says that even a dog should be given a hearing. Rama abandoned Sita in response to the argument of a washerwoman. Devotees of the *Ramayana* ought to fall at the feet of every guilty person and appeal to him to come forward and confess his crime. When he pleads guilty and repents or atones for it or begs to be given due punishment for his crime, we may then let him go with a mild chastisement in view of his honest penitence.

I wish to give vent to the fire that is raging within me in the course of my answers to your questions. Why should we behave in this manner? Neither you nor I have a correct picture of what is happening in the Punjab. Anyway, whatever it may be, it is indeed deplorable. But we have to keep our houses clean. We need not make our houses filthy because another person fills his house with filth. If you [do not] act according [to my advice], remember you will be sorry for it. You will regret that you did not listen to this old man's advice. There are people, I know, who say that Muslims are like serpents and that just as we would kill a snake we should also kill Muslim women and children along with their menfolk. I tell you such people are mad. They are not Hindus; they do not know what is Hinduism. There are similar fanatics among Muslims too; but they are not true Muslims. In the beginning the protagonists of Pakistan used to insist that Hindus in their region would have to live like Muslims. But now they concede that minorities will have to be protected. I remind you again that those who hurt Muslims will be hurting me. I am camping here simply to put an end to this fratricide or die in the effort.

Q. What should we do if Muslims do not trust us even when we reassure them?

A. If you speak to them earnestly and reassure them, they will certainly come, because no one likes to leave his home on his own. Give us the names of the villages whose Muslim residents are not ready to return to their homes in spite of assurances from the Hindus so that we may trace those people and persuade them to return to their villages.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, pp. 26-8

128. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

GHORHUAN,
March 21, 1947

I wish that those who have assembled here would think of the damage done and the number of men, women and children brutally done to death in this village, and sit in mournful silence in memory of the deceased. This will do you good. You will consider for yourselves why those who committed these crimes did so. Was it to save their religion? I would rather say that they did not thereby save any religion but harmed it. No religion teaches anyone to kill his neighbours. Righteous wars do take place, but I do not approve of them either. In the *Bhagavadgita*, too, oppressors and tyrants were resisted in a righteous war. It is the work of ruffians to kill innocent children and blameless men and women. A marauder wreaks destruction on others out of selfishness or ignorance. Whatever has happened here is, in my opinion, the work of oppressors and barbarians. Many houses have been burnt down and many others have been reduced to debris. The houses which a few months ago were full of life, are now desolate.

Why we turned into such barbarians will be revealed only in future. But the immediate problem is what you should do next. It is the duty of all men and women, I think, to clean the ruined houses and make them neat and habitable. We can always render some service, however poor we may be. Mere bathing in the Ganga does not wash away our sins. We should undertake honest cleansing. We can keep our bodies clean by bathing in clean water. But all men and women should cleanse themselves in every other way also. They should render all service

honorarily and in a spirit of expiation. Did those who committed arson do it for any payment? We must wipe out the stains of their demoniac deeds with the water of human kindness. You should go to the Muslim brethren and tell them to forget the past, that it will never be repeated and persuade them to return and live peacefully as before. Tell them that their misery is your misery, that you are their brothers, that both Hindus and Muslims are sons of the same soil, both eat and drink from the same source and breathe the same air, hence there should be no ill will between them. Tell them that you will not get any peace of mind until they return to their homes. It is possible that the Muslims may turn round and ask how they can go back and live in the houses where their kith and kin have been done to death. They will be justified in saying so. But if the guilty persons go to the Muslims with truly penitent hearts, I am sure, they will be persuaded. Human hearts melt before love. When the murderers themselves go to them in sackcloth and ashes and promise them never to repeat such deeds, even a stony heart will melt.

You should not depend on the Government to do this work. The Government will of course lend a hand. But it is mainly your task. The Government can give you tools and materials; but the cleaning has to be done by you.

Amidst this mad upheaval there were some Hindus, like oases in a desert, who risked the wrath of the violent mobs and saved the lives of many Muslims and gave them shelter. They deserve congratulations though they do not need any. They have done their duty and acquired *punya*[1]. *Punya* contains all congratulations. Since we have become strangers to human sentiments these days, we are impelled to congratulate any evidence of human love. Those who gave shelter to Muslims did not do so from any selfish motives. If I have not gone to meet them, let them not think that I have no regard or respect for them. I would love to meet them and know how they saved the lives of Muslims. I have been unable to go to them in spite of my admiration because I have come here like a physician who goes only to those who are suffering. I have come to lighten the sufferings of Muslims in Bihar.

I have been told that the Hindus have also suffered in the riots at some places. If there are any such Hindus, they too will be given relief. But I pay more attention to Muslims because there are quite a few of them here who are willing to help the Hindus.

[1] Merit acquired from good acts

I have been told that about fifty persons, who were wanted in connection with riot cases, surrendered themselves the day after my arrival at Masaurhi. I welcome this and hope that others who had taken part in the riots will also surrender to the appropriate authorities, making a clean breast of the crimes they had committed and taking whatever punishment might be given to them. If they do not have the courage to surrender to the authorities, let them come to me or to Badshah Khan or to Major-General Shah Nawaz with their confessions.

A friend from Bengal[1] had recently come to me and told me that the Hindus in Noakhali are apprehensive about the preparations being made by the Muslims to observe the Pakistan Day and wish that I should return to Noakhali. I have asked the friend to return to Bengal without insisting on my going there. I am doing the same work here that I was doing in Bengal. If the Hindus in Bihar become honest and convince the Muslims that no harm will be done to them and if Muslims too do not want to take revenge in view of the Hindus' promise to look after them well, it will have its effect on the whole of India. As a result of this Muslims in Noakhali may also assure Hindus of their safety. There is no question of abandoning my post of duty till the Hindus and Muslims from both these regions assure me that they do not need my services. The Muslims of Bihar and the Hindus of Bengal should accept me as security for the safety of their lives and property. I shall suffer if they are made to suffer in any way.

I have repeatedly said that I have come here to do or die. If communal peace is not established, I shall pray to God to hasten my end, because, in that event, I shall not be in a position to serve anyone.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, pp. 29-32

129. LETTER TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY

March 22, 1947

I have seen your Press note. . . .[2] I must confess that it does not give me much satisfaction. May we hold Pakistan Day celebration meetings in parts of Bengal where Section 144, Criminal Procedure Code, is not in action or where there is no

[1] According to *Harijan*, from Khadi Pratishthan

[2] Omission as in the source. For the Press note, *vide* footnote on p. 127.

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other prohibitory order? And if meetings can be held indoors are they not likely to be far more dangerous than public meetings?

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 38

130. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

PATNA,
March 22, 1947

CHI. AMRIT,

This is a mere love letter. Mridula asked me if I did not want to write to you and I at once said of course, I do. Hence this note.

How are you now? Tell me all you can about the Punjab. Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 4191. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7827

131. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

PATNA,
March 22, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

If you can, please explain your resolution[1] about the Punjab. I cannot form any judgement.

I trust you are well.[2]

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 351

[1] *Vide* Appendix VI.

[2] On March 24, the addressee replied: It is difficult to explain to you the resolution about the Punjab. It was adopted after the deepest deliberation. Nothing has been done in a hurry or without full thought. That you had expressed your views against it, we learnt only from the papers. But you are, of course, entitled to say what you feel right. The situation in the Punjab is far worse than in Bihar. . . . The military has taken over control. As a result, on the surface things seem to have quietened down somewhat. But no one can say when there may be a flare-up again. If that happens, I am afraid, even Delhi will not remain unaffected. But here of course we shall be able to deal with it.

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132. TALK WITH WOMEN REFUGEES[1]

PIPALWAN,
March 22, 1947

I am sad as well as glad to meet you all. There are many sisters here whose husbands, sons and relations have been killed. Their tragic tales make me sad. I was very glad to hear that the S. D. O. acted very promptly and prudently to prevent riots here, and that refugees from other places were given shelter here. Hindus from this place have written to me saying that they did not participate at all in the riots.

I have seen with my own eyes how much people have suffered because of the riots. I have seen houses which were burnt or looted, and I was told that the residents had been killed. The aggrieved people, the people whose houses have been destroyed, wish to resettle at some other place. Personally, I do not approve of this. Why should we lose heart? We should keep up courage. The Hindus have committed a sin. What have they gained thereby? You do not trust them. But if their hearts are cleansed, if they clean your houses, if they build new houses for you and if they sincerely atone for their sins, why should you then not return to your homes? True bravery on the part of Hindus consists in confessing their guilt and changing their hearts. I shall be only too glad if they do this.

People should return to the houses where there had been no killing. If the residents don't feel like going to murder-haunted houses they may shift to another place. It would be good if lands can be exchanged by mutual consent. It may not be possible for the Government to arrange such transfers. In any case whether they return to their own villages or shift to some other place, Muslim brothers and sisters should eschew all anger and bear no ill will towards Hindus. You should not think of taking revenge against those who have oppressed you. That is true bravery.

How transitory is this life? Everyone has to die one day. It is difficult to comprehend the ways of God. Is there any place where He is not present? Some people hold God responsible for whatever has happened. Who can understand His ways?

[1] While returning to Patna Gandhiji met some Muslim women refugees at Pipalwan in the morning.

God cannot be talked about disparagingly. Why should we, then, blame Him for these happenings? I do not wish to hear such talk from the lips of those who recite the *kalma*. In fact, no one should even speak in this vein.

I wish to reassure all of you that I am wandering from place to place to prevent a repetition of what has happened so that Hindus and Muslims may live like brothers. I shall stay and strive here as long as hearts are not cleansed and fraternal feelings are not revived. I shall do or die; I shall either succeed in my mission or perish in the effort.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, pp. 33-4

133. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

PATNA,
March 22, 1947

I have returned to Patna today after a five-day tour. You would have learnt from newspapers where I went and what I said. I liked the attitude of the villagers. They are genuinely penitent. Liberal contributions are being made by them for the relief of their Muslim brethren. I was very happy to see this. Many persons have also written to me that they will not misbehave again.

In a number of places, Gandhiji said, due to the bravery of the local Hindus, no incidents had occurred. He was told by the Muslims themselves that in Dinapore Sub-division no trouble occurred though the Muslims were greatly nervous.

Gandhiji said that he had addressed the Muslim women refugees in the morning at Pipalwan.[2] He did not wish at present to enter into a description of the feelings of these women and their present condition. His heart was too heavy and he did not wish to shed tears. He only wanted to tell them how to repent. He tried as best as he could to console them and persuade them to pick up courage and return to their villages, placing reliance on God. At this meeting he was told that Muslim women and men dreaded the approach of March 22, as it had been reported that Punjab Day would be observed in

[1] The Urdu version has been collated with the report in *Harijan* published under "Gandhiji's Bihar Tour Diary".

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

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Bihar on that date. He had told them that the Bihar Government had banned the observance of any kind of day, be it Pakistan Day or Punjab Day. The Minister who was present also gave the assurance that no celebration of any kind would be permitted and that the ban would be strictly enforced throughout the province. The Bihar Government, Gandhiji said, had banned the *kisan* rally also.

It is a different thing that the rally should not have been tarred with the same brush. But the situation is very delicate today. Our people's hearts are not clean. Hence even a *kisan* rally should be abandoned. I shall appeal to the people concerned not to celebrate either a Punjab Day or a Pakistan Day. The Ministers have issued the order after much deliberation; hence the order must be obeyed. If one wishes to disobey a law as a satyagrahi, one can do so. When we have the voting right we can remove the Ministers if we do not approve of their policies. But so long as they are in authority, we must carry out their orders.

A true satyagrahi should implicitly obey the directions of those he had himself put in power. What Gandhiji said did not refer only to March 22. It applied to the future also and at no time should these celebrations be indulged in, so long as the atmosphere remained as it was that day.

There is a conflagration in every quarter today. A *kisan* rally is not advisable in these circumstances. You can write to the Government about the difficulties you are facing. You can agitate through newspapers. Rallies are intended to awaken the *kisans* and to organize the people. I have been leading such activities for the past sixty years and am quite an expert in these matters. Conditions today are not conducive for such activities. The *Gita* speaks of action in inaction and inaction in action.[1] If I apply this to the present-day context, it means we can do a lot of good by keeping quiet. We should discriminate between dharma and *adharma*. There are occasions when keeping away from *adharma* becomes the dharma. It is no doubt our duty to awaken the *kisans*. But this is not the time for it. It is the duty of every Hindu to follow the teachings of the *Gita*, although anyone in the world can derive benefit from the *Gita*. No one can say that we should repeat the same action in season and out of season. We are subserving our waking hours even when we sleep; but if we go on sleeping all the time we will be as good as dead. This only means that every action has its

[1] IV. 18

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appropriate time. Desisting from an inopportune action is as good as timely action.

The 22nd March has passed off peacefully. It is a good thing. We should now forget all about it. We don't have to celebrate a Punjab Day or a Pakistan Day. These days are intended only to make us fight. But our Muslim brothers here do not wish to fight. Why should we then celebrate a Punjab Day?

I concede that a *kisan* rally stands on a different footing. But the times are not propitious even for a *kisan* rally. Every action should be undertaken at an appropriate time. This is an occasion for penitence. We should first atone for our sins. It is part of the atonement to realize that the atrocities committed on Muslim brothers and sisters constitute grave sins. If we are convinced that the Hindu heart has been cleansed through such atonement, then we can organize a *kisan* rally.

Major-General Shah Nawaz Khan has arrived here. Badshah Khan who intended to leave, has postponed his departure. A scheme is being prepared to rehabilitate the Muslims who have suffered at our hands. Every Hindu brother and sister should go to villages and put in hard labour, not for the sake of wages but in a spirit of service. We should clean up Muslim villages and rebuild their houses to convince them that once again we have become their brothers although for a time we had gone berserk.

Some officials have informed me that about fifty persons have confessed their crimes. They have admitted that they are guilty. They are prepared to undergo any punishment meted out to them. This is a welcome development. But thousands have committed such crimes. All these thousands should confess their crimes. Then the Muslims will not be in a position to say that the criminals have not been arrested. Whoever has committed a crime should frankly say that earlier he was afraid of prosecution, but having made a confession he is now prepared to undergo any punishment. This would not only enhance their own prestige but also that of Bihar as a whole.

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, pp. 35-7, and *Harijan*, 6-4-1947

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134. LETTER TO SHIV BALAK BISEN

March 23, 1947

CHI. BISEN,

Your letter was frank. That your views about the Ashram inmates are not correct does not matter. As for your desire to stay with me, we shall think about it when I return there. I cannot decide just now. Normally I would have welcomed your services, but at present I have to consider what [my] dharma is. We are going to meet before long, aren't we?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 7726

135. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

March 23, 1947

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

The reply you gave to Narandas is perfectly correct. I have written to him, too.

You need not worry about Manu at all. She is still forgetful, of course, and indifferent about herself. I have explained to her that those who are free from all impure feelings or desires are indifferent about nothing, nor do they forget things. She understands this, but is unable to act upon it.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

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136. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

PATNA,
March 23, 1947

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

I read both your letters and gave them to Khan Saheb for reading. He says he is watchful and will go when it is necessary. If I ask him to go he is ready to leave today. But I do not feel the need for it. Your anxiety is meaningless. You must have received my previous letter.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 2504

137. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

PATNA,
March 23, 1947

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

After sending a letter[1] today I received your letter of the 20th and also the paper cuttings.

If you have stopped Dubeji's treatment, my advice is that you should go to the Nature Cure clinic in Calcutta. You can come over here to see me. You can come wherever I am or come after my third tour.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 2503

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

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138. DISCUSSION WITH WOMEN WORKERS[1]

PATNA,
March 23, 1947

QUESTION : Can women take part in politics while they are working in the Kasturba Memorial Fund?

GANDHIJI : This question can be answered in two ways: they can and cannot take part in politics. If they want to serve, they should not take part in politics. There is Congress rule in the country at present (it may be socialism or communism in future). Now, supposing it is necessary to sell spinning-wheels or khadi for the sake of propaganda in the villages, women can take part in such activities. But supposing the intentions of the Congress go wrong and instead of khadi it wants to sell liquor in the villages, the *sevikas*[2] would certainly not take part in such an activity. Rather, they would start a satyagraha campaign against it if it became necessary. Women can take part in any activity which is in the interest of the country irrespective of the 'ism' of the ruling party.

Q. When we raise slogans in the villages the Muslims do not join us. What should be done about it?

G. You must keep quiet and try to persuade them. If they still do not come forward, you must give up raising slogans. As for me, I do not give importance to slogans any more. People have been stabbed while cries of *Bharatmataki jai* and *Gandhijiki jai* were being raised. That is why slogans have become so repugnant. It is easy to understand such feelings.

Q. Women do not still seem to give up untouchability and purdah. What should we do?

G. If they do not give them up they must be persuaded to do so. You must carry on your work. You should not worry about the results. Those who want to serve should continue to work more and ever more, and firmly hold on to truth.

[1] Of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Fund who met Gandhiji at 4 p. m.

[2] Women workers

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A. HARIJAN WOMAN : Nobody is willing to sit by my side. What should I do?

G. (Smiling) : There are so many women sitting around you. You must forget that you are a Harijan. Things would automatically smoothen out if you do that.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 89-90

139. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

PATNA,
March 23, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I request you and those others whom my voice could reach to understand the aim of life. The sole purpose of life is that we should serve the creation of the Power which has created us and on whose mercy or, say, kindness, depends our very breath. Let us not destroy this creation. But today, in our arrogance we have either lost sight of this cause or we tend to forget it and are either fighting each other or preparing to do so. If we cannot avoid this calamity, you may be sure that India's independence is an impossibility. If you think you can achieve independence by the simple fact of the British quitting the land, you are sadly mistaken. If we continue to fight amongst ourselves even after their departure some other power would step in. To think that we can fight the world with its own weapons is like expecting a barren woman to give birth to a child.

A friend has written that a semblance of peace appears to have been established in the Punjab. But this peace and tranquillity has come through military occupation. Everyone is preparing openly for a fight and is busy collecting arms. If these preparations continue the peace established through the army or the police will ultimately turn out to be the peace of the grave. Real peace will come about only when one party at least silently adopts the course of true bravery. Bihar has realized through its own experience that there can be no bravery in killing women and children, or old and innocent people, that it is sheer cowardice. What a grand thing it would be if Bihar could show

[1] As Gandhiji was observing silence his written speech was read out at the meeting held at the Bankipur Maidan.

the real power of non-violent bravery and thus guide India and the whole world on the path of true life.[1]

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, pp. 38-9

140. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

PATNA,
March 23, 1947

CHI. AMRIT,

I sent a love note[2] yesterday thro[ugh] Mridula. I have yours of 21st.

When I get the time to write, your letters are not before me. Hence the omissions.

Tell me whether you have the dictionaries[3] you wanted.

I fancy that I wrote[4] to you twice about paying me a brief visit but never at the sacrifice of your duty undertaken there. Mine may be regarded as a selfish wish. We shall exchange thoughts about it when the 4th April is on us.

I was satisfied with your answer about Aryanayakum.

I think now I have answered all your questions, your letter was in front of me.

I have taken the Monday silence. It is now 6.10 [p. m.] when I finish this.

Love.

BAPU

From the original : C. W. 4192. Courtesy : Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7828

[1] According to *Harijan*, at the end Gandhiji informed the audience that the prayer meeting on Monday would be held near Poonpoon.

[2] *Vide* p. 138.

[3] *Vide* p. 7.

[4] *Vide* p. 107.

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141. LETTER TO JAIKRISHNA BHANSALI

March 24, 1947

CHI. BHANSALI,

I do not like the change in your diet. Even a person of self-control may not disregard nature's laws. You cannot eat *kodra*[1], *banti*[2], etc., uncooked. You may, if you wish, make your food moderate or even abstemious. I should advise you to eat cooked *kodra*, take a moderate quantity of milk and fruit and eat such green vegetables as can be eaten raw.

I think you should now stop going out. People are exploiting you.

According to me, your work is to keep a watch over the Ashram in a spirit of non-attachment. In any case it will do no good to take Pushpa out.[3] She is still immature. She ought not to give up khadi work. Her knowledge is very imperfect. Explain all this to her. She must not visit Raju.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C. W. 10441. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah

142. LETTER TO PUSHPA K. DESAI

PATNA,
March 24, 1947

CHI. PUSHPA,

You feel tempted to go out with Bhansalibhai, but that is not proper. Your dharma lies in completing the khadi work and learning to see God in that work alone. You have a long way to go yet. You must learn to be steady in your mind. Do not think of going out anywhere.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 9278

[1] & [2] Cereals
[3] *Vide* also the following item.

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143. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

March 24, 1947

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

You are writing to Dev, but he cannot read Hindi with ease. Ultimately I have to strain myself. It would be better if you write in Gujarati. He finds it difficult to decipher your Nagari characters.

Bhansali may go [out], but Pushpa ought not to. Read what I have written to them.[1]

I am surprised about Gomati[2].

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 10658

144. A LETTER[3]

PATNA,
March 24, 1947

I have not read your letter to . . . but I have read the reply. The reply seems correct to me. And so long as he has faith in me what else could he write? Moreover, there is no question of practising it just now. But where there is no pretence, is it not thought itself that matters most? And therefore what all of you have to consider is whether it is proper to remain with me if my thoughts are unconsciously impure. If they are so, all of you who have firmly stood by me should withdraw your co-operation. As far as I can see . . . agrees on this point. At least I hope so. Copies of the letters written to . . . must have been sent to all of you. Ask for the copies if you have not received them. Do not hesitate to write to me anything you may wish to write. . . . is in a great dilemma. I have written him a letter and passed it on to . . . for posting. . . . is very much perturbed. You had better meet and talk with him. The situation is such that no one can remain neutral. There can hardly be any scope

[1] *Vide* the preceding two items.
[2] Wife of Kishorelal G. Mashruwala
[3] Omissions in the letter are as in the source.

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for compromise when it is a matter of determining what is dharma and what is *adharma*.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 91-2

145. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

PATNA,
March 24, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I find that it is difficult to leave Bihar. The work here seems to be easier than it was there. But it is difficult all the same. This much is clear that if I am able to do something here, it will have its impact everywhere. Think over it and send me your opinion.

Never give up the work in Noakhali even if you have to die.

Tell Sucheta[1] and Annada[2] if they have done anything against [your wishes]. I have received *Dinlipi*[3].

Cholera must have completely subsided by now.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 8969

146. NOTE TO GLADYS OWEN[4]

March 24, 1947

1. Dr. Gopichand is Gopichand Bhargava[5]. Initials I do not know. I shall give you a letter. He is well known to everyone of note.

[1] (1908-1975); wife of J. B. Kripalani; Secretary, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust; Member Constituent Assembly; Chief Minister of U. P. in 1963

[2] Annada Choudhary

[3] A cyclostyled daily bulletin, issued by the Gandhi Camp in Noakhali for circulation among workers and friends

[4] The addressee, a Quaker educationist and teacher, explains : "On March 23, 1947, I went to Patna to see if there was anything Bapu wanted me to do and this is part of Bapu's conversation with me on his silence day, March 24, 1947, when he asked me to go to . . ."

[5] (1889-1966); Chairman of Punjab Branch of Harijan Sevak Sangh; Chief Minister of Punjab, 1947-51

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2. Answered above.

3. No reply necessary. You will feel your way when you reach there. Of course you should go quickly.

4. My confidence is a little shaken because I have begun to fear that I might not quickly reach the requisite state of detachment described in the *Gita*. Read if you care the last 18 verses of Chapter II of the *Gita* in Edwin Arnold's translation[1]. I become impatient and irritated. It is not conducive to a life of utter consecration without which a long life of 125 years is neither possible nor desirable.

5. I am not particular about your seeing anything here. You may go to Ramzanpur now. But I would like you to return to take my letter to Dr. G. and see what I write to Horace[2]. This I may not do now. I must go to the massage table. But you should please yourself.

6. I shall write to Catlin and give him a date.

Note: Give me a copy of answer 4. If you go away now you may send a copy at leisure.

From a photostat : G. N. 6201

147. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

RAJGHAT,
March 24, 1947

It is well nigh impossible for me to say anything amid such noise. I can say something only when you are quiet. In the first place, I wish to address a few words to the men and women volunteers. I have told them before also what they should do during the tours. It is the duty of women volunteers to guide women as to how they should sit and conduct themselves at public meetings. For this they should distribute leaflets beforehand and should read them out for their benefit. The men who are either standing or sitting are keeping quiet, but because the women are not quiet, they cannot also hear anything. In fact, it is not women alone who are to be blamed for this. They are over-worked, poor and illiterate. They behave as they are told by their menfolk. If we have to take work from them, we should make them understand things and educate them. It is the duty of the women volunteers first of all to tell women the rules to be observed at public meetings.

[1] *The Song Celestial*
[2] *Vide* pp. 152-4.

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Today I saw a village[1] where Hindus too have suffered losses. I had been asked earlier to visit that village. I realize the Hindus have suffered but that in no way mitigates their guilt. I did not visit the place with the thought of the Hindus who have suffered there. But that does not mean that I am hurt only at the loss of Muslims and that Hindus' sufferings do not move me. I am equally pained at the sufferings of all persons. In the words of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, founder of the Aligarh University, I would say that the Hindus and the Muslims are like the two eyes of Mother India. Just as the trouble in one eye afflicts the other too, similarly the whole of India suffers when either Hindus or Muslims suffer. If you realize this, I would think my purpose has been fulfilled.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, p. 40

148. LETTER TO HORACE ALEXANDER

PATNA,
March 25, 1947

MY DEAR HORACE,

Gladys has given me your letter and I had a fairly long discussion[2] with her as a result of which she has written to you a letter which I enclose herewith. She has gone to see the Friends' Unit[3] and she is expected to return tonight. I think her presentation of my position is fairly correct. But let me put it in my own language.

What I feel is that however much detached we may want to be from our surroundings and the unseen atmosphere about us, we cannot but be affected by it. Hence I am not sure whether, whilst the British military forces are in India, we can possibly be in real Indian atmosphere of peace and tranquillity, if these are ever to be her lot during our generation. The present distemper may continue beyond January next and if it does not I am afraid it won't be because of sanity regained by the communities but because of the fear of the military. What is the use of our meeting under the protection of the bayonet, whether it is British or Indian? May it not be wise therefore

[1] Behrawan
[2] *Vide* pp. 150-1.
[3] Friends' Service Unit

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for sincere peace-lovers to pray in their own homes, every day if you like, even for five minutes at the same time throughout the world? It will be easy enough for everyone to find out the hour which should correspond with the time, say, in Calcutta or any place in India. We can even make the calculations and publish the different times for the different centres. The value would lie in finding the exact time. If you still think that a meeting should take place here, I suggest postponement till after the withdrawal of British arms.

These are my random thoughts, not for you to act upon unless they fully appeal to you, because in this matter I have yielded to your judgment. If you propose to go on with your idea and want to have the meeting at the time you have conceived, send me the thirty names and I shall send you my suggestions as to whether I want to add to the list.

With reference to milk distribution in Madras you have another Ministry there now.[1] I wonder if it will make any difference. I hold on to my suggestion.

About my own private affair I have done and am doing all I can. I suppose you already know that Manu no longer sleeps in the same bed with me. This departure was made by her with my full approval in order to please Bapa who, though he saw absolutely nothing wrong, would appeal to her not to continue [it] whilst I was in Bihar and whilst I was engaged in this important work. I do not agree with the conclusion. But I did not wish to argue and therefore I promptly agreed.

Whilst I am dictating this letter I see that you could not know this because the decision was made on the last day of my stay in Haimchar. What, however, is the subject of examination is my mental attitude, whether it is correct or whether, as Kishorelal and some other Indian friends consider, it is a remnant of my sexuality however unconscious it might be. My whole mental outlook will be changed immediately I saw this defect in me. Only then, the weakness was coeval with the time when I took the vow of *brahmacharya* which was probably in 1902.[2] It may be that their definition of *brahmacharya* is different from mine.

[1] The Ministry headed by T. Prakasam had resigned on March 14 and the new Ministry assumed office on March 23, under the leadership of O. P. Ramaswami Reddiar.

[2] Gandhiji took the vow some time in August-September, 1906 after his return from ambulance service during the Zulu revolt in Natal; *vide* Vol. XXXIX, pp. 252-4.

I return the draft with very slight corrections if it is to go at all. Love.

Yours,
BAPU

HORACE ALEXANDER, ESQ.
1 UPPER WOOD STREET
CALCUTTA

From a photostat : G. N. 1443

149. LETTER TO SIR HUGH DOW

PATNA,
March 25, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

Many thanks for your letter[1] of the 22nd instant. I have to deny myself the pleasure of writing in my own hand for the sake of sparing you the infliction of bad handwriting, of which I am really ashamed. Whenever you feel that you want to discuss anything with me please do not hesitate to tell me so and I shall be at your disposal.

I am going on my third tour tomorrow morning. I return on the 28th instant.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. SIR HUGH DOW
GOVERNMENT HOUSE
PATNA

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 234-5

150. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

PATNA,
March 25, 1947

CHI. AMRITLAL,

I got your letter. Enclosed is a letter for Dhiren[2]. Read it and then pass it on to him. I have merely given in it my opinion, but I think it will be enough for you. All the same,

[1] *Vide* footnote 1, p. 130.
[2] Dhirendra, son of Amrita Lal Chatterjee. The letter is not available.

if you on your own wish to keep him, you may do so. I could not train him, nor could Satis Babu. This would be a charitable view. If we take an uncharitable view, we might say that both Satis Babu and I kept him with us for his own good, but he could not stay with either. However, sooner or later he is bound to stay somewhere. He does have a certain kind of ability, and will be able to earn enough for a living. Those who wish to get married can certainly do so. Dhiren, therefore, will miss nothing. I now look upon him as completely free.

You may now do what you think fit. Kakasaheb will of course see this. Give the accompanying letters to the two brothers.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 10813

151. LETTER TO TARABEHN JASANI

PATNA,
March 25, 1947

CHI. TARA,

As soon as Satish[1] told me about Mohanlal, I wrote[2] to you at Wankaner. Now Bal[3] writes and tells me that you are there and feel very much depressed. Why are you so weak? Have you ever known anybody's dear one to have lived for ever? The way Mohanlal has gone, you, I and all others have to go. Why, then, rejoice or grieve over things? Is it not our selfishness that we do so? You have to shed lustre on Mohanlal's name, and you have the ability to do that. If you do not have it, cultivate it. Arise, awake, open your eyes and see. Do your duty.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

CHI. TARABEHN
C/O SHRI G. JASANI
36 DOCTOR RAJENDRA ROAD
BHAWANIPUR, CALCUTTA

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 8789

[1] & [3] Sons of D. B. Kalelkar
[2] *Vide* p. 96.

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152. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

PATNA,
March 25, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I have your three letters. It can be said that the danger about which you have written in two of them does not exist now. But no one can say what will happen in the end.

I think it is better to store paddy after obtaining a permit.

I am enclosing herewith the two cheques, one for Rs. 400 and the other for Rs. 182 with the letters received along with them.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 8970

153. LETTER TO NAGEN BABU

PATNA,
March 25, 1947

BHAI NAGEN BABU,

I got your letter. Bhai Kalipada will give you all the news. I can only say that my heart is in Noakhali, and whatever I do here is bound to have some effect there. No one need be scared and no one should be a coward. What God wills will be done.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

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

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154. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

PATNA,
March 25, 1947

My third tour will commence tomorrow. I shall go to Jahanabad and return on March 28. The prayer meeting will again be held here on the 29th.

I saw the destruction in the village which I visited and met the Hindus and the Muslims there. Today also I have been meeting people throughout the day. One Muslim friend said that it was very good indeed that I visited them. Now they were convinced that nothing of this sort would recur. But I was pained by what another Muslim friend told me. He said that the Hindus were now boycotting the Muslims. Sometimes boycott could be a welcome thing but it is bad if it is directed against one's own brother. Suppose we have been under the treatment of a Muslim doctor till today, as for instance I used to be treated by Dr. Ansari[1], Hakim Ajmal Khan[2] or Dr. Abdul Rehman. Should we stop being treated by him as soon as a Hindu-Muslim riot breaks out? Boycott had an important place in our struggle against the British. But if it is adopted amongst ourselves it will amount to violence. The Hindus have committed a sin in Bihar and today they are the guilty ones; do they now want to persist in doing wrong? The case of the doctor was cited only as an example. The gentleman mentioned by me is a businessman and landlord. Both Hindus and Muslims had their shops on his land and did business there. It was a source of income for him. But now the Hindus have stopped going there; this is a pernicious boycott. It so happens sometimes that one who is engaged as a tailor does not like anyone else to take up that profession. There was a time when a tailor's son took to tailoring only. But now a tailor's son can also become a head clerk. Such ill will and feeling of animosity should be given up.

[1] M. A. Ansari (1880-1936); physician and surgeon; Member, Congress Working Committee; President, Indian National Congress, 1927; Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia, 1928-36

[2] (1863-1927); Chief Physician to the Nawab of Rampur, 1892-1902; President, Indian National Congress, 1921; first Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia, 1920-27

Let me give you some good news too. Today some League friends met me and expressed their wish to live with the Hindus amicably and wanted the Government to listen to them. I said to them that though the League represented a large number of Muslims I did not agree that those who were outside the League were not Muslims or that the League was the sole representative of the Muslims. The boycott of the League would not do. I even asked the Noakhali Muslims to obey the orders of the League. So long as they were in the League, it was their duty to carry out its orders. But if the League misguided them and asked them to slit the throats of the Hindus, they should refuse to obey it and quit the League.

The League friends also said: "Though we belong to the League still we are friends of the Hindus. If the Government does not take us into confidence, how can the Muslims trust it? If we plead with the Muslims who had run away, they will come back. But if we do not co-operate, how many Muslims can you bring back? Maybe a few of them would return. But all of them will not. The Government should consult us." I told them it was a good and straightforward suggestion. Each should co-operate with the other and do his duty. When we work unitedly it will have its impact on India as well as on the world. It will purify our hearts. We should act only with a pure heart. What is the use of our being together without unity of hearts?

I also heard some Muslims say that there were ten crore Muslims and even if one crore perished the remaining nine crores would fight for founding a nation of their own. I told them that if they had such notions they would not serve Islam in any way. On the contrary they would destroy it. I had told the Hindus also in Noakhali that they should get rid of all fear. We should fear God alone. It is cowardice to agree to something or to bow our heads before others out of fear.

The friend from Noakhali has informed me that after my return from Noakhali the situation there has deteriorated again. I told him that if the Hindus in Bihar co-operated with me, I could work for Noakhali while I was still here. I would appeal to the Muslims of Noakhali, if my voice could reach them, to live in unity with Hindus, wherever they may be. Hindus should do likewise. I do not know what will happen in Noakhali in future—whether the surviving Hindus will be killed, their houses looted or burnt. But if this happens, the Muslims will dig their own graves. Even here I hear voices are being raised that scores

will be settled once Gandhi goes away. This is a bad omen. I beseech you not to become cowards, but to be truthful and have faith in God. It is folly to agree to anything out of fear. Today some Domes came to see me. They told me that it was not only caste Hindus who boycotted them but even the Bhangis among Harijans boycotted them. They said that the Domes were normally engaged in bamboo work, only the poor ones did scavenging. They are not even aware of the exact strength of their community. Only one boy from the community goes to college. The Domes invited me to stay with them. I told them that, though I would like it, I was at the moment engaged in other very important work. I was grieved to know that the Bhangis did not allow them to draw water from their wells. Bhangis and other Harijan friends should not discriminate amongst themselves. I fail to understand why others regard Harijans as inferior. I have myself become a Bhangi. If I swept your lanes and cleaned your latrines, and you hurled abuses at me and I tolerated them, how would I then become low? Those who are engaged in scavenging are not inferior but it is those who abuse others that are low. Those who do the cleaning for us and serve us should be treated with love by all of us.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—II, pp. 41-4

155. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN[1]

PATNA,
March 26, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of the 22nd instant received by me yesterday.

You have rightly gauged my difficulty about moving out of Bihar at the present moment. But I dare not resist your kind call. I am just now leaving for one of the disturbed areas of Bihar. Will you therefore forgive me if I do not send you the exact date of my departure for Delhi ? I return from this third Bihar tour on the 28th instant. My departure will therefore be as quickly as I can arrange it after the 28th.

[1] The addressee had taken over as Viceroy and Governor-General of India on March 24, 1947.

In order that this may be in your hands as early as possible I send this through His Excellency the Governor of Bihar.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA
NEW DELHI

[PS.]

I expect to leave for New Delhi on the 30th instant.

M. K. G.

From a photostat : G. N. 10832

156. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

PATNA,
March 26, 1947

Gandhiji's attention being drawn by the A. P. I. to a report in a section of the Press (not *The Indian Nation*) about a letter said to have been received by him from the new Viceroy and his alleged reply thereto, he said that it was packed with half-truths which he always held as more dangerous than full untruths and therefore, characterized half-truths as "a lie and a half".

Pressed for clarification Gandhiji said that he had no desire to run into the trap, however unconscious it might be. He added that whoever had concocted the message had done no service to the cause of Indian independence or to honest journalism. He would like Indian journalists not to copy the worst features of journalism of the West with which unfortunately it was reeking. But if there was to be imitation it should be of the best in Western journalism of which he was happy to be able to testify. Gandhiji said :

There are several brilliant examples in journalism and as a journalist of long-standing, though an amateur, I must conclude by the warning that journalism which is rightly called the Fourth Estate should never degrade itself by becoming a means of making money. This caution is doubly necessary at the present critical time in the history of the country.

The Indian Nation, 27-3-1947

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157. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

JEHANABAD,
March 26, 1947

Gandhiji began his post-prayer speech by referring to the common weakness of misunderstanding opponents, attributing to them motives which could not be proved. Such behaviour often led to untoward results which prudent people would avoid. Such misunderstanding was responsible for differences between the Congress and the League.[2] Both the organizations had a large following. The responsibility resting on them was all the greater for their popularity. Their conduct towards each other had to be above suspicion.

Gandhiji next referred to his visit to Kako Relief Camp[3] and the village of Saistabad. Men and women burst into tears when they saw him. He told them that to break under one's sorrow did not become brave people. All religions taught that sorrow should be bravely borne.

As he watched crowds of sturdy men pursuing him, mobbing his car and shouting vociferously *Mahatma Gandhiki jai*, etc., he could well imagine the havoc they must have wrought when they attacked a handful of Mussalmans. The Hindus should be ashamed of the act. They should take a vow never to succumb to the madness again. Nor should they think of taking revenge for the incidents of the Punjab or the like. Would they themselves become beasts simply because others happened to sink to that level? If ever they became mad again, they should destroy him first. His prayer in that case would be that God may give him the strength to pray to Him to forgive his murderers, that is, to purify their hearts. He prayed that God may enable him to show by example what true bravery was. No one could mistake arson and murder of innocent women and children as a brave act. It was cowardice of the meanest type.

Gandhiji next referred to a complaint that he had received from the Hindus of Kako enumerating their sufferings at the hands of Muslim zamindars. He interpreted it as intended to minimize their own offence against the Mussalmans. It was not manliness to attempt to do so.

[1] Extracted from "Gandhiji's Bihar Tour Diary"

[2] Gandhiji had offered to stay in Jehanabad with some members of the Muslim League who had called on him at Patna. Not knowing this, one of his secretaries arranged for his stay with the authorities. When Gandhiji came to know of it, he tried to contact the members of the Muslim League but could not. The latter, however, accused him of breach of promise.

[3] Where 500 refugees had taken shelter

Again Gandhiji referred to a report that he had heard of the Hindus threatening the Mussalmans that they would wreak vengeance on them when he (Gandhiji) was gone. It ill became the votaries of the *Ramayana* to try to suppress the fourteen or fifteen per cent of the Muslims in their midst. Men aspiring to be free could hardly think of enslaving others. If they tried to do so, they would only be binding their own chains of slavery tighter. It became their duty to go and beg forgiveness of the Mussalmans, and by their true repentance they should try to persuade them to go back to their homes. They should rebuild their houses. They should make their sorrow their own.

Harijan, 13-4-1947

158. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

GHOSI, JEHANABAD,
March 27, 1947

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

You may make whatever arrangement seems best to all of you regarding Kanchan. It is essential that her delivery pass off without any difficulty.

Kanchan's own desire in this matter should get the first priority. If she wants to have the delivery at her mother's, please arrange it that way.

It is for you all to decide whether you can arrange for the delivery in the old hospital building. I will raise no objection if you decide that. I cannot say more than this from here.

I understand about Hoshiaribehn[1].

I trust Mohan[2] and Anasuya[3] are doing well. How long will they stay there?

Tell Bhansalibhai that he should stop eating cereals and pulses until the fever disappears completely. He should till then live on milk, buttermilk and fruit. If he does that, the body will recover its normal health quickly. Raw *kodra* is taboo. We are not strong enough to digest it.[4]

Tell Prabhakar that he must get rid of his weakness.

If Shashi[5] takes friction-bath regularly and observes the necessary restrictions on diet, I am sure his fever will disappear. It will of course be good if he goes to Panchgani.

[1] Niece of Balvantsinha
[2] & [3] Son and daughter-in-law of Narahari Parikh
[4] *Vide* also p. 148.
[5] Son of Ratilal Mehta

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I understand about Kausambi's[1] illness.

Why does Nayakumji get severe attacks of cold so often? Tell him that he must get rid of the disease once for all with the help of rural remedies, that is, by nature-cure methods. This is also part of basic education.

If Sharda[2] can do without Shakaribehn[3], I think it would be good for her to return to the Ashram. Let her do what keeps her happy and contented.

Parnerkar's[4] leg must have got all right now. Manohar also, I hope, is all right. This is my third tour. I am in a village today. I have to leave for Delhi on the 30th to meet the Viceroy there. I shall be staying there for two or three days.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10659

159. TALK WITH MUSLIMS[5]

AMTHUA,
March 27, 1947

Gandhiji said that the style in which the memorandum had been written, it could not represent the views of the people who surrounded him there because when he himself understood so little of it he was sure the illiterate friends around him could not understand what it conveyed. He asked how could the reader of the memorandum claim to represent the views of those for whom he spoke.

Referring to the complaints against the Hindus, Gandhiji said it was his mission to make people brave whether they were Hindus or Muslims and he asked the people who had submitted the memorandum not to preach cowardice among the Muslims. He gave the example of South Africa where he led the Indians, a bare handful of 13,000 in the entire sub-continent, against great odds and those Indians were courageous enough today to fight their oppressors. In Bihar the Muslims were in a much greater majority than the Indians in South Africa and therefore they should be brave.

[1] Dharmanand Kausambi, who had been Professor of Buddhist Literature at the Gujarat Vidyapith, was suffering from a severe skin ailment.

[2] Addressee's daughter, married to Gordhandas Chokhawala

[3] Addressee's wife

[4] Y. M. Parnerkar, a dairy expert

[5] Gandhiji visited Amthua at 8 a. m. where Muslims presented to him a memorandum written in highly Persianized Urdu. It stated among other things that Gandhiji's visit was likely to do more harm than good and that the Government had helped rioters and Congressmen who were in league with them.

Gandhiji reaffirmed that he was not disloyal or unfaithful to the Muslims and that his one aim in life was to help the Muslims as long as he was alive and he would try to help them even by dying.

Before he left he invited the Muslims to come and see him and place before him all the difficulties in their way.

The Indian Nation, 29-3-1947

160. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

OKRI,
March 27, 1947

Gandhiji uttered the warning that Indians might lose the golden apple of independence which was almost within their grasp, out of insanity, which had caused scenes of desolation and destruction, and stated that the peace that reigned in the land was only on the surface. He said this while referring to his visit during the morning and afternoon to some riot-affected villages.

Gandhiji added that they knew the very first pronouncement that the Viceroy had made when he assumed office stated that he was sent as the last Viceroy to wind up the British rule in India. They must have noticed that the pronouncement was deliberate, unconditional and unequivocal. He said that we must trust British promises for it would be cowardice to say that all Britons were dishonest. That, he explained, would mean that we were ourselves dishonest. Gandhiji added that the jar of British sins was full and they must go but it was not right to abuse them while they were departing. He knew that it had become a fashion, though not without cause, to distrust every British declaration. He for one would advise the acceptance of every declaration at its face value without qualifying it in the light of past experience to the contrary. His experience was that it was the deceiver who always lost and never the dupe if he was honest and brave. But he very much feared on account of what had happened in the country that by their folly or, what was worse than that, insanity, they might let slip out of their hands their hard-won prize before it was strongly locked in their unbreakable fist.

Gandhiji referred to Bihar and the Punjab and said that he had wisdom enough to see that they themselves might tempt the Viceroy to eat his own words, uttered solemnly on a solemn occasion. Heaven forbid that such an occasion should arise, but, if it did, even though his might be a voice in the wilderness, he would declare that the Viceroy should firmly and truly carry out his declaration and complete the British withdrawal.

[1] The reports in *Harijan* and *The Indian Nation* have been collated.

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Gandhiji then referred to his tour today in villages Amthua, Belai and Ghosi, this morning and Abdal Chak, Zulfipur and Abdalpur[1]. He said that the same stories of atrocities were repeated the whole day. He advised the Congressmen who had approached him and said that innocent men were in jail as a result of communal cases, that they should produce those who were guilty and if they failed they should cease to be Congressmen. Gandhiji also advised the guilty to confess to him, for he would not give them away to Government but then they ought to atone for their sins. Gandhiji also requested Hindus to return all abducted women and girls, if any in their possession, at once.

Gandhiji referred to the police strike[2], and said that the police, like the scavengers, should never go on strike. Theirs was an essential service and they should render that service irrespective of pay.

There were many other effective and honourable means of getting grievances redressed. If he were a Cabinet Minister, he would offer the strikers nothing whatever under the threat of a strike, which implied force. He would give them the choice of an impartial arbitration, without any condition. He said :

It will be a bad day for India if the military, including the police, rule India.

He hoped the police would call off their strike unconditionally and request the Ministry to appoint an impartial arbitrator to investigate their case.

Gandhiji also appealed to the policemen not to behave in the manner in which they were behaving then. Every policeman, he said, was a servant of the people and his duty was to behave like the Khudai Khidmatgars. Policemen were the custodians of law.

Continuing, Gandhiji said that if every man, woman and child tried to understand his or her duty and if there was no theft or dacoity, there would be no need for policemen. Everyone could then become a policeman and help each other.

Gandhiji expressed regret that the Bihar Government had employed British soldiers to deal with the strikers. No matter what the cause was, and wherever it was, the Indian Governments must never requisition the services of British soldiers to deal with civil disturbances. Otherwise it would mean that the Indian Governments were helpless without British arms.

Harijan, 13-4-1947, and *The Indian Nation*, 29-3-1947

[1] In the afternoon

[2] On March 20, 1947, a police havildar was convicted of contempt of court by the Sub-Divisional Officer, Gaya. The Gaya police then gave notice of strike unless redress was given to the havildar and the Sub-Divisional Officer punished. An immediate inquiry was ordered by the District Magistrate. The strike commenced on March 24 and the strikers refused to return to duty in spite of the inquiry which began the same day. From Gaya the strike spread to Patna and Monghyr.

161. TELEGRAM TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

JEHANABAD,
March 28, 1947

ANAND HINGORANI
7 EDMONSTONE ROAD
ALLAHABAD

LEAVING THIRTIETH MORNING.

GANDHI

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

162. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

JEHANABAD,
March 28, 1947

CHI. MANILAL,

I got your long letter of March 7. You have given sufficient details. You need not hesitate to write to me out of compassion for me because of the pressure of work on me. I have not known a father who would not welcome a letter from his son or daughter. On the contrary, every father looks forward to such letters. It is true, of course, that if my sons were to write silly and sentimental letters, I would be pained to read them. But I have never taught any of you to be sentimental or to write such letters, nor is it in the nature of any of you to be or act so. I, therefore, have no fear on that score.

I understand what you say regarding me. It is enough for me that you do not worry about me but leave me in God's hands. It is also true that, if what I am doing is wrong, I alone will have to suffer the consequences. If it is good, its benefit will be shared by millions.

If refusal to extend a welcome to the Prince[1] is likely to do us any harm, we should endure it. When we accorded a welcome in our time the circumstances were different, and more-

[1] *Vide* "Statement to the Press", p. 28.

over we extended the welcome jointly with other people.[1] Keep on sending me newspaper cuttings which you think I should read. I rarely read your journal[2]. And moreover in the midst of all this touring, how can I even get it?

Dadoo and Naicker called on me[3] as soon as they arrived. I was in Patna then. I had only a brief talk with them. They said they would come back and call on me again. They didn't say a word regarding you. Nor did I ask them. I didn't think it advisable to do so. And, moreover, your letter gives me all the information, and so really speaking I had nothing to inquire about.

One thing seems certain, namely, that now the struggle will be carried on through selfless and elected representatives. I cannot say how long I shall be detained in Bihar and Noakhali.

I have to leave for Delhi the day after tomorrow to meet the new Viceroy. I think I will have to stay there for two or three days and then return here.

Don't worry at all about Sita[4]. I do whatever is necessary.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. SUSHILA,

Despatch this letter to Manilal. You may add whatever you wish to.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 4997

163. TALK WITH MUSLIM REFUGEES[5]

JEHANABAD,
March 28[6]*, 1947*

One memorandum suggested that Gandhiji's reference to the Noakhali incidents in his speeches instead of suppressing the feeling of Hindus here would aggravate them.

Gandhiji answered that the inference was not correct for he had not spared the Hindus. In fact there was a time when he used to be equally

[1] The reference appears to be to the visit of Duke of Cornwall and York to South Africa; *vide* Vol. III (Second Edition), pp. 238-9.

[2] *Indian Opinion*

[3] On March 20

[4] Addressee's daughter

[5] The report in *Harijan*, reproduced from *The Searchlight*, 30-3-1947, has been collated with the version in *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*. Gandhiji was replying to a written memorandum submitted by the Muslim refugees.

[6] *Biharni Komi Agman* however gives this talk under March 26.

plainspoken with the Muslims, too. He had even fasted for twenty-one days for what they had done in 1924.[1] The Muslims did not then regard him as their enemy.

Gandhiji said that as the Muslims today generally considered him as their enemy, he was sometimes obliged to speak with restraint. In the Punjab worse things were happening and at first he did not believe the newspaper stories but his subsequent enquiries made him believe that far more excesses than the newspapers reported were being committed in the Punjab. Because it was the doing of a particular community, should he not speak about it? His mission could not be successful by such suppression, he said.

As far as possible I have refrained from discussing the affairs in Noakhali in my speeches. But whenever I have had occasion to speak about Noakhali, I claim that I have spoken with great restraint. Do the Muslims want that I should not speak about the sins committed by them in Noakhali and that I should only speak about the sins of the Hindus in Bihar? If I do that, I will be a coward. To me the sins of the Noakhali Muslims and the Bihar Hindus are of the same magnitude and equally condemnable.

Gandhiji thereafter replying to another memorandum, which stated that the signatories had no confidence in the present Ministry, said:

I told the Hindus of Noakhali, who also expressed lack of confidence in Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy, that they could not remove Shaheed Saheb from the Ministry as he was returned by the separate electorate system. So long as Shaheed Saheb enjoys the confidence of the community he represents, no one can remove him. Similarly, how can you remove the Ministers when they have been returned by the Hindu electorate? This unfortunate situation has been created by the communal electorate system which, you know, I have always condemned. Dr. Khan Saheb[2] also said the same thing the other day that so long as he enjoyed the confidence of the Pathans there was no question of his resignation. Moreover, what will happen if the Ministry goes out? There will again be the rule of the bureaucratic Government. That apart, I can take good work from these Ministers as my relationship with them is most friendly.

The Bihar Ministers have told me that if I asked them to resign, they would do so. But it would be wrong on my part to ask them to resign. I can ask them to do only what is reasonable.

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXV, pp. 171-2.

[2] Premier of the North-West Frontier Province

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Referring to the demand that fifty per cent of the officers and constables put in charge of new *thanas*[1] should be Muslims, Gandhiji replied:

I disapproved of the very same demand of the Noakhali Hindus. This demand cuts across my peace mission. If conceded, this will mean so many small Pakistans and a division of Bihar. After all, wherever you live, you have to live by creating mutual goodwill and friendly relations with your neighbours. Even the Quaid-e-Azam once said that in the Pakistan areas the majority must so behave as to win the confidence of the minority. In the same manner, I am urging upon the Hindus here to win your confidence. Either Pakistan or Hindustan, whichever is established, it must be based on justice and fair play.

Referring to another demand that the Muslims may be allowed to resettle in certain exclusive areas, Gandhiji said:

You cannot force the Government to keep you in certain exclusive areas. Could I tell that to Shaheed Saheb for the Noakhali Hindus? I never gave any encouragement to the Noakhali Hindus for such a move. I told the Hindus of Noakhali that if they were afraid, they could go anywhere if they got compensation. And why should the Government not pay compensation when they got the properties? Similarly, I will tell you to go anywhere provided you get adequate compensation. But I must tell you that it is not my heart's desire. Leaving your homestead in such a manner is nothing but cowardice. If the Government is not prepared to pay compensation, I should say it is unworthy of them and the Government cannot refuse it. Moreover, if the Ministers who have been returned by the Hindu votes say that the Hindus here have gone beyond control, it is better for them to consume themselves in the flames of the Hindu rage than to continue in office. The Government has to do justice and cannot afford injustice in any manner.

Referring thereafter to the Muslim grievances regarding the reported appointment of Mr. Justice Reuben to conduct the Bihar Riots Enquiry, Gandhiji said, the memorandum suggested that the Muslims had no faith in Mr. Reuben. But they never suggested whom they wanted. To hold anyone as a suspect simply because he was a non-Muslim was not right. Personally he would have liked the Judge to be a Muslim provided he was acceptable to all. Unfortunately in the vitiated atmosphere of the times, Hindus did not trust the Muslims and the Muslims the Hindus.

[1] New police stations that were being set up to create confidence among the refugees

We must have faith in some non-Muslim such as Mr. Justice Reuben. There is no harm in the one-man Commission. If the Muslims want, they can submit a panel of names from amongst which the commission should be appointed. Then I can inform the authorities. I am not one of those who would refuse to do anything simply because the League wants it. Truth alone should be our criterion, no matter who utters it.

With regard to the demand of restoration and finding out of abducted women, Gandhiji said :

Since my arrival in Bihar I have been telling all those Muslims who told me about the abducted girls to give me the names and the family connections of such girls in order to help find out if they were still alive. But till now not one name has been submitted to me. I again ask you to submit the names of the unfortunate girls.

In the meeting . . . was also present Mahant Bhagwat Das, M.L.A., against whom Muslims brought forward charges that he infuriated the Hindu mob during the riots. Bhagwat Das then stood up and told Gandhiji that he was innocent and asked the Muslims to bring forward specific instances to prove the charges.

It was further alleged that he was related to a notorious dacoit. The member of the Assembly denied that he was related to the dacoit in question. As for the allegations against him, he was prepared to face an inquiry by a body of Muslim Leaguers themselves. If they found him guilty, he would submit to any punishment. Even otherwise, he would carry out Gandhiji's orders.

Gandhiji remarked that if the dacoit referred to was still at large, every effort should be made to arrest him and all should co-operate with the Government to that end. Gandhiji said:

It is a challenge to the Government. If the Government fails to arrest the culprits it will stand discredited.

Turning to the member of the Assembly in question, he told him that a special responsibility rested upon him, he being a member from the locality. If the Muslims suspected him of complicity in the riots, he should resign his seat even though the suspicion against him was unfounded. To the Muslims Gandhiji said that they should seek God's truth only, prove their charges and if they could not be proved, unreservedly withdraw them.

Harijan, 13-4-1947, and *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 309-11

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164. TALK WITH MUSLIM REFUGEES AND VILLAGE REPRESENTATIVES[1]

March 28, 1947

Gandhiji agreed with them that where the Muslims had in panic sold their property at ridiculously cheap prices they should be able to get the same back at those very rates. Police outposts should be opened at places where looting and destruction of property was still going on. An inquiry should be held into the conduct of the officers who were guilty of gross neglect of their duty during the disturbances, and those against whom the charges were established should be dismissed. It was further suggested to Gandhiji that attention should be paid to the irresponsible and communal-minded section of the Congress. Gandhiji replied that unlike the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha the Congress was meant to serve all. If it belied its nationalist character, it would destroy itself.

QUESTION: Does the experience that you have had and the atmosphere that you find around you lend you any hope of success in your mission of re-establishing lost confidence between the Hindus and Muslims?

GANDHIJI: Man can only try. The result is in the hands of God.

Addressing the village representatives, Gandhiji exhorted them to cleanse their hearts. If they told him they were innocent, he would not believe them. If a single Hindu had committed the crime, they were all responsible for it. Could he reassure the Muslims on their behalf, he asked, that the realization of their sin had been brought home to them and their hearts had been thoroughly cleansed by genuine repentance? If, on the other hand, they felt that in butchering the Muslims they had done the right thing, they should say so plainly, so that he might know exactly where he stood and decide his future course of action accordingly. For, he had sworn to "do or die" in Bihar.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 311

[1] In the afternoon Gandhiji met representatives from the surrounding villages and Muslim refugees. Gandhiji's answers to questions that had been asked at the meeting of the Muslim Refugees in the morning were read out to them. They then proceeded to ask further questions. *Vide* also the preceding item.

165. TALK WITH CONGRESS WORKERS[1]

March 28, 1947

QUESTION: It is being said that Congressmen have taken quite an active part in the riots and there is an increasing tendency among the workers to take bribes.

GANDHIJI: I do not know whom I shall hold responsible for this. My faith in God, however, is not a whit shaken by it, rather it is strengthened. These incidents have shown me the persons I trust in their true colours. I will not be losing anything if they prove to be false, because they will be shunned wherever they go. I am not anyone's master, I am only an humble servant. When the dawn of independence is on the horizon, our people are indulging in such madness.

Q. The Muslims who fled their homes are trying to sell their properties at cheap rates and the Hindus naturally want to buy them. Should they do so?

G. Honesty demands that the deal should be fair. The Hindus should pay the Muslims a fair price for their properties. As a matter of fact, instead of buying, they should hold them in trust.

Q. Should we ask the Hindus not to buy their properties?

G. Yes. But it should not develop into a boycott as in Noakhali. We should not take advantage of the Muslims' distress.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 311-2, and *Biharni Komi Agman*, p. 94

[1] The account in *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase* has been collated with the Gujarati version in *Biharni Komi Agman*.

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166. TALK WITH POLICEMEN[1]

JEHANABAD,
March 28, 1947

Gandhiji told them that their strike was ill-advised and there was no convincing argument in favour of continuing it. They were not mere wage-earners. They were members of an essential service. Limbs of the law were expected to put duty before self-interest. If they continued their strike until their demand was conceded, it would jeopardize their case. They should, therefore, immediately and unconditionally call off the strike. The Government of the day was their own and there was no loss of dignity in surrendering to it. But they should follow his advice only if their leaders accepted it. While they belonged to their organization, loyalty demanded that they should consult their leaders before they acted upon his advice.

Gandhiji deprecated the growing rift between the Hindu and the Muslim policemen and told them that Hindu policemen should treat their Muslim colleagues as their brothers. Their conduct should be such that both Hindus and Muslims should have equal faith in them and the Muslims should not feel that for their protection they needed Muslim policemen and *vice versa*.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 313

167. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[2]

ALLAHGANJ,
March 28, 1947

Gandhiji began by saying that he had passed a very full and heavy day. The day was begun with a long meeting[3] with the members of the local Muslim League at the bungalow of Mr. Azharul Haq, local League leader. He was with them for over an hour and had a hearty chat with them answering all kinds of questions. Then he had a meeting[4] at his residential quarters with Hindus and Muslims belonging to Jehanabad and the surrounding villages. He had then a meeting[5] with the Congressmen which

[1] The policemen who were on strike came to see Gandhiji at 1.15 p. m.

[2] The reports from *Harijan*, *The Indian Nation* and *The Hindu* have been collated.

[3] *Vide* pp. 167-70.

[4] *Vide* p. 171.

[5] *Vide* p. 172.

included members of the various Congress Committees. Later he met the members of the local Hindu Mahasabha. Finally he had a heart-to-heart talk[1] with over 25 members of the police force on strike. Then at half past three again he visited the villages of Malathi, Gangasagar, Bola and Allahganj, in which Muslims had suffered badly.

Referring to his visit to the villages, Gandhiji said that naturally he was full of topics on which he wanted to speak and bespeak their attention. He was sorry to say that Hindu repentance was not open and sincere enough to inspire confidence among the Muslims. He had told the afternoon meeting that it was open to the representative Hindus who were present at the meeting to disabuse the Muslims of their suspicion. He was sorry to say that not one Hindu got up to give the needed assurance. He had not the heart, therefore, to ask his Muslim hearers whether they (the Hindus) had cleansed their hearts. Muslims were the injured party in Bihar and it was not open to anyone to expect a satisfactory answer from them unless the guilty Hindu party had led the way by repentance. There were, yet, ring-leaders like Mathura Singh at large and successfully evading arrest. There was, therefore, little cause for wonder if the Muslims were afraid to return to their respective villages. Gandhiji said that he could not help feeling that the culprit could not long remain at large if the Hindu population did not give him shelter. He asked Mathura Singh's friends and sympathizers to advise him to discover himself and face the consequences of his action. He would also like to tell him that it was no act of bravery for him to evade arrest. He was thus rendering a disservice to himself, his religion and his country. He suggested to the Congressmen, in whose midst the inhumanities were enacted, that they could not absolve themselves from the guilt, unless they made every effort to induce all the culprits to come out into the open and to wash their guilt as publicly as they had committed the crimes.

Continuing, Gandhiji said that he had visited a mosque in the village Bola which was damaged during the disturbances. He was told that on the day of Holi the mosque was again desecrated by some villagers who played Holi inside the mosque premises. If it was true, Gandhiji said, it was undoubtedly a notice given by them to the Muslims not to enter their homes even when they were rebuilt, nor dare to visit the mosque. If this reported desecration on Holi day was a fact, it was a bad omen for the Hindus, for Bihar and for the whole country. He regretted the reported action of the local Hindus and warned them to respect all places of worship alike. He called upon the culprits to confess. But, Gandhiji regretted, new parties and new leaders had risen who believed in all sorts of crimes and perhaps nobody was prepared to listen to him. He recalled the theme of today's *bhajan* and prayed to God for help and hoped Bihar would come out of the difficulty now facing the province.

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

Gandhiji went on to say that he had heard at the Muslim League meeting in the morning and at the meeting of the Hindus and the Muslims in the afternoon that Mahant Bhagwat Das who was a member of the Bihar Legislative Assembly was himself a participator in the crime and was himself present at both the meetings. The speaker advised him whilst he was under suspicion to give up his membership. He was glad to say that Mahant Bhagwat Das, without a moment's hesitation, welcomed the advice and promised at once to act up to it. He also added that Bhagwat Das was in no way a participator directly or indirectly in the crime and that he was quite ready to face an open, impartial enquiry to be made by the Muslim League itself. If it was a sincere declaration, Gandhiji said, it was certainly a refreshing thing at a time when there was no real sign of sincere sorrow and repentance on the part of the Hindus in the affected areas. This he was obliged to say in spite of welcome letters of repentance to which he had made reference at the previous evening's meeting.

His attention has been drawn, Gandhiji said, to the fact that the Government lorry which had accompanied him in his tour was forcibly boarded by passers-by as if they had a right to travel in it even as the authorized occupants. He was sorry at the unmanly exhibition of authority and lawlessness. Such licence could not be tolerated even in the freest country in the world. Those who defied the law were digging the grave of Indian independence before it was in their hands.

Gandhiji fervently appealed to all Bihar and through Bihar to the Indian people not to plunge the country into a turmoil in the prelude to the dawn of freedom over this land which he called the *arunodaya* of the new age. Gandhiji warned the nation to awaken before the day of freedom dawned, just as all good men were up from slumber and prayed before sunrise.

Gandhiji set at rest all speculation about his visit to Delhi in response to Lord Mountbatten's invitation by announcing that he was leaving Bihar for three or four days. Gandhiji said he was determined to stay in Bihar and see the work he had taken up through and no man could prevent him from doing it. God alone could keep him away if He so desired.[1]

Harijan, 13-4-1947, *The Indian Nation*, 30-3-1947, and *The Hindu*, 31-3-1947

[1] With this Gandhiji concluded the third part of his tour in Bihar.

168. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

PATNA,
March 29, 1947

MY DEAR KU.,

I wrote to you thoughtlessly a few days ago.[1] But having now got your letter of the 22nd instant[2] I feel that the healthy rule which prevents the members of constructive organizations from becoming members of the Working Committee should not be tampered with however tempting a particular offer may be. What the President can do however is to invite you and such other members when expert advice is wanted on village matters. If you were a full-fledged member you would be obliged to give your thought to many other matters which did not fall within your jurisdiction as a village scavenger. Hence my opinion is that we must resist this temptation. However, I am likely to see the President during the next few days. I shall discuss the matter with him and if there is anything to change my view I shall write again.

Yours sincerely,
BAPU

SHRI J. C. KUMARAPPA
WARDHA

From a photostat: G. N. 10192

[1] *Vide* pp. 92-3.

[2] In which the addressee had sought Gandhiji's advice regarding the Congress President's request to him "to serve on the Working Committee in the place of Jayaprakash Narayan"

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169. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

PATNA,
March 29, 1947

At the outset Gandhiji told the audience that he would be leaving for Delhi the next day and hoped to return in about four or five days.

Gandhiji then feelingly referred to the death on the previous evening of Prof. Abdul Bari, President of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, under tragic circumstances. Prof. Bari was a disciple and co-worker of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Dr. Rajendra Prasad has built for himself a unique and undisputed position and influence in the province by his service and sacrifice. Prof. Bari had also by his service in the cause of the workers in Jamshedpur and other places endeared himself to the people and risen to occupy the position of the President of the Provincial Congress Committee. A fearless fighter, Prof. Bari was with the Congress during the different phases of its struggle for freedom.

Gandhiji referred to his visit earlier in the day to Prof. Bari's house to console the members of the bereaved family and ask them not to grieve and to hearten them for the work that had specially descended upon the weak shoulders of his children. Gandhiji said that as he entered the house he was struck with its simplicity and the simple life Prof. Bari had led. The house was located in an ordinary narrow lane and what he saw inside the house fully bore out what everyone had said about Prof. Bari, that he was a poor man and that though he had opportunities he scrupulously maintained his integrity as far as public finances were concerned. At a time when the administration of the country was in the Congress hands and crores of rupees had to be administered, men of Prof. Bari's honesty would have been of invaluable help. He had hoped on his return from the third tour just finished, to be more closely associated with him and to make an effective appeal to him to modify, if not altogether get rid of, his short temper which went ill with the very high office, in fact the highest in the province of Bihar, especially when there was a nationalist ministry at the head of affairs which naturally had to be influenced by the premier provincial Congress organization. Gandhiji said that he had had full faith in Prof. Bari and had known that his word carried great weight with him. But God had willed otherwise and He had deprived Bihar of the great service of a very brave man with the heart of a *fakir*. But men like Bari never died, and it was for those who remained to carry on the noble work he had left behind.

[1] Extracted from "Gandhiji's Bihar Tour Diary"

Gandhiji then referred to the circumstances of Prof. Bari's death and said that in an unfortunate altercation that had ensued between him and one Gurkha member of the anti-smuggling force and a former member of the Indian National Army, the latter shot him. He warned the audience that there was no politics of any kind in the death and that it would be wrong and unjustified to associate the whole I. N. A. organization with the death of Prof. Bari because of what one single individual did.

Harijan, 13-4-1947

170. NOTE TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

ON TRAIN,
March 30, 1947

What do you two[1] want to do in Delhi? I shall have little time to talk. I have become perfectly useless for such things now. If success attends my effort in Bihar and Noakhali I shall live.

Where would you want to stay in Delhi? Who are they? What is he doing? I do not know what is going to happen in Delhi. I have only two with me this time. Let us see.

Supposing that your hearing is restored, why not the million deaf people also should have the restoration?[2] And how would it benefit humanity? Do you know that Beethoven the great musician was deaf? You are worrying about nothing. But that is my view. You must do what you think is best for you.

In your place I should welcome this deafness. You are spared much useless hearing. There is no harm in friends writing what they wish to tell you.

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

[1] The addressee and his wife Gangi Hingorani

[2] The addressee had sought Gandhiji's approval to proceed to the United States for treatment of his deafness.

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171. A NOTE[1]

ON THE TRAIN,
March 30, 1947

Meet the prisoners if they[2] permit you to do so. But offer them only as much as Jayaprakash suggests. I do not want that he and I should differ on this issue. The real work is to be done by him. I have no doubt at all that my policy is absolutely correct. The Chief Minister should grant you permission to meet them. He should not even think that you will help any party of Socialists. If any political gain is made out of it, it would be a poisonous legacy of the British rulers. A volunteer cannot be in a party. As far as possible the police prisoners should be released. The cases of those charged with murder will have to be considered separately. The duty of the police is to remain faithful to the government of the time. Today's Government is counted as the people's Government. Here the question of capitalist and labour does not arise. A solution can be found to the problems. The police should keep aloof from them.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G. N. 5099

172. INTERVIEW WITH LORD MOUNTBATTEN[3]

April 1, 1947

Gandhiji asked the Viceroy if Manu[4] could in the meantime roam about the garden so that they could proceed with their talk uninterrupted.

"Certainly", replied the Viceroy. Then addressing Manu he added: "All this is yours; we are only trustees. We have come to make it over to you." Gandhiji put in laughing:

[1] According to the G. N. register this was addressed to Dr. Syed Mahmud. But from the form of address it appears to have been written to a lady. The note carries the remark: "Regarding the Police".

[2] The Government

[3] Gandhiji called on the Viceroy at 9 a. m. At their meeting the previous day, the talk had mostly centred round Gandhiji's early life, his sojourn in England and subsequent struggles in South Africa and India.

[4] Who along with Brijkrishna Chandiwala had brought in Gandhiji's lunch

You can search her person for any hidden arms.

"I am perfectly satisfied there can be no need for that in a disciple of yours," replied the Viceroy with a smile.

The Viceroy told Gandhiji that it had always been the British policy not to yield anything to force, but the Mahatma's non-violence had won. They had decided to quit as a result of India's non-violent struggle. Towards the close, on being invited to do so, Gandhiji placed before the astonished Viceroy his solution to the Indian deadlock.[1]

He reiterated what he had said often before, that he did not mind Jinnah or the Muslim League turning the whole of India into Pakistan, provided it was done by appeal to reason and not under threat of violence. But while he had previously held that this could be properly done only after the British had quitted, and while in principle he still adhered to that view, the crux of his present proposal was that he was now prepared under Mountbatten's umpireship—not as Viceroy but as man—to invite Jinnah to form a government of his choice at the centre and to present his Pakistan plan for acceptance even before the transfer of power. The Congress could give its whole-hearted support to the Jinnah Government. At the same time since the Muslim League would now be the Government, it would have no further excuse for continuing the movements of organized lawlessness, which it had launched in some of the provinces. These must be called off. Further, since the Viceroy had declared that he was out to do justice only and nothing would be yielded to force, if the League did not accept the offer, the same offer *mutatis mutandis* should be made to the Congress. The old policy of trying to please both the parties must be given up.

Gandhiji told the Viceroy that the system of British policy of "divide and rule" had brought about a situation in which the only alternative to a continuation of the British rule, which they had found was no longer feasible, was to accept the logic of the "Quit India" demand and retire unconditionally, leaving India to her fate. The role of peace-maker in the "communal triangle" which they had themselves helped to create was not for them.[2]

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 77-9

[1] For the outline of Gandhiji's plan, *vide* pp. 199-200.

[2] For an account of the interview as recorded by the Viceroy, *vide* Appendix VII.

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173. DISCUSSION AT INTER-ASIAN RELATIONS CONFERENCE[1]

April 1, 1947

The Azerbaijan delegate, Mr. Yousotoff, who was presiding at the Plenary Session, requested Gandhiji to say a few words.

Gandhiji replied that he would be attending the closing session of the Conference on April 2 and would speak then. For the present, he would answer any questions that the members might like to put to him.

In answer to a question whether he believed in the theory of one world and whether it would succeed under the present conditions, Gandhiji declared:

I would not like to live in this world if it is not to be one world. Certainly I should like to see this dream realized in my lifetime.

I hope that all the representatives who have come here from the different Asian countries will strive their level best to have only one world. They will have to think out ways and means for achieving this goal.

If you work with fixed determination, there is no doubt that in our own generation we will certainly realize this dream.

Dr. Han Liwu from China asked him his views on the proposal to set up an Asian institute. Gandhiji replying said:

The question is certainly very nice. Let me confess my ignorance. I have really to apologize to you. Pandit Nehru had asked me long before this Conference was scheduled to take place whether it would at all be possible for me to attend it. It has proved to be a much more important conference than it was expected to be. I was obliged to say at that time that I was very sorry and would not be able to come.[2] When Lord Mountbatten, the new Viceroy, invited me to meet him, however, I could not say 'No'. It would have been foreign to my nature to do so. The Viceroy had already told me that the credit for bringing

[1] The Conference, attended by 250 delegates representing 22 Asian countries and 10,000 visitors, had been inaugurated on March 23, 1947, at the Red Fort by Jawaharlal Nehru.

The report in *Harijan* under the title "Strive for One World", has been collated with the version in *The Hindu*.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", p. 22.

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me to Delhi during the Asian Conference was really his. And I told the Viceroy: "I am your prisoner. But I am also Pandit Nehru's prisoner, for, after all, he is your Vice-President!"

Through correspondence I know almost all parts of the world and naturally, therefore, of Asia, though I know very few of you personally—perhaps none of you. I am doubtful whether I can say anything useful but the question is one after my heart. Some portions of the question put to me now were discussed by Pandit Nehru yesterday. It is a great event that for the first time in our history such a conference takes place on the Indian soil. I am sorry that I have to refer to the conditions that we see today. We do not know how to keep peace between ourselves. We have so many differences which we cannot settle between ourselves in a humane and friendly manner. We think we must resort to the law of the jungle. It is an experience which I would not like you to carry to your respective countries. I would instead like you to bury it here.

India is now on the threshold of complete independence. India wants to be independent of everybody who wants to own this country. We do not want a change of masters. We want to be masters on our own soil, though I am not quite sure how it will come about. All that we know is that we should do our duty and leave the results in the hands of God and not in the hands of man. Man is supposed to be the maker of his destiny. It is only partly true. He can make his destiny, only in so far as he is allowed by the Great Power which overrides all our intentions, all our plans and carries out His own plans.

I call that Great Power not by the name of Allah, not by the name of Khuda or God but by the name of Truth. For me, Truth is God and Truth overrides all our plans. The whole truth is only embodied within the heart of that Great Power—Truth. I was taught from my early days to regard Truth as unapproachable—something that you cannot reach. A great Englishman taught me to believe that God is unknowable. He is knowable but knowable only to the extent that our limited intellect allows.

You, gentlemen, have come here from different parts of Asia, and having come with eagerness and zest you should all have yearly meetings or two-yearly or three-yearly conferences. You should carry away sweet memories of the meetings and make every effort to build the great edifice of Truth.

All the Asian representatives have come together. Is it in order to wage a war against Europe, against America or against

non-Asiatics? I say most emphatically 'No'. This is not India's mission. I am free to confess that I will feel extremely sorry if India, having won independence through essentially and predominantly non-violent means, was going to use that independence for the suppression of the other parts of the world. Europeans have hitherto exploited different races inhabiting this vast continent called Asia. It will be a sorry thing if we go away from this Conference without a fixed determination that Asia shall live and live as free as any Western nation. I just wanted to say that conferences like the present one should meet regularly, and if you ask me where, India is the place. You will forgive me for this partiality for India.

Harijan, 20-4-1947, and *The Hindu*, 2-4-1947

174. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
April 1, 1947

Today as soon as Manu Gandhi uttered the first word of the *Kalma* from the Koran a young man stood up, marched right up to the stage where Gandhiji sat and said, "You go away from here. This is a Hindu temple where we will not allow a Muslim prayer. You have been repeatedly telling this thing to us but our mothers and sisters continue to be slaughtered. We cannot tolerate it any longer." Gandhiji told him:

You are free to go. If you do not want to pray let the others do it. This place does not belong to you. This is not the right way.[1]

You did not do the right thing. You forcibly removed the young man from the meeting. You should not have done such a thing. It would give him a sense of triumph. He was very excited. He did not wish to listen to the prayer. But I know that you all wish to listen to it. I do not wish to hold the prayer in spite of protests. Now I intend to give up the rest of the prayer. You are all familiar with the prayer I offer. You have heard it even before I went to Noakhali. In my sequence of prayers, the Muslim prayer is followed by the Parsi prayer. After that this girl would have sung to you a *bhajan* in her

[1] But the young man could not be silenced. He came close to Gandhiji. People tried to pull him back but he stood firm and persisted in arguing. A lady put herself between Gandhiji and the young man. Gandhiji asked her to keep away, saying, "Let no one stand between me and him." But the people removed the young man from the meeting.

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melodious voice and then there would have been *Ramdhun*. But now I am leaving out the Parsi prayer and also the *Ramdhun*. *Auz-o-Billahi* is the beginning of one of the verses of the Koran. You think that uttering this expression is an insult to Hinduism. But I am a true sanatani Hindu. My Hinduism tells me that along with the Hindu prayer I should also offer the Muslim prayer and the Parsi and Christian prayers. True Hinduism lies in offering prayers of all religions because only he is a good Hindu who is also a good Muslim and a good Parsi. The young man said that this was a Hindu temple and such prayers could not be held here. But that is wild talk. This temple belongs to the Bhangis. Even a single Bhangi can throw me out of this place if he so desires. But these people love me. They know that I am a Hindu. Jugal Kishore Birla, on the other hand, is my brother. He is a big man in terms of money but he regards me an elder. He has put me up here because he considers me a pious Hindu. He also takes me to the big temple built by him. If in spite of all this the young man insists that I should go away and I cannot pray here, it is merely his arrogance. But you should have won him over with love. You threw him out by force. What is the point in offering prayers by resorting to force? The young man was in a rage and in his anger was talking wild things. It was out of such talk that all those things happened in the Punjab. This rage is what starts all the fanaticism.

The *shlokas* just recited by this girl say that when a man broods on objects of the senses—that is, all the five senses—he is caught up in craving. Then he is possessed by wrath which leads to stupefaction, i. e., insanity.[1]

Driven by such frenzy the simple folk of Bihar have indulged in such acts as make me hang my head down in shame. In the same mad fury the people of Noakhali indulged in excesses. But the law of the jungle was more in evidence in Bihar than in Noakhali and it was even more so in the Punjab.

If you are true Hindus, you should not act in such a manner. If in a meeting something is being said which we do not like to hear we must get up and leave the meeting. There is no need to shout and make a row. Moreover, this is a matter of religion. Leave alone religious discussion this man would not even allow people to pray. Prayers should not be disturbed as was done by this young man. Such acts help no one.

[1] *Bhagavadgita*, II. 62 and 63

None of those who have died in the Punjab will ever come back. Ultimately all of us have to go the same way. It is true that these people met their death by being slaughtered whereas others die of cholera or in some other way. He who is born is destined to die. In being born there is, to an extent, some human responsibility, but in the matter of dying, none but God has any hand. Death cannot be avoided on any account. Death is our companion, our friend. If people have died with courage, they have lost nothing. Rather, they have gained something. But the great problem is how to deal with those who committed these murders. True, to err is human. After all man is but a bundle of errors. But we ought to rectify the errors. God will not overlook our acts. When we go to Him He will look into our hearts. He knows our hearts. If there is a change of heart in us, he will pardon all our lapses.

I have many friends in the Punjab who call themselves my devoted followers. But who am I that they should describe themselves as such? All these friends insist that since I have already come as far as Delhi I should go over to the Punjab at least for one night, so as to comfort the people there. It would take only a few hours if I fly. But how can I go at somebody's bidding? I shall go there only at God's bidding or at the bidding of my own heart. I did not go to Noakhali at someone else's call. Before leaving this place I had said that I was going there because my heart urged me to do so. People had been for long asking me to go to Bihar but I had not gone there at anyone's call. I went when Dr. Mahmud Saheb wrote to me that my going there would alone clear the minds of the Biharis.

Bihar is a province where Hindus and Muslims can live together [in peace]. But there too women and children have been subjected to outrages no less violent. Blind with fury, people killed innocent children; they slaughtered the womenfolk and threw the bodies into the wells. I am not talking in the air. All these are facts that can be proved by evidence. After that the Muslims are bound to say that they would not live there. But once they are assured that they would not be treated like that again, they would come back. The Bihari Muslims had nearly come to appreciate this; so much so that if we could have reassured them, I was confident that the Muslims who had fled to Asansol and Sind would have come back. They were on the point of returning. But now, should the atrocities in the Punjab be avenged in Bihar? Then, will it be repeated

in Madras? And where will this end? Will all of us become barbarous in this way? The Congress fought a non-violent battle against the British. Should we now start killing our own brethren? True, Muslims are perpetrating atrocities, but should we also do the same? Was there an act of atrocity that the British did not commit?

But now the British are going. The Viceroy told me that they had never retreated, but they were leaving India, as a result of her non-violent struggle. You might say that they are doing it for show, because in any case they had got to go. But, if anyone comes to us with honest intentions, why should we interpret his honesty as wickedness? I have learnt to accept honesty on the face of it till I have experience to the contrary. Just at the moment of the departure of the British should we present the spectacle of pleading for the retention of their army although they are leaving? In the Punjab today we are protected solely by them. But can we call it protection ? I wish we could protect ourselves even if only a handful of us survived. Let us not be afraid of dying. If we are to be killed, would we not rather be killed by our Muslim brothers? Would a brother cease to be a brother because he has changed his religion? Moreover, do we not indulge in the same acts as they do? What have we not done to the women in Bihar? The Hindus have done it, which means I have done it. It is a matter of shame. Do you think I should hurl two abuses in return for one ? But that is exactly what both the Hindus and the Muslims are secretly doing and they are possessed by a mad frenzy.

Here is Badshah Khan sitting right beside me. Who can remove him from here? How much prayer did I leave unfinished because of that young man? I did so because I wanted to demonstrate, I wanted to proclaim to one and all that I would be a good Hindu only if I am a good Parsi, a good Muslim. Would it be religious to abuse other religions? For me, there is nothing like different religions.

All these people who have come from all over Asia[1] talk very lovingly to Jawaharlal. They are all very pleased with him. By the grace of God, we have a gem of a man in our midst who wants to embrace the whole world. Should we not maintain peace if only to honour him?

Now let me say a few things about the Viceroy. I was with him yesterday for more than two hours, and therefore could not

[1] For the Inter-Asian Relations Conference

come for the prayers. Fortunately the girl started the prayers as I had instructed her. Today also I talked with the Viceroy for two hours.[1] He said that he was making an honest effort. He assured me that he was the last Viceroy. He said he never wanted to come to India. He wanted to be on the seas but he came here because he was prevailed upon.

He was sent here when the Labour Government of Great Britain decided to quit India, since he belongs to the royal family. The British want to depart from India with grace. He said he was eager to hand over this country even to a single Parsi if he came forward to take it, not to mention a Hindu or a Muslim. Why should I not listen to one who comes to me with such honest intentions? The British have done us enough harm in the past. But Lord Mountbatten has done us no harm. He says that he would like to be a servant right from today if it were possible. But it is not proper that he should run away while we are fighting with each other. He, after all, belongs to a brave race. Why should he run away? He is thinking of the manner in which he should leave the country. He is making good efforts. He is proceeding honourably. If we too proceed accordingly, what has never before happened will happen now. If anyone wants to accommodate a fellow who would not conduct himself honourably but would act barbarously, let him learn from me how to do it. I am a prisoner of the Viceroy till Friday. Jawahar also wants to detain me here. After three days I shall tell you everything. I do not want to hide anything. But what can possibly happen? Whatever the Congress decides will be done; nothing will be according to what I say. My writ runs no more. If it did the tragedies in the Punjab, Bihar and Noakhali would not have happened. No one listens to me any more. I am a small man. True, there was a time when mine was a big voice. Then everyone obeyed what I said; now neither the Congress nor the Hindus nor the Muslims listen to me. Where is the Congress today? It is disintegrating. I am crying in the wilderness. Today everyone can forsake me but God will not. He has His devotee tested. An English poem[2] describes God as the "Hound of Heaven". He is the retriever of dharma, i. e., He seeks out dharma. It would be enough if He hears me. When God rules your hearts you will do only as He bids. We should therefore behave like rational

[1] *Vide* pp. 179-80, and Appendix VII.

[2] By Francis Thompson (1859-1907)

creatures. We ought not to let loose our tongues at the slightest provocation.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 5-11

175. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

April 1, 1947

It is here that my non-violence will undergo its true test. But you are in charge of conducting the prayer. The purity and sincerity with which you conduct the prayer is sure to have its impact on the general public. The people will learn a new lesson through it. Your responsibility in this regard is indeed great. And if the recitation of *Ramanama* is from the heart Rama will himself inspire right-mindedness in all. I have no doubt about it.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 118

176. A LETTER

April 2, 1947

I have come here but I could see the Sardar only for a few minutes. His field of work has grown so vast that I do not like to engage him in talks. I would rather not encroach upon his time even to know his views about me and about *Harijan*. When I look at the work-schedule of the Cabinet I feel as if I had more time than they. It looks surprising, yet it is true.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 120

177. ADVICE TO MAHARAJA OF KAPURTHALA[1]

April 2, 1947

All you can expect to hear from me is that you should cease to be a ruler and become a servant of the people. I can say no more.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 121

[1] This was given to Sir Jagatjit Singh Bahadur, who met Gandhiji and sought his advice.

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178. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

DELHI,
April 2, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

If there is anybody who intends today to object to the prayers, as was done yesterday, I should like to be informed so that I may not begin the prayers at all. I do not wish to hold the prayers in the face of opposition by anyone.

Two persons stood up and said, "If you wish to have your prayers you should hold them in the grounds outside this Hindu temple."

GANDHIJI: This temple belongs to Bhangis. I too am a Bhangi. It would be a different matter if the Trustees object. I shall hold the prayers in this very place if you would let me do so.

A YOUNG MAN: This temple belongs to the public. We have seen what has happened in the Punjab. We shall certainly not allow you to hold the prayers.

GANDHIJI: I do not wish to enter into an argument. Let me tell you with due respect that you can't represent the Bhangis. I am a Bhangi by choice. I have removed night-soil. If I ask you, you will not be able to do so. Even so if you object I shall not hold the prayers.

"We wish to hear the prayers. We want to have the prayers", people shouted.

GANDHIJI: Among these thousands of people you are the only two persons who are putting an obstruction. It does not behove you. I know you are full of anger. I shall have the prayers, but not unless you calm yourselves and try to understand.

The young man shouted: "If you want to recite the verses of the *Gita* in a mosque, will the Muslims allow you to do so? We have witnessed so much in the Punjab."

GANDHIJI: It is not necessary to shout. You are not protecting Hindu dharma by doing so, in fact you are murdering it. I am not postponing the prayer out of fear. If anybody wants to stop me once I have started the prayers I shall not

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stop even if I am killed. And you will see I shall be reciting *Rama Rahim* and *Krishna Karim*[1] when I breathe my last. I have told you that I am a Bhangi, a Christian, a Muslim, besides of course being a Hindu. How can you stop me when Badshah Khan is here with me? But you may stop me, even a child can do so.

YOUNG MAN : Go to the Punjab.

GANDHIJI : What shall I do by going there? I am straining every nerve to do what service I can for the Punjab, Bihar and Noakhali even while remaining here.

Some persons tried to remove the young man.

GANDHIJI : Please do not push him. Be patient.

YOUNG MAN : Give us four minutes, we would like to talk to you.

GANDHIJI : I don't have the time and I don't want to enter into an argument. I would only urge upon you respectfully to tell me in the affirmative or negative [whether I should hold the prayer or not].

YOUNG MAN : We shall not allow you to hold the prayers.

GANDHIJI : Everyone should remain seated peacefully. I am going. No one should molest these persons. You may consider this to be your triumph but is it so? Is it bravery to stab anybody in the back? I must say that by doing so you are murdering Hinduism. You must try to think and understand. I will put the same question to you tomorrow and if you object to the prayers I shall go away.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 11-3

179. SPEECH AT INTER-ASIAN RELATIONS CONFERENCE[2]

April 2, 1947

I do not think that I should apologize to you for having to speak in a foreign tongue. I wonder if this loud speaker carries my voice to the farthest end of this vast audience. If some of

[1] According to the source after his return from Noakhali, Gandhiji replaced the refrain *Bhaj man pyare Sitaram* by *Bhaj man pyare Rama Rahim, bhaj man pyare Krishna Karim.*

[2] The version in *Harijan* entitled "The Message of Asia", has been collated with *The Hindu* report. More than 25,000 persons attended the concluding session presided over by Sarojini Naidu. Gandhiji spoke in Hindi.

those who are far away are unable to hear what I may say, it will be the fault of the loud speaker.

I was going to tell you that I do not wish to apologize. I dare not. You cannot understand the provincial language which is my mother tongue. I do not want to insult you by speaking in my own language (Gujarati). Our national speech is Hindustani. I know that it will be a long time before it can be made into an international speech. For international commerce, undoubtedly, English occupies the first place. I used to hear that French was the language of diplomacy. I was told when I was young that if I wanted to go from one end of Europe to the other, I must try to pick up French. I tried to learn French in order that I may be able to make myself understood. There is a rivalry between French and English. Having been taught English I have naturally to resort to that language.

I was wondering as to what I was to say to you. I wanted to collect my thoughts but, let me confess to you, I had no time. Yet I had promised yesterday that I would try to say a few words. While I was coming with Badshah Khan I asked for a little piece of paper and pencil. I got a pen instead of a pencil. I tried to scribble a few words. You will be sorry to hear from me that that piece of paper is not by my side though I remember what I wanted to say.

You, friends, have not seen the real India and you are not meeting in conference in the midst of real India. Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Lahore—all these are big cities and are, therefore, influenced by the West.

I then thought of a story. It was in French and was translated for me by an Anglo-French philosopher. He was an unselfish man. He befriended me without having known me because he always sided with the minorities. I was not then in my own country. I was not only in a hopeless minority but in a despised minority, if the Europeans in South Africa will forgive me for saying so. I was a coolie lawyer. At that time we had no coolie doctors, no coolie lawyers. I was the first in the field. You know perhaps what is meant by the word coolie.

This friend — his mother was a French woman and his father an Englishman — said : " I want to translate for you a French story. There were three scientists who went out from France in search of truth. They went to different parts of Asia. One of them found his way to India. He began to search. He went to the so-called cities of those times — naturally this was before British occupation, before even the Moghul period. He saw the

so-called high-caste people, men and women, and he felt at a loss. Finally, he went to a humble cottage in a humble village. That was the cottage of a Bhangi and there he found the truth that he was in search of.''

If you really want to see India at its best [*sic*], you have to find it in the humble Bhangi homes of such villages. There are 7,00,000 of such villages and 38 crores of people inhabit them.

If some of you see the villages, you will not be fascinated by the sight. You will have to scratch below the dung heap. I do not say that they ever were heavenly places. Today they are really dung-heaps. They were not like that before. What I say is not from history but from what I have seen myself. I have travelled from one end of India to the other and have seen the miserable specimens of humanity with lustreless eyes. They are India. In these humble cottages, in the midst of these dung-heaps, are to be found the humble Bhangis in whom you find the concentrated essence of wisdom.

Again, I have learnt from books—books written by English historians. We read books written in English by English historians but we do not write in our own mother tongue or in the national language — Hindustani. We study our history through English books rather than through the originals. That is the cultural conquest which India has undergone.

Stating that wisdom had come to the West from the East, Gandhiji said:

The first of these wise men was Zoroaster. He belonged to the East. He was followed by the Buddha who belonged to the East — India. Who followed the Buddha? Jesus, who came from the East. Before Jesus was Moses who belonged to Palestine though he was born in Egypt. After Jesus came Mohammed. I omit any reference to Krishna and Rama and other lights. I do not call them lesser lights but they are less known to the literary world. All the same I do not know of a single person in the world to match these men of Asia. And then what happened? Christianity became disfigured when it went to the West. I am sorry to have to say that. I would not talk any further.

I have told you the story in order to make you understand that what you see in the big cities is not the real India. Certainly, the carnage that is going on before our very eyes is a shameful thing. As I said yesterday, do not carry the memory of that carnage beyond the confines of India.

What I want you to understand is the message of Asia. It is not to be learnt through the Western spectacles or by



ARRIVING AT ASIAN RELATIONS CONFERENCE



MORNING WALK WITH ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

imitating the atom bomb. If you want to give a message to the West, it must be the message of love and the message of truth. I want you to go away with the thought that Asia has to conquer the West through love and truth. I do not want merely to appeal to your heads. I want to capture your hearts.

Of course, I believe in "one world". How can I possibly do otherwise, when I became an inheritor of the message of love that these great unconquerable teachers left for us? In this age of democracy, in this age of awakening of the poorest of the poor, you can redeliver this message with the greatest emphasis. You will complete the conquest of the West not through vengeance because you have been exploited, but with real understanding. I am confident that if all of you put your hearts together—not merely heads—to understand the secret of the message these wise men of the East have left to us, and if we really become worthy of that great message, the conquest of the West will be complete. This conquest will be loved by the West itself.

The West is today pining for wisdom. It is despairing of the multiplication of the atom bomb, because atom bombs mean utter destruction not merely of the West but of the whole world, as if the prophesy of the Bible was going to be fulfilled and there was to be a perfect deluge. It is up to you to tell the world of its wickedness and sin — that is the teaching your teachers and my teachers have taught Asia.

Harijan, 20-4-1947, and *The Hindu*, 3-4-1947

180. A TALK[1]

April 3, 1947

We must project ourselves in a better light in foreign countries. Foreigners observe us with a view to learning something from us. But we, in our turn, come under their spell. As a matter of fact we should try to impress them with what is our own. For instance, while there we should insist on wearing khadi, should ply the charkha regularly, abstain from smoking, drinking and taking tea and should have vegetarian food if possible. We must live as simply as possible, conforming to our way of life. If we do this, we shall be able to impress the people there

[1] On the conduct of Indian ambassadors abroad

and enhance our country's glory. We should demonstrate to them the advantages of our way of life. What is the true meaning of appointing our ambassadors in those countries or their ambassadors in our country? It means that these ambassadors, through their conduct and manner of dressing and their food habits, should reveal their own cultural heritage to the other country so that it can benefit from it. Such mutually advantageous exchanges would spread friendliness which in turn would promote world peace, and this would enable people to live in harmony and peace and make progress. In my opinion this is the basic purpose of appointing ambassadors in every country. No doubt there are distinct international advantages accruing from this in the commercial and economic spheres, but the most significant is the former advantage. Hence we must take great care to see that our representatives exhibit no undesirable trait. Then alone would we shine forth and rise from our present backward state. There is a saying in English that if wealth is lost nothing is lost, if health is lost much is lost but if honour is lost everything is lost.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 130-1

181. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
April 3, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Yesterday there were only two or three persons who wanted to stop the prayers, but today the matter has gone further. I have received a letter written by the president of some scavengers' union. It says that I must not stay here. Just look at the ordeal an old man like me has to go through. But the president of the scavengers' union here is another person. After all I am a scavenger myself and all my scavenger friends here listen to me. I have been staying here after consulting them and will continue to stay. Moreover, Jugal Kishore Birla is the boss here. He has put me up here. When the person who has accommodated me does not ask me to leave, why should I go?

Again today I shall ask you whether I should hold the prayer or not. But before that I would like to ask if you have

understood what I said to you yesterday. If you have, you would have realized why I stopped the prayer yesterday. If somebody tells me not to hold the prayer or that, if I did, I may not include the recitation from the Koran, should I accept defeat and continue the prayer? I am not going to give up the prayer even if I have to lose my life. Those who stop the prayer in this manner do not advance Hinduism but harm it. Yesterday there were only two or three such persons; today there are many.

I am disturbed by what I heard today. I hope it is not true—namely, that the persons obstructing prayers belong to a big organization[1].

But those who do physical exercises and drill here every morning and are members of that organization love me. If they do not want me to stay here there is no point in my staying on. I must not remain here. But I had a talk with their leader. He said that it was not their intention to harm anyone. The Sangh was not formed to oppose anyone. True, they had not accepted my method of non-violence; but they were willing to confine themselves within the Congress discipline. So long as the Congress rules non-violently they would remain peaceful. He thus talked with me very cordially.

If you still want to stop me, then kindly do not come here from tomorrow. I do not wish to hold prayers in this manner. I am made of different stuff. If I am a Hindu, I am also a Muslim. And the Sikhs are almost Hindus. I have seen the Granth Sahib. In many parts it is Hinduism to the letter—the religion I follow. Hence, with great humility I request you to remain peaceful because I would stop the prayer even at a child's wish. If you want to recite God's name by creating a row you would be acting like a devil although you may be uttering the name of God. And I can never do the work of the devil. I am a devotee of God alone.

Please do not take it as cowardice on my part. Had you been in large numbers and had all of you insisted that I should not hold the prayer, I would certainly have carried on. I would have asked you to cut my throat and continued the prayer. But here in the presence of so many of you, a handful of persons want to stop me. If you suppress them and insist on my continuing the prayer it would be the act of a devil and I cannot follow the devil. He who is God's enemy is the devil. I cannot co-operate with the devil. My method of resisting is like Rama's.

[1] The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

During the battle between Rama and Ravana Vibhishana asked Rama how he would fight against Ravana without a chariot. Rama then pointed out how one could fight a war with the help of qualities like truthfulness, valour and so on. Rama was a devotee of God and talked like one. I have regarded Rama not as God but as a devotee. Later on from a devotee he came to be regarded as God. Tulsidas too has described Rama as without a body. This One without form pervades all forms. Him we worship. I am a worshipper of this Rama. How can I ever worship Ravana? You may kill me, spit in my face but I shall go on repeating *Rama Rahim* and *Krishna Karim* till my last breath. And even at the moment you shower blows on me I shall not blame you. Nor shall I complain to God whatever may be done to me. I am His devotee. I shall accept His wish.

But today, even if a child wants me to stop, I shall stop the prayer. I shall leave the place. Please remain seated in silence and do not indulge in arguments. Silence is also a form of prayer, and my prayer is not meant for the world to see. It is for peace of mind, for cleansing the heart. In the present circumstances we cannot cleanse our hearts by praying while they are full of anger. Hence, let us consider silence itself as prayer.

If people forced me down from all sides, stopped me from praying and under pain of bodily injury I discontinued the prayer it would be irreligion, not religion. It would not cleanse our hearts. What face would I have to go and tell the Hindus of Noakhali not to be afraid and to go on repeating Ramanama? That is why I ask you to understand this peaceful method of mine. How can I carry on the prayer if all of you want to stop me? But I would continue the *Ramdhun* and *Rama Rahim Krishna Karim*, and so on and leave the place if a child wants me to do so.

Now I ask you to reply 'yes' or 'no'. Do not argue. Shall I conduct the prayer?

Some thirty persons stood up and said: "Do not hold the prayer, we do not want your prayers."

GANDHIJI: Well, so, all of you are against it?

Two to three hundred persons cried out: "No, all of us are not against it. Do hold the prayer."

G. No, there are too many people against it. I am defeated, you have won. Tomorrow more people can raise their hands.

Even now your number is considerable. I can hold the prayer, but I have no desire to be killed at your hands. I want to live and work.

PEOPLE: Not all, only a few are not in favour.

G. That's all right, there need not be more! Even these few can kill me if they want.

This was followed by shouting from both the sides and there was a great deal of noise. Gandhiji stood at the edge of the dais and said:

Please listen. Do not get so excited. You are all Hindus. A Hindu ought to think calmly and speak after great thought and consideration. Please go home and think how the wound of the Punjab can be healed. I am also thinking about it as best as I can. But the wound is not going to be healed by getting angry.

With this Gandhiji finished his speech. But a voice came from the crowd: "Please answer one question before leaving. Why did you stop *Ramdhun* at Noakhali?[1] Stop it here too and hold your prayers in your room."

G. I do not wish to give any answer here. Please leave this place and do not quarrel even after you have left.

Gandhiji then started to leave. In the meantime the police tried to restore order. This created confusion in the meeting. Then Gandhiji returned to the dais. People asked him to start the prayer. They offered to pacify those who were protesting. They said they would all sit down, and that they were all ready to lay down their lives for him, but he should not abandon the prayer.

G. If you are going to die let it be on my condition. All my life I have been teaching the art of laying down life and learning it myself. If you want to lay down your lives, you should not do it boiling with rage. You should meet death with the strength of coolness. Right now these people are confused. They think that it is only Gandhi who is going about doing all the harm. So, for the present, consider only my silence as my prayer. I know at present everyone's blood is boiling because of the events in the Punjab. Isn't my own blood boiling? There is a fire raging even in my heart. I understand the problem of the Punjab fully well. The Punjabis are all my brothers. Right now they are all enraged. They must

[1] According to the source *Ramdhun* was never stopped during prayers at Noakhali. A few Muslims did leave the prayer meeting when the *Ramdhun* started, but the prayer did not stop.

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calm down. The people of Bihar were also angry. I have contained their anger. In the present situation we can make any headway only by containing our anger.

The police have taken away those few persons. How can I hold the prayer when they have been removed? Let them return to this place and sit here in silence and then we shall all pray together.

Just now, I am using my energy in thinking how to prevent what is going on. What else? Do you think I visit the Viceroy for dinner parties?[1] We are both putting our heads together and trying to find out a way. He is more eager to put an end to all this chaos than I am. It is just as well that he should. I request you again to remain quiet. Silence by itself is prayer. I do not like those who protest being stopped by force.

When Gandhiji turned to go, people stopped him for the third time and said: "Why do you listen to those few persons who are causing obstruction? Actually, they have suffered nothing. It is we who have suffered in the Punjab—who have been wronged. But we are not preventing you. We request you to hold the prayer, if only for some time."

G. You are right. But you must give them a chance to understand.

Some people said: "Will you answer our question?"

G. You just think. I am an old man. Can I keep standing and talk? I tell even the Viceroy that he should not expect me to talk standing. Do I have all that energy? But God makes me talk. He gives me strength. I am having [high] blood-pressure these days. Still He is pulling me along. Tomorrow I shall talk more provided there is no opposition.

Let those who are at the root of this opposition at least come to me and talk. If all they want is that I should not stay here I shall go away. There are many people who would have me stay with them. But I am a Bhangi, and am content to put up in the Bhangi Colony. I could even have all this accommodation here. They have only small holes to live in. I cannot stand it. I insist on cleanliness. If God grants me the strength, I shall start living in one of them.

May God be kind to all and grant independence to India.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 14-9

[1] For reports of the interviews with the Viceroy on April 2 and 3, *vide* Appendices VIII and IX.

182. OUTLINE OF DRAFT AGREEMENT[1]

April 4, 1947[2]

1. Mr. Jinnah to be given the option of forming a Cabinet.

2. The selection of the Cabinet is left entirely to Mr. Jinnah. The members may be all Muslims, or all non-Muslims, or they may be representatives of all classes and creeds of the Indian people.

3. If Mr. Jinnah accepted this offer, the Congress would guarantee to co-operate freely and sincerely, so long as all the measures that Mr. Jinnah's Cabinet bring forward are in the interests of the Indian people as a whole.

4. The sole referee of what is or is not in the interests of India as a whole will be Lord Mountbatten, in his personal capacity.

5. Mr. Jinnah must stipulate, on behalf of the League or of any other parties represented in the Cabinet formed by him that, so far as he or they are concerned, they will do their utmost to preserve peace throughout India.

6. There shall be no National Guards[3] or any other form of private army.

7. Within the framework hereof Mr. Jinnah will be perfectly free to present for acceptance a scheme of Pakistan even before the transfer of power, provided however, that he is successful in his appeal to reason and not to the force of arms which he abjures for all time for this purpose. Thus, there will be no compulsion in this matter over a province or a part thereof.

8. In the Assembly the Congress has a decisive majority. But the Congress shall never use that majority against the League policy simply because of its identification with the League but will give its hearty support to every measure brought forward by the League Government, provided that it is in the interest of the whole of India. Whether it is in such interest or not shall be decided by Lord Mountbatten as man and not in his representative capacity.

[1] & [2] At the end of his interview with the Viceroy on April 4, Gandhiji dictated this to Lord Ismay, Chief of Staff. *Vide* pp. 212-4 and Appendix X.

[3] A volunteer corps organized by the Muslim League

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9. If Mr. Jinnah rejects this offer, the same offer to be made *mutatis mutandis* to Congress.[1]

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 238-9

183. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

April 4, 1947

Whatever has been lately happening during the prayer meetings is a measure of my own purity. I shall succeed to the extent that I am pure. The responsibility lies as much on you. The success of my action depends on you. We might have left Noakhali; but the *yajna* is the same. I am being tested no doubt. But you are being put to a greater test because the person conducting the prayers has his own influence. If there is not the slightest negligence, the frequent bleeding of your nose must stop. You must look after yourself as much as you look after me and my belongings, for you too are one of them. Then alone would you succeed.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 137

184. TALK WITH REFUGEES[2]

April 4, 1947

Q. You tell people to discard arms, but in the Punjab the Muslims kill the Hindus at sight. You have no time even to go to the Punjab. Do you want us to be butchered like sheep?

GANDHIJI: If all the Punjabis were to die to the last man without killing, the Punjab would become immortal. It is more valiant to get killed than to kill. Of course my condition is that even if we are facing death we must not take up arms against them. But you take up arms and when you are defeated you come to me. Of what help can I be to you in these circumstances? If you cared to listen to me, I could restore calm

[1] For further developments, *vide* letters to Lord Ismay, pp. 212-4 and Appendices XI and XII.

[2] The Gujarati version in *Biharni Komi Agman* has been collated with the report in *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase.*

A group of refugees from Rawalpindi came along with Dr. Lehna Singh, and Dr. S. D. Kitchlu, President, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee. Out of about one thousand Hindus, only sixteen had escaped and that too by hiding.

in the Punjab even from here. One thousand lost their lives of course, but not like brave men. I would have liked the sixteen who escaped by hiding to have come into the open and courted death. More is the pity. What a difference it would have made if they had bravely offered themselves as a non-violent, willing sacrifice! Oppose with ahimsa if you can, but go down fighting by all means if you have not the non-violence of the brave. Do not turn cowards.

There was a time when the most casual remark from me was honoured as a command. Such is not the case today. Man after all is mortal. We are born only to die. Death alone is the true friend of man. [Birth and death] are like the two sides of a coin.

How did we react in Bihar? Man's claim to humanity consists in his magnifying his own fault a million times and minimizing others' faults correspondingly. You ought to know that I have been to villages where death reigned supreme. But in spite of it if I feel like it I would certainly go to the Punjab. But now I am doing the same work from here. I believe I have calmed down Bihar to some extent. Naturally it could be only with God's grace, without which nothing happens. Why, I had said to none else than Master Tara Singh that I was the true heir of Guru Govind Singh and not he. . . .[1] Matters can be mended only if you try to understand this without getting excited.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 97, and *Biharni Komi Agman*, pp. 137-8

185. TALK WITH EGYPTIAN DELEGATES[2]

April 4, 1947

One of the delegates asked: "If the British quit, would you still provide them with military facilities in India? And would India adhere to your policy of non-violence after you attain independence? Would you welcome American aid for winning India's independence?"

With regard to the first, Gandhiji replied, he could, in certain circumstances, contemplate the possibility of Britain approaching independent India with that request, as a friendly concession vital to her (Britain's) existence.

[1] Omission as in *Biharni Komi Agman*

[2] The Gujarati version in *Biharni Komi Agman* has been collated with the report in *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*.

The delegates were accompanied by Jawaharlal Nehru.

He hoped that in that event India would consider the request on its merits, uninfluenced by the memory of past wrongs.

Of course, today non-violence is no more to be found. But, I hope, when the hurdle of foreign domination is removed everything will be peaceful. I can never think of seeking foreign aid for the attainment of independence. I believe in the dictum a known enemy is better than an unknown one. I do not know what the national policy of India after independence will be. But looking at the present state of affairs I do not think I shall live to see it. I would advocate the policy of non-violence as far as we can stretch it. India can contribute substantially towards world peace and progress leading to its reconstruction. All the same, I would say that there are many militant groups in India. India's history also points in the same direction. Naturally therefore our national policy is sure to tend towards some kind of mild war policy. But I shall certainly die with the hope that my efforts of the last thirty years will not be in vain and that there surely will be a powerful section in the country that would hold steadfastly to the doctrine of true non-violence. You have already met my heir Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his associates. I hope you have had a discussion with him. But I have faith that a day will come when the world will come to India in search of peace and India and Asia will become the light of the world. I do not know whether I shall survive to witness the day, for I might be consumed in the conflagration that is raging now. But you who are all young men will live to see it. [Laughter.] I tell you all that our 'Jawahar', meaning a 'jewel', is sure to become one. And he will belong not only to India but will become an ornament of the whole of Asia—of those countries from where you all have come here to cultivate our friendship. However, without your help nothing can be achieved. You have come here from distant lands drawn by your love of him and he deeply appreciates it. I have also had the privilege of meeting you. I sincerely thank you all.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 98, and *Biharni Komi Agman*, pp. 144-5

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186. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
April 4, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Will there be peace today or are you going to repeat what you did yesterday and the day before?

Voices came from all sides: "It is all quiet today. There will be no trouble today. Please hold the prayer."

Gandhiji asked again:

Are you sure you did not drown a voice or two in your own? Is there anyone who wants to oppose?

A hand went up. Gandhiji said:

Very well. In that case, there will be no prayer today also. I shall not hold the prayer so long as there is even one person who refuses to understand or does not voluntarily leave the meeting. It serves no purpose if the police seizes him and takes him away. People should not gang up like this to suppress a smaller group. Even if there are only a few who oppose, they should be persuaded. They should leave the place if they disapprove of anything that happens here. They should not create disturbance. If this one person is convinced of my point and goes away from here I shall hold the prayer. Otherwise he must sit through the prayer in silence.[1]

Are you all quiet now? Has the gentleman who did not want the prayer to be held, left? I shall appeal to all of you that he should not be threatened or bullied. What will happen to the poor man if the police take him away? Whatever may be his opinion about himself, I shall only pity him. Who will protect him if I do not? If a person calls himself a Hindu or a Muslim and wants to stop me from holding the prayer, why should he be attacked?

He says that I should not hold the prayer in this temple. But this temple belongs to the scavengers who come to me and complain against outsiders creating trouble in their temple. How

[1] A pundit then requested Gandhiji to hold the prayers and appealed the people to maintain silence.

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can I console my little brothers? I am their elder brother. I am an excellent Bhangi. I do the external cleaning and clean the latrines, but our hearts too need to be cleansed. A true Bhangi has to do the inner cleaning too, which I am doing. If we do not cleanse our hearts, if we do not get rid of the feeling of high and low, Hinduism is not going to survive. It has survived so far because it is a great religion. It is still alive even though it is gasping for breath. But if we do not give up the feeling of high and low it would go on weakening even though it is a great religion. Even Dr. Moonje[1] has supported me in this. He has written me a letter saying that even though he does not agree with me on other points — he believes in the training of the sword —he is in complete agreement with me in the matter of removal of untouchability and the feeling of high and low.

Hence, those who oppose my prayer are destroying Hindu dharma. They should understand that I am as much a Parsi, a Christian and also a Muslim as I am a Hindu. What wonderful meaning is conveyed by *Auz-o-Billahi*. I have not read the *Yajurveda*. But a gentleman writes to say that everything it contains is to be found in the *Yajurveda*. In that case why should you oppose it? Religious sentiment whether expressed in Arabic, Sanskrit or Chinese, is always noble. That is why I would like to ask that gentleman if he has understood my point.

If he is not a Hindu and belongs to some other religion, let him not attend the prayer. In any case only a few Muslims join my prayer. The Muslims too have been asking me what right I have to recite portions from the Koran. Yet they did not prevent me from doing so in Noakhali. Could they not have stopped me?

But no one who belongs to Hinduism can have reason to complain. We have 108 Upanishads. One of them is the *Allopanishad*. The wonderful thing about Hinduism is that it assimilates people from outside. But its one great limitation is untouchability or the feeling of high and low. This poison has spread in it. It can survive only if the poison is removed. These people talk of saving Hinduism with the help of the sword. They carry swords while doing their drills. Why? For killing [their opponents] ? This is not the way to advance Hinduism.

A religion grows through truth alone. I have learnt this from Hindu dharma. It has also taught me that "there is no religion greater than Truth"[2] and that "ahimsa is the greatest

[1] B. S. Moonje

[2] नास्ति सत्यात् परो धर्मः *Mahabharata*, Shantiparva, XI, 13

religion''[1]. Patanjali[2] put the five vows of non-violence, truth, non-possession, non-stealing and brahmacharya on a scientific plane. These are to be found in the other religions too. But Hinduism alone has provided a scientific basis for them.

After this Gandhiji while narrating the story of the South Indian Harijan saints Nandanar and Avvaiamma, said that Avvaiamma's feet were stretched towards the temple's deity. When some Hindus found fault with her, she asked them to place her feet where God was not present. But whichever side they turned her feet God was surely there.

Idol worship is only one form of worshipping. But if God resides in one's heart, it hardly matters where one's feet may be. Man can worship with his feet, and he can also kick with them. If there is a fire raging like a volcano it cannot be extinguished with water. If I control it with stones and standing on it save the lives of millions of people I will certainly have worshipped God with the stones and my feet. One can worship with one's feet and hands and also with one's tongue. Worship should be sincere, no matter what method one adopts.

That is why, if that gentleman is present here, I would like to request him to allow us to carry on the prayer in peace.

I would like to emphasize that I am not at all angry with those young men. How could I be angry with them? The *Gita* does not preach anger. And right from my South Africa days I have been reciting the *Gita* verses in the course of my prayers. I have learnt this teaching of the *Gita* right from there and have carried it here with me. Those who oppose it do not know what Hinduism is. Not realizing it they indulge in devilish acts and forget God.

After this the people were quiet and the prayer was held in peace. Gandhiji said :

I am extremely grateful to God that today on the fourth day He allowed us to have our prayer in peace. Let me also tell you that nobody should think that no prayers were held during these days. When you came here, I came here and we all sat in silence, it was as good as praying, because there was prayer in our hearts.

Then, I am also indebted to those who tried to disturb our prayers. I am grateful to them because I had an opportunity to look into my heart. I had no opportunity before to examine my heart about the question of prayer. I had to search within to find out where I stood. Was there anger in my heart against them? Did my prayer mean something different? God wants to

[1] अहिंसा परमो धर्मः *Mahabharata*, Adiparva, XI, 13, CLXII, 24
[2] Propounder of the Yoga philosophy

test His devotees in ever so many ways, and ultimately, He frees His devotee from his trouble as you have just heard in the *bhajan*[1]. From this we must learn that whatever we suffer is ordained by God. It is God's grace that I have passed this test today.

I am also grateful to the gentleman who was persuaded by the pundit's appeal.

God has saved me from a more difficult test. Once the prayer was started, even if as few as four persons had asked me to stop, I would have said: 'You may cut my throat if you want, but I shall keep on repeating *Rama Rahim, Rama Rahim,*' and even at that moment, instead of allowing myself to be overpowered by anger, I would have prayed to God to grant them good sense as was said in the *Ramdhun.*

Let me narrate to you one thing that happened at Noakhali. It was with great difficulty that *Ramdhun* could be started there. Every time I started my journey we used to sing *Ramdhun* and as we approached some village we entered it with *Ramdhun.* We used to explain to the people that Rama, Rahim, Khuda, Ishwar were all names of God. In fact, God is known by millions of names.

If I explain to you the meaning of *Auz-o-Billahi* you would not even know that it has been taken from Arabic. Would it then be a crime if I pray in Arabic? Please do not reduce Hinduism to a worthless faith by such acts. Hinduism is a great religion. It is an ancient religion. Lokamanya Tilak[2] has proved it to be ten thousand years old. But in my view it is older than a hundred thousand years. It is eternal. What is contained in the Vedas is the essence of dharma and dharma has come into being with the functioning of human beings. That is why the Vedas are said to be without a beginning. When men realized those things they inscribed them in their hearts. They were reduced to writing much later, because man learnt the art of writing afterwards. Many of the writings too are lost. Thus a large part of the Bible too is lost from memory. The same is the case with the Koran. Many scholars of the Bible are of the opinion that it has a number of interpolations. Thus, the Shastras are endless. The essence of the Shastras, i. e., the Vedas, is that God is, and He is One. The essence of the Koran and the

[1] By Mirabai, namely, *Hari tum haro janaki bhir. Vide* Vol. XLIV, pp. 427-8.

[2] Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920); patriot, scholar and writer; one of the founders of the Deccan Education Society; was sentenced to six years' deportation in 1908; launched Home Rule League movement with Annie Besant in 1916; started the Congress Democratic Party in 1920; author of the *Orion, The Arctic Home in the Vedas* and *Gitarahasya*

Bible is the same. No one may say that the Bible mentions three Gods. It mentions only one God.

I frequently visit the Viceroy. I am spending quite some time there. But that time is not wasted. I do there what I would do in Bihar, the Punjab, Noakhali and all the other places. For me the smallest work is as important as the biggest. For me whatever is in the atoms and molecules is in the universe. I believe in the saying that what is in the microcosm of one's self is reflected in the macrocosm.[1] If I leave out the Punjab, Bihar or Noakhali, I can do no work for India. For me India lives only in such places.

Today I have explained so many things to you. I feel happy about it. I thank you for maintaining peace.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 19-24

187. TALK WITH EUROPEAN VISITORS[2]

April 5, 1947

Q. What can be India's contribution to the elimination of violence in the world?

GANDHIJI: If the Congress succeeds in its non-violent effort the rest will settle down automatically. There are reports of quite a few Congressmen being involved in the Bihar riots. At this stage I cannot sift the truth in these reports. But how could such a rumour, even if false, spread?

One of them asked Gandhiji a question about his conception of free India's economic policy. Gandhiji replied:

I hope we shall never want to get rich by exploitation of others, having passed through that experience ourselves. For instance, we might export our textile manufactures to help a neighbouring country that was suffering from a cloth shortage, as a friendly act, but not to exploit industrially backward people. At present India exports raw materials to the U. S. A. How much do we have to suffer on that account? All our industries have been ruined. How I wish Western powers learnt to look upon

[1] यथा पिण्डे तथा ब्रह्माण्डे

[2] The Gujarati version in *Biharni Komi Agman* has been collated with the report in *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase.*

The visitors were accompanied by Dr. Sjahrir of Indonesia and Jawaharlal Nehru.

India not as a country to be exploited but as a country whose independence they should respect because it has been won without the power of armaments. Good relations should be maintained by both the parties. If you expect courtesy from me I ought to treat you accordingly. If we lacked the technical know-how, they could provide it to us in a spirit of mutual help, not at a fabulous price. At present you have brought us to such a pass that we cannot do without your motor-cars and other luxury goods. You have crippled us. Christianity that came to India from the West was a mixed affair. If only Christian missions had come to render humanitarian service to the poor village folk, without the proselytizing motive, they would have earned their undying gratitude and proved themselves true heirs and representatives of Jesus Christ. But I regret to say that this does not benefit you. As for us we never stood to gain by it.

I would say to whoever assaults me that he may destroy my home and hearth, why, even my person, but he would not be able to destroy my soul. I would not defend my country with foreign arms. If I could have my say I would place in the hands of the police hoe and spade instead of bayonets so that they could take to farming. Besides, a country wedded to non-violence is not bothered about foreign aggression because every citizen will be prepared to lay down his life. It is my belief that non-violence is not an entirely personal quality. It is an easy way of spiritual as well as political action for all—individual, society and country.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 98-9, and *Biharni Komi Agman*, pp. 146-7

188. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
April 5, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It is a painful thing but for the remaining few days I shall have to ask you if there would be any protest from any quarter against the recitation from the Koran. If there are it will benefit neither you nor your religion. Just as God, in spite of the many names that describe Him, is but one, dharma although known by several names is but one; because all religions have come from God. They would be worthless if they had not come from God. Any religion which is not the religion of God is the religion of the Devil, and cannot but be worthless. You must,

therefore, realize that if what has been happening for the last three days continues, it would mean the end of Hindu dharma.

If I am a Hindu, why can I not recite from the Koran, or from the Zend-Avesta? Besides, the Hindu mode of worship also is no less diverse. Some would have recitations from the Upanishads and not from the Vedas; some would want the *Gita* and not the Upanishads, a third one would demand the *Atharva-veda* in preference to the *Yajurveda.* In other words, each one is entitled to pray in his own way. If you want to stop me, even today I am willing to accept defeat and let you win. If anyone from among you so desires, he can give me this cup of poison. If somebody does give it to me I would be glad to drink it and you too should bear with it. You do not have to drink the poison but you will please witness it. Do not be angry but please understand that if this old man is forbearing he is doing the right thing.

It is a good thing that you have come here in such large numbers. But if even one of you is opposed to the recitation of *Auz-o-Billahi*, I will abandon the prayer and you will have to go back peacefully.[1]

I must thank you for maintaining the peace. Such peace was not usual before. It indicates that we have not lost our dharma by what happened during the past three days. If man does not live in peace, if he never inwardly examines his thoughts, is caught in the mad rush of life and remains excited all the time, he cannot produce what Shaukat Ali Saheb used to call "cold strength". Mohammed Ali Saheb also used to say that we had to achieve independence by fighting the British and the *taklis* would be our cannon and the cones our cannon-balls. He had as much poetic imagination as erudition.

And all this happened in your Delhi. In those days I had been staying with Rudra Saheb[2] at his St. Stephen's College residence. The College has now been shifted to some vast premises, but I first met Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in the same old building. There I met Prof. Abdul Bari as also many other great Maulanas. After long discussions it was decided that the Congress could join the Khilafat movement[3] only if the whole movement was conducted peacefully. It was decided with God as witness that every activity of the Khilafat movement would be peaceful. It was a matter of swearing by Ishwar or Khuda. There was no

[1] The people reassured Gandhiji and the prayer went off peacefully.
[2] S. K. Rudra, Principal, St. Stephen's College, Delhi
[3] Which was launched in 1919; *vide* Vol. XX, p. 20.

distinction between Ishwar and Khuda. We are going to be rewarded with the fruit of what we did then.

I mention this incident because tomorrow the National Week begins. It was on this day[1] that India realized herself. India then realized that she lived not in Delhi or Bombay or Lahore but in her seven lakh villages. If there were a terrible earthquake destroying the entire urban population, even then India would not die. Even if the entire population of two crores in the cities perished, the 38 crores in the seven lakh villages would continue to live. The terrible earthquake that had rocked Patna[2] too caused damage only to the big cities, leaving the tiny villages untouched. Of course, if the Cosmic Being described in the eleventh chapter of the *Gita* decides to swallow all, none would escape. It is however clear that India is alive because of her villages.

These seven lakh villages were suddenly aroused on the 6th April, 1919. When I had issued an appeal on the 5th April[3] I had not imagined even in my dreams that India would be aroused to that extent. On that day I was at Salem in the house of Rajagopalachari who is your Minister now. I was thinking the whole day how to start the satyagraha. Shri Vijayaraghavachari—who is no more—and others too met me there. When the thought occurred to me I asked Mahadev—alas, he too is no more—to send for Rajaji. Rajaji agreed with me and we issued the appeal. Just by the appeal India was so aroused that I was wonder-struck. In those days the Congress had neither volunteers nor any means to carry messages, still it was like the passing of an electric current.

We had appealed to the people to observe a fast and pray on the 6th of April. The Hindus observe fast for 36 hours whereas the Muslims may observe a *roza*[4] for only 24 hours. The Hindus too observe *pradosha*[5] for 24 hours. We also decided upon a fast for 24 hours so that both Hindus and Muslims could observe it. During this fast no food, milk, vegetables, etc., could be taken. One could take any amount of water. I had instructed that the aged and the weak like me could take fruit. But when you undertake the fast tomorrow you should not take fruits like bananas which satisfy hunger. This would be something like what my mother

[1] In 1919

[2] In January, 1934

[3] Apparently the reference is to the appeal issued on March 23, 1919, when Gandhiji was in Madras; *vide* Vol. XV, pp. 145-6. For the instructions issued on April 5, *ibid.*, pp. 177-8.

[4] & [5] Fasting during daytime

did, she used to put me on a fast-diet and feed me with *puris*[1] of *kutu*[2] and *gulabjamun*[3] the whole day long. I do not intend to pamper you as my mother pampered me. Those who cannot observe a complete fast may take fruit juice.

The special message for the 6th April is Hindu-Muslim unity, khadi and village work; but who would do it today? Today if there is Hindu-Muslim unity anywhere, it is only in my heart. Even the charkha is lying only by my side. You can also take up these things tomorrow if you wish. For doing this you must forget the past happenings. No matter what atrocities had been committed by the Muslims in the Punjab and by the Hindus in Bihar, both the communities should forget these things and think in terms of establishing brotherly relations. If you do not think along these lines, are you going to pray to God that He should make you as fanatical as the people in the Punjab and Bihar? Would you thus save yourselves and your religions? That is why you should undertake the fast only if your hearts are imbued with the spirit of 1919 and you would be able to imbibe that spirit only if you remain peaceful and calm.

How would you attain peace? Spin for an hour daily and then tell me if you do not find peace. Pattani Saheb[4], Chairman of the Bhavnagar Council, member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India, could sleep after spinning for an hour at night when all other remedies failed.

Hindu-Muslim unity can be established only through peace. I know it is a difficult task. Our non-violence is tested when we can remain calm even though a volcano may be raging in our hearts.

And what is the harm if all of us die by remaining peaceful? Even if some Muslim kills me, he will be after all my brother. If we fail to preserve peace and forcibly retain the country's unity our hearts will remain divided. And, if [the spirit of] Pakistan persists in our hearts and we are not willing on any account to live with our brothers peacefully, I warn you India will not be able to retain her freedom.

Yes, in a way, Pakistan can be full of the nectar of nectar. But why do you need pistols, spears and swords for it ? A Pakistan forced on others will be full of poison. Why should we force people to swallow this poison ? If I do not poison others' hearts, have no poison in mine and do not mind it if I have to die fighting all

[1] A fried delicacy
[2] A cereal which may be taken
[3] A sweetmeat
[4] Sir Prabhashankar Pattani

others, the Pakistan [thus achieved] would be a thing of love and so would be India. India will be full of the nectar of love when she belongs not only to the Hindus but also to the Muslims, Parsis, Christians and Sikhs in equal measure. And that Pakistan alone would be full of love where there would be place for all the communities and no malice against anyone. Because I am a believer in such an India and such a Pakistan, I would recite *Auz-o-Billahi* even while I recite the *Gayatri*[1] and the *Gita*.

Today is the seventh death anniversary of Andrews Saheb[2]. We should remember his qualities. He lived a very simple life. We were very close friends. He was a white man, but he was so simple and mixed so well with the villagers that it was difficult to believe that he was an Englishman. He did not even know how to dress properly. He used to wrap a *dhoti* loosely round his large body. He was not bothered about appearances. He had a heart of gold.[3]

In conclusion, Gandhiji said that he had received a letter, which he would release to the Press, from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh that they had had nothing to do with the raising of objections to the prayer on the three previous days. He was glad to hear that and believed it. No organization could protect life or religion if it did not work absolutely in the open.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 25-9, and *Harijan*, 20-4-1947

189. LETTER TO LORD ISMAY

BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI,
April 5, 1947

DEAR LORD ISMAY,

Pandit Nehru gave me what you have described as an outline of a scheme. What I read is merely a copy of the points I hurriedly dictated,[4] whereas, as I understood from H. E. the Viceroy, you were to prepare a draft agreement after the line of the points I had dictated. Of course you were at liberty to amend them, add to them and omit what you wished to omit.

[1] A Vedic hymn invoking the creative energy of the sun; *Rig-veda*, III. 62, 10

[2] C. F. Andrews (1871-1940); British missionary, author, educationist and a close associate of Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhiji

[3] What follows is reproduced from "The Delhi Interlude" in *Harijan*.

[4] *Vide* "Outline of Draft Agreement", pp. 199-200.

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I had a chat with Pandit Nehru twice during the day, the second time when he handed a copy of the outline at 5 p. m.

The seventh point should read thus: "Within the framework hereof Mr. Jinnah will be perfectly free to present for acceptance a scheme of Pakistan even before the transfer of power, provided, however, that he is successful in his appeal to reason and not to the force of arms which he abjures for all time for this purpose. Thus, there will be no compulsion in this matter over a province or a part thereof."

What I could not recall yesterday I now recall.

The eighth will read as follows: "In the Assembly the Congress has a decisive majority. But the Congress shall never use that majority against the League policy simply because of its identification with the League but will give its hearty support to every measure brought forward by the League Government, provided that it is in the interest of the whole of India. Whether it is in such interest or not shall be decided by Lord Mountbatten as man and not in his representative capacity."

I have finished dictating this at 8.45 p. m. I am anxious that it reaches you tonight. Therefore, I have only made manifest correction and addition. The outline is by no means complete. When a draft agreement is prepared, many other points which should occur to any draftsman will have to be covered.

I must add that Pandit Nehru has at least one vital objection to the outline. But I will not tax you with its mention here. If the outline appears workable to H. E. I would like to wait on him once more and discuss Pandit Nehru's objections. Before putting it before Q. A. Jinnah I would like to show it to a few friends.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 237-8

190. LETTER TO LORD ISMAY

BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI,
April 6, 1947

DEAR LORD ISMAY,

Many thanks for your letter of even date.[1]

The very thought that at the threshold of my friendship with Lord Mountbatten and you, there can be any misunder-

[1] *Vide* Appendix XI.

standing at all fills me with grave doubts about my ability to shoulder the burden I have taken upon my weak self. It is impossible, at every stage, to reduce to writing conversations, and that would be, in my opinion, a bar to friendship. I can only say that there must be some defect in my understanding or my attentiveness if I misunderstand very simple things. I do not feel inclined to reproduce the talk about this topic except to mention one thing, viz., that H. E. mentioned [V. P.] Menon to you and said you should prepare something in conjunction with him and I was to give you the points which were to become the basis of the draft you were to prepare.

So far as you are concerned you correctly took down what you heard from me. But as it did not answer what I wanted to say I have given you my considered view about point 7.[1]

Now that I have seen Nos. 3 and 4 I must differ from you in your view that with the new version of No. 7 and filling in of No. 8, Nos. 3 and 4 become redundant. But of this later, if we ever reach the consideration stage of the "outline".

Since writing this Badshah Khan came into my room and I find that he confirms the gist of the conversation with Lord Mountbatten as described by me and adds that when we went to your office I told you that I had only to give the points as I hastily thought of them in order to enable you and your draftsman to prepare a draft agreement.[2]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 240-1

191. A TALK[3]

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
April 6, 1947

Both of you should go to the Bhangi Colony and take up the task of teaching the children and of sanitation and so on. No one can afford to sit idle here. I would rather like Manu also to go there daily but she is not keeping well and as it is I am making her work beyond her capacity. Why worry about

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

[2] For the Viceroy's reply in this connection, *vide* Appendix XII.

[3] With a couple from Allahabad, presumably Gangi and Anand T. Hingorani

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your husband's loss of hearing? He can very well look after the sanitation work and you can teach the children. You will be learning something thereby. Then alone your and my stay here will serve any purpose. Along with this you should take interest in the prayer and study the opposition that is being voiced during the prayer meetings. There are women too in the opposition, and you should try to persuade them. I am surprised why none of these things occurred to you or [Anand]. If you work only when I point it out to you, it has no meaning. One has to look for work wherever one happens to be. There is no dearth of work here. If there is any dearth, it is that of workers, not of work.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 151-2

192. TALK WITH ABDUL MAJID

April 6, 1947[1]

"Bapuji is now going to drive us out of India in our old age," Khwaja Abdul Majid remarked to a member[2] of Gandhiji's party, affecting a laugh. "When India is divided, I shall come to take asylum with you. You won't let the Hindus murder me," he added playfully. Gandhiji, overhearing the remark, interjected:

If a fanatic should kill you, I shall dance with joy! My misfortune is that I have not many like you who would die bravely and without anger.[3] If I had even half a dozen [men] like you, the flames that threaten to devour us would be put out and peace would reign in India in no time.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 100

[1] Abdul Majid, a nationalist Muslim leader and a trustee of the Aligarh Muslim University, met Gandhiji on this date; *vide* also p. 218.

[2] Manu Gandhi

[3] *Biharni Komi Agman* here says: "It is a pity that no one kills persons like you who would court death bravely. Otherwise all the dices would be cast in my favour, won't they?"

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193. A TALK[1]

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
April 6, 1947

What a great misfortune it is for us that two brothers should talk to each other in English! One of them claims that it is only in English that thoughts occur to him! We have become such slaves to the English language. This slavery is of our own choice. I have openly told the British that it was wrong on their part to educate Indians through the English medium and in doing so they had caused immense harm to our country. But I cannot blame them when in normal course two Indians talk in English. For this we are ourselves to blame. We consider it to be our good fortune to be able to speak English. To fulfil that ambition we sacrifice endless time. If we speak faultless English and an Englishman happens to compliment us, we feel elated. If we were to count the hours we spend in learning English we would realize that we thereby deprive the country of the precious time that would have been otherwise devoted to its service, thus resulting in the wastage of countless hours. Still we cannot ever fully master English. I receive letters from persons holding high degrees, whose English is simply awful. One feels disgusted by them. No doubt, one should learn English as a hobby. It has a vast treasure of literature. But one should not make indiscriminate use of it. Quite a few dignitaries from among the delegates to the Asian Conference came to see me. But they conversed in their languages, viz., Japanese, Turkish, etc. There used to be an interpreter conversant with English and their languages. It occurred to me that that was the occasion when Hindustani could have become the language of the whole of Asia. Under such circumstances the interpreter would have learnt the language of the particular country as well as our national language. If it happens, Asia, which at present is divided into different parts, will witness one country developing cordial relations with the other as members of one family. It would indeed be a magnificent achievement. But to

[1] This was addressed to two brothers whom Gandhiji happened to overhear talking in English.

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whom can I address my advice? You two brothers, fully conversant with Hindi and Punjabi, continue to talk in English!

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 154-5

194. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
April 6, 1947

While I was listening to this *bhajan*[1], as also to the *Ramdhun*, the scene of my Noakhali days came vividly before my eyes. The party[2] comprising these very men and women used to accompany me for about half a mile while I proceeded on my tour in the morning.

I only wish to tell you that you should not give up your goodness. If all the Muslims say that they wish to sever all connection with the Hindus and wish to live separately, should we out of anger start killing them? If we do that we shall be engulfed in such a holocaust that we shall all be reduced to ashes and none will survive. Indiscriminate looting and arson will only spell disaster for the whole country. Regular warfare also, I must say, causes only destruction and nothing is gained thereby.

What has been said in the *Mahabharata* is of universal application. It does not apply to Hindus alone. It depicts the story of the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Though they were blood-brothers the Pandavas worshipped Rama, that is, goodness, and the Kauravas followed Ravana, that is, evil. Renouncing ahimsa they took to violence and fought among themselves with the result that not only were the Kauravas killed, but the Pandavas also were losers in spite of their victory. Very few among them survived to see the end of the war and those who did found their lives so unbearable that they had to retire to the Himalayas. This is exactly what is happening in our country today.

Today is the first day of the National Week. I trust you are observing it as a day of fasting and prayer. There was mass

[1] By Rabindranath Tagore. The purport of the *bhajan* was: "Let us all aspire and say that our Bharat may rise to great heights in the world. It may attain eminence in the field of religion and action. Again a new sun will rise above it."

[2] Which, besides Manu Gandhi, included the Press correspondents, Sailen Chatterjee and Biren Sinha

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spinning also from 3 to 4 p. m. in which the Congress President, his wife, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Acharya Jugal Kishore and many others took part. The spinning *yajna* having been completed so beautifully and enthusiastically you will soon be breaking the fast but how good it would be if as a result of today's re-dedication the names of Rama and Rahim and the message of the *bhajan* are permanently engraved in our hearts. But today all this remains but a dream in India.

I am being inundated with abusive letters and telegrams. This shows how grossly some people misunderstand my ideas. Some think I consider myself too big even to reply to their letters while others think I am enjoying myself in Delhi while the Punjab is in flames. How can they understand that I am working day and night for them wherever I am? True, I cannot wipe their tears. God alone can do that.

Khwaja Abdul Majid, who is a trustee of the Aligarh University, came to see me today.[1] He has a lot of landed property but at heart he is a *fakir*. He used to be my host whenever I went to Aligarh. Swami Satyadev Parivrajak, who had been on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas, used to accompany me. He was a very active worker but now God has taken him away. He told me he would accompany me but he would not join me if I dined with a Muslim. On hearing this Khwaja Saheb said, "If that is what his religion enjoins, I shall make separate arrangements for him." Though the Swami was accompanying me Khwaja Saheb did not mind when the Swami did not dine with him. Would that those good old days were here again when there used to be heart-unity among Hindus and Muslims. Khwaja Saheb continues to be the president of the nationalist Muslims. Other nationalist Muslims who had graduated from the Aligarh University in those days are today ideal students of the Jamia Millia and are excellent workers. They are like an oasis in the Sahara. Even if somebody killed Khwaja Saheb he would not wish him ill. Such people may be few but we must retain our innate qualities. When faced with bad characters we should not stoop to their level. But we committed this mistake in Bihar. Nationalist Muslims had been killed by Hindus there and Hindu friends of Islam had been done to death by Muslims.

We should dispassionately think where we are drifting. Hindus should not harbour anger in their hearts against Muslims even if the latter wanted to destroy them. Even if the Muslims want

[1] *Vide* p. 215.

to kill us all we should face death bravely. If they established their rule after killing Hindus we would be ushering in a new world by sacrificing our lives. None should fear death. Birth and death are inevitable for every human being. Why should we then rejoice or grieve? If we die with a smile we shall enter into a new life, we shall be ushering in a new India. The concluding verses[1] of the second chapter of the *Gita* describe how a godfearing man should live. I would exhort you to read and understand those verses and ponder over their meaning. You will then realize what our ideal is and how far short of it we are today. Our independence is at our threshold and it is our duty to ask ourselves whether we are fit to have it and sustain it. This week, while I am here, I propose to administer you the dose which would make you worthy of freedom. If we keep on quarrelling amongst ourselves we shall lose our freedom even after attaining it.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 29-32

195. TALK WITH DELEGATES FROM VIET NAM

April 6, 1947

If the Congress firmly implements the constructive programme given by me, including khadi, village industries, prohibition, removal of untouchability, communal harmony, uplift of women, adult education, etc., it would become a truly non-violent body and freedom would automatically come.

India's contribution to the welfare of the allied nations and world peace would be without compromising her adherence to non-violence and truth and her goal of complete independence.

I believe that there is unnecessary delay in granting us independence and irrelevant issues are being raised. The present-day communal riots are also an unfortunate outcome of that policy. I, therefore, say with certainty that thereby the British are harming themselves. This is the moment of my greatest trial. The moment has now arrived to demonstrate successfully my weapon of non-violence. And, in this quest I am not taking a moment's rest. Day and night I pray to God that He may give me light. There is considerable violence in the hearts of Congressmen and they are no less selfish. I have sufficient

[1] 55 to 72

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evidence of this. Even if Congressmen alone had imbibed non-violence and truth, freedom would have come sixteen years ago, that is, in 1931, and our history would have been different. But I do not wish to complain about that. I must manage with whatever knife I may be having to cut this *mosambi*. If I do not have a knife I should learn to cut it even with the blunt edge of a dish. How long can one carry on with a borrowed knife? And, if I borrow a knife from someone, I cannot refuse if in turn he asks for a precious thing from me. That is why I flatly decline to seek help from any other country to attain the independence of my own country.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 157-8

196. MESSAGE FOR PEOPLE OF VIET NAM[1]

[*April 6, 1947*][2]

My heart is always with the oppressed peoples of the world, and I have full sympathy with the cause for which the people of Viet Nam are fighting.

The Hindu, 10-4-1947

[1] & [2] This was sent through Tran Van Heun, leader of the Viet Nam Delegation to the Inter-Asian Relations Conference, who called on Gandhiji on April 6, 1947; *vide* the preceding item.

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197. TELEGRAM TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

NEW DELHI,
April 7, 1947

SATIS DAS GUPTA
KAZIRKHIL
RAMGANJ

ALL YOUR PRECISE BUT PAINFUL WIRES[1] ALSO FROM HARAN BABU[2] (STOP) CASE SEEMS TO BE FOR EXODUS OR PERISHING IN FLAMES OF FANATICISM (STOP) HOPE YOU WILL NOT ADVISE MY COMING TO ADVISE ON CHOICE (STOP) HOLD COUNSEL WITH WORKERS AND ACT PROMPTLY.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 897, and *Harijan*, 20-4-1947

198. TELEGRAM TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY

BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI,
April 7, 1947

THE CHIEF MINISTER BENGAL
SUHRAWARDY SAHEB
CALCUTTA

I CONTINUE RECEIVE DOLEFUL WIRES ABOUT INCREASING LAWLESSNESS NOAKHALI (STOP) I SUGGEST PROMPT ATTENTION

[1] The addressee had informed Gandhiji that he had sent two telegrams to the local authorities and the Chief Minister of Bengal. The one dated April 2, 1947 read: "There have been five cases of arson between March 23 and yesterday. Yesterday's case . . . was an attempt to burn alive three families consisting of twenty one persons male, female, children. . . ." Another telegram dated April 5, 1947 read: "Have to bring to your notice another case of arson last night . . . Haralal Bhowmik found himself locked from outside in his sleeping room while all structures including sleeping room were burning. . . . Request you think over these gruesome attempts of burning alive the Hindus and shape Government policy by shaking off inactivity."

[2] Haranchandra Ghosh-Chowdhary; *vide* p. 222.

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WIRES[1] OF SATISCHANDRA DASGUPTA AND PROMPT ACTION (STOP) AM PUBLISHING WIRES (STOP)

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal. Also *The Hindu*, 8-4-1947

199. TELEGRAM TO HARANCHANDRA GHOSH-CHOWDHURY

BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI,
April 7, 1947

HARANCHANDRA GHOSH-CHOWDHURY
CHOUMUHANI (NOAKHALI)

IF WHAT YOU SAY[2] IS TRUE CLEAR CASE FOR EXODUS OR PERISHING IN THE FLAMES OF MADNESS AND FANATICISM. CONSULT SATIS BABU AND ACT UNITEDLY.[3]

GANDHI

From a photostat: G. N. 7826. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] *Vide* footnote 1, p. 221.

[2] The addressee's telegram dated April 6 read: "Rehabilitation in Noakhali is becoming increasingly difficult. Lawlessness, theft, burglary, housebreaking, night raids, burning of houses, hay-stacks, becoming common.

Ploughing of fields in some areas obstructed. In about five hundred cases involving loot, arson, murder, final reports submitted on pleas non-availability sufficient evidence which under present circumstances can be had from riot victims alone. Absconders and culprits moving freely reported holding meetings now. People suspect foul play in original cases as all Hindu officers in charge affected *thanas* transferred. Those officers who have timely submitted charge-sheets against good number of offenders also transferred. Proceedings drawn against officers who attempted quell riots or arrested large number of culprits of whom ninety per cent now bailed out. More than hundred counter cases against workers. Hindu police and army staff are seriously enquired into and in some cases summoned or otherwise harassed."

[3] The draft of this telegram bears the following instruction in Gandhiji's hand: "Note for Arunanshu—if this is right it should be sent."

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200. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

Personal and Immediate

BHANGI COLONY,
READING ROAD,
NEW DELHI,
April 7, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I have pressing letters from friends in the Punjab asking me to go there even if it be for a few days. Pandit Nehru agrees. Nevertheless I would like you to guide me too.

Then Noakhali calls.[1] If wires received by me during the last two days are to be relied upon, there is increasing lawlessness in Noakhali. Attempts at roasting people alive have been traced twice, and loot, etc., is going on. You will see my public statement in the Press.[2]

This outbreak of violence is not a mere detail. If it cannot be dealt with now, it won't be fourteen months hence.[3]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

HIS EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY
NEW DELHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 242. Also C. W. 6523, 6524 and 6525. Courtesy: Mirabehn

[1] This sentence from the initial draft (C. W. 6523) was omitted by Mirabehn in her copy (C. W. 6525). The draft (C. W. 6524) carries the following note by Gandhiji: " 'Then N. calls' was necessary. Punjab calls, then Noakhali. But I shall let it go as it is."

[2] According to The *Transfer of Power*, Vol. X, the reference is to a report in *The Statesman*, 7-4-1947, of Gandhiji's speech at prayer meeting on April 5, in which "he reminded his audience of the folly of looking upon one religion as better than the other. He said he was sure that recent happenings were due to the atmosphere of hate that pervaded the land and he called on his audience to join him in fasting during a 'National Week' to begin the following day." *Vide* pp. 208-12.

[3] For the addressee's reply, *vide* Appendix XIII.

201. LETTER TO DALAI LAMA

BHANGI COLONY,
READING ROAD,
NEW DELHI,
April 7, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I have three letters from different functionaries saying the same thing. I thank you for them.

I advised the friends who saw me on your behalf to give up secretiveness and superstition if Buddhism (which is but an attempt to reform Hinduism) is to live.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. H. THE DALAI LAMA
TIBET

From a copy : Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy : Pyarelal

202. NOTE TO ARUNANSHU

April 7, 1947

You should understand properly all the steps.[1]

From a photostat : G. N. 8030

[1] According to the source the note was regarding the Noakhali situation.

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203. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
Monday, April 7, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am constantly receiving letters accusing me of being subservient to M. A. Jinnah[2] and being a fifth-columnist. One correspondent has accused me of becoming a communist. But I am unaffected by such attacks. The verses of the *Gita* to which you listen every day are always in my mind and give me the strength to put up with such things. If my critics understood the meaning of these verses they would not say such things. I am a sanatani Hindu and therefore claim to be a Christian, a Buddhist and a Muslim. Even some Muslims feel I have no right to recite from the Koran. They think by doing so I am trying to beguile the Muslims. They do not realize that religion cannot be confined within the boundaries of language or script. I do not see why I can't read from the Koran or consider Mohamed as my prophet. I have faith in the saints and prophets of every religion. I pray to God that I may not lose my head over those who accuse me; in fact I am ready to die at their hands. I firmly believe that if I am steadfast in my faith I shall be serving not only Hinduism but also Islam.

Today a Hindu from Rawalpindi narrated the tragic events that had taken place there. Fifty-eight of his companions were killed just because they were Hindus. He and his son alone could survive. The villages around Rawalpindi have been reduced to ashes. What a pity that Rawalpindi where Sikhs and Muslims once vied with one another in welcoming me and the Ali Brothers has become a danger spot for non-Muslims. The Hindus of the Punjab are seething with anger. The Sikhs say that they are the followers of Guru Govind Singh who has taught

[1] It being Gandhiji's silence day, his written message was to be read out. But as the meeting began half an hour late and by then Gandhiji had broken his silence, he addressed the gathering himself.

[2] One of the letters bore the address "Mahmud Gandhi". In one he was called a communist, in another "Jinnah's slave". This only amused Gandhiji; he wrote: "It's the people who have conferred upon me the titles of 'Mahatma' and 'Bapu'. Shouldn't I welcome the new titles given by them?"

them how to wield the sword. But I would exhort the Hindus and Sikhs again and again not to retaliate. I make bold to say that if Hindus and Sikhs sacrifice their lives at the hands of Muslims without rancour or retaliation they will become the saviours not only of their own religions but also of Islam and the whole world.

I have been preaching truth and non-violence for the last thirty years. I had done the same thing in South Africa for twenty years and I believe that the Indians there have been the gainers for following my advice. Even here those who have trodden the path of truth and non-violence have not been losers at all. True, the satyagrahis have sacrificed their all. But what does it matter? They have gained a gem and thrown away what was worthless. I am hesitating to go to the Punjab as I am not sure what I would do there. Should I go there to take revenge? The thought of taking revenge appears quite pleasing but God tells me that it is not for me to take revenge. A number of persons have advised me that I must go to the Punjab. But I have told them that I am not going to speak in favour of retaliation because that would be doing a disservice to Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims.

Let me tell the Muslims also that it is sheer madness to talk of wresting Pakistan by fighting with the Hindus and Sikhs. Pakistan is supposed to be the land of peace. M. A. Jinnah asserts that justice will prevail there. Today why don't we find justice there? What happened in Bihar, he may ask. But the Bihar Chief Minister is miserable today. 'Where had the Congress gone? What has it done?', one may ask. It is a big question. The Congress should exercise equal authority over both Hindus and Muslims. But this is not the case today. I cannot even think of a Pakistan where there would be no peace and security for a non-Muslim nor can I think of an India where Muslims may be in danger. I went to Bihar and tried to pacify angry Hindus and to create a sense of confidence among the Muslims in respect of the Hindus. Happily a large number of Hindus expressed regret and promised that such a thing would not be allowed to be repeated in future. Similarly, I would appeal to Muslim leaders to ask their fellow-Muslims in Muslim majority provinces to refrain from trying to wipe out non-Muslims in those areas. No matter how provocative had been the language of Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab, that was no excuse for the barbarity and cruelty perpetrated on non-Muslims by Muslims in the areas where they were in a majority.

During the last two days distressing news has again been received from Noakhali. But in spite of everything it is wrong and cowardly to seek police or military protection. Those who cry when the disturbances break out are slaves and those who seek military protection will remain slaves for ever. People do not like civil war nor do they like to remain in slavery. In their letters Satis Babu and Pyarelal have inquired what is to be done when thatched huts with scores of people locked inside are set ablaze.

Haran Babu has also written in the same strain from Chaumuhani and sent the information that some people in their charge who were intending to leave have been persuaded to stay on. I have telegraphed to the Chief Minister of Bengal that this is a dangerous development.[1] I have sent a message to the people that those who have the fortitude and courage should sacrifice their lives and let themselves be burnt. If they don't find in themselves the strength to do so they may migrate to other places.[2] Many a great men had resorted in the past to migration. Mohamed did it once. Whatever people do, they should in no case call the army belonging to the British, whom we wish to drive away. So many sons of England and Japan died in the last War but their people didn't grieve for them. Theirs are brave races. To have a preference for British rule would be a shame for us.

Will the land protected by the immortal Himalayas and irrigated by the waters of the health-giving Ganga ruin itself through violence? I hope in my heart of hearts that we shall give up the very thought of maintaining large armies. The armies are not going to do us any good and so long as they remain our independence will be meaningless.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 32-5

[1] *Vide* "Telegram to H. S. Suhrawardy", pp. 221-2.

[2] *Vide* telegrams to Satis Chandra Das Gupta and Haranchandra Ghosh-Chowdhury, pp. 221 and 222.

204. TALK WITH GOSWAMI GANESH DUTT

April 7, 1947

I shall proceed to the Punjab as soon as there is a call from God. Unless God urges me to visit the Punjab, I cannot leave my present mission unfulfilled. I had gone to Noakhali and Bihar on my own initiative and without waiting for an invitation from the sufferers in these parts of the country. Rama's call made me go. When He wishes it, I shall immediately proceed to the Punjab.

Gandhiji asked Goswami Ganesh Dutt to see him next Friday again.

The Hindustan Times, 8-4-1947

205. A TALK[1]

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
April 7, 1947

First of all, let us take up communal unity because that is the crying need of the day. Had the 18-point constructive programme[2] been acted upon earnestly since the time I had put it forward, the tragic events all over the country would not have overtaken us. I hold that without communal unity we are simply crippled. If any one of the functions in our body stops we are considered ill. The same thing applies to our country. How can such a country achieve independence? And even if it is achieved, how can it be preserved? There are innumerable communities like Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs, and others in India and unless all the communities are united we shall continue to be weak and sickly. That is to say we shall remain slaves and even if we achieve independence there will be no happiness in it. In fact that freedom will be worse than slavery. This is my reading of the present situation.

My faith is being strengthened every day that no one need buy an inch of cloth if everyone plies the charkha daily—just

[1] Two students from Santiniketan, who believed in communism, called on Gandhiji and asked questions about the constructive programme.

[2] *Vide* Vol. LXXV, pp. 146-66.

for half an hour. Not only that, this is the key to the preservation of swaraj. If crores of people devoted half an hour to spinning, its result would amaze the whole world. There is no alternative to khadi for bettering the lot of the famishing millions. A number of industries have developed in the wake of khadi which provide livelihood to artisans like carpenters, blacksmiths, peasants, weavers and so on. I compare the charkha to the sun and say that so long as its wheel goes on rotating, it spreads light throughout the whole country. The uplift of India depends solely on the uplift of the villages. India lies in its seven lakh villages, not in Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Lahore or Karachi.

Third on the list is removal of untouchability. So long as untouchability remains we shall not be able to touch one another's hearts. How can people so estranged gain swaraj through non-violent means? The gross indifference with which we treat our brethren who carry night-soil is a blot on our country. If we believe in non-violence and truth we should make no discrimination between high and low and should have no false sense of superiority. We should regard the whole world as a family and live like members of one family.

Intoxicants have impoverished us physically as well as economically. Ours is not a cold climate where drinking of alcohol may be necessary. Moreover an addict to intoxicants has no moral sense and therefore the habit would put an end to spirituality in our land. Then as the *Gita* says, "loss of memory ruins the reason"[1]. And those who have lost their reason are as good as dead.

Woman in our scriptures is called *ardhangini*[2]. But instead of treating her as an *ardhangini* we treat her as a plaything. Or in our country she is still being treated like a slave. The birth of a girl spreads gloom, whereas the birth of a boy is considered to be a festive occasion. So long as this evil custom is not done away with root and branch, women can make no progress whatsoever. Man and woman will attain equality only when the birth of a girl is celebrated with as much joy as in the case of a boy. Every worker, therefore, should respect woman as his mother, sister or daughter. The way we are misbehaving with women and dishonouring them, about which one hears daily, shows the extent of our shamelessness, meanness and bestiality. I think there is no redemption from this sin.

So long as enough attention is not paid towards sanitation of villages, the inhabitants will never have purity of heart and

[1] II. 63

[2] Woman as an organic part of man

their condition will be symbolized by the garbage dumps one finds in the villages. Therefore, sanitation in villages is an equally important item in village reconstruction.

I have seen that if we want to impart education with good foundation, basic education is necessary. And it can only be given through Nayee Talim. Unless we adopt Nayee Talim crores of India's children cannot be educated. Adult education will also come within its scope automatically. Similarly we will have to adopt the national language. We are too much enamoured of English. Only yesterday I gave vent to my thoughts regarding English.[1] It is because of our infatuation with English that we have neglected our national language, which is inexcusable. A worker, who knows the national language, will not bother himself about the controversy of Persianized Urdu or Sanskritized Hindi but will speak a language which is easily understood by local people. He will learn the local language of the village selected by him and try to inculcate respect for the national language among the people there. Thus one who learns a new language loses nothing, on the contrary his knowledge increases thereby.

In the end I would only say that under *swarajya* efforts should be made for providing everyone at least with a square meal, enough clothing to cover himself and a house to live in. At present while some have utensils of gold and silver, others have not even pots of clay—some have garments of silk and brocade whereas others have not even enough clothing to cover their nakedness. The constructive programme, as presented by me, is the only solution for the removal of such gross inequalities. Instead we are showing a leaning towards Russian communism which draws its strength from the pistol. That is the way of violence. Even there it has not proved successful as yet. If we adopt that method here the handful of capitalists that we have will become paupers, while a vast majority is already living in a state of poverty. Instead, if we propagate economic equality through non-violent means as suggested by me, these capitalists will out of shame realize that they ought not to eat sweets and don brocades while their brethren were without food and clothing. This will naturally foster a feeling of fraternity and serve the larger interests of the nation.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 162-5

[1] *Vide* pp. 216-7.

206. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

1 Aurangzeb Road, New Delhi,
April 8, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

Many thanks for your two letters[1] of the 7th inst.

As to the first, I am glad that as I read it, whatever misunderstanding, if there was any, was of no consequence.

As to the second letter, the weather would not stand in the way of my going to the Punjab. I must ask the voice within for the final guidance. If I do go, I shall let you know the date.

Of course, you can rely upon my help no matter wherever I happen to be at the time.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

From a photostat: G. N. 10833

207. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

April 8, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I have your telegram[2]. I want to make public use of all the telegrams.

I would not be sorry even if everyone there gets killed although innocent.

No letters from Pyarelal, Amtussalaam and others. I shall enclose with this as many [letters] as possible.

Blessings from
Bapu

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 8975

[1] *Vide* Appendix XII and XIII.
[2] *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", p. 235.

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208. LETTER TO SUSHIL KUMAR

NEW DELHI,
April 8, 1947

BHAI SUSHIL KUMAR,

I have your cheque for the refugees. It has been sent to Satis Babu, and the receipt to you.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 6758. Also C. W. 4501. Courtesy: A. K. Sen

209. INTERVIEW WITH SIR M. DERLING[1]

BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI,
April 8, 1947

Q. It appears now the British are preparing to quit. Will they partition the country? What type of government will be formed and which parties will be invited to participate in it?

BAPU : My objective opinion is that the British should leave without worrying about us. And this is in their interest as well. America and England are, no doubt, big nations — advanced and ambitious, but in comparison with the mute millions of Asia and Africa, their eminence is just like dust. Until they wash clean the blot on their faces they have no right to talk big. And equally true is the fact that people are no longer going to be fooled by their tall talk. It will be in their interest to earn the blessings of the millions of Africa and Asia by giving them the human right of freedom.

I admit there will be chaos once the British leave India. Even at present, strife is very much in evidence everywhere. But I believe if they grant the country its independence in all sincerity and in an orderly manner, all the quarrels will come to an end and the leaders of all the parties will be able to come together and form a stable government. But I do not know whether

[1] Gandhiji gave the interview while having his meal.

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it is going to happen or not, because I am aware of the fact that there is a large section in favour of the vivisection of India. Who cares for the nation today? Everyone wants to realize his ambition and grab power by creating dissensions. This is the situation obtaining today.

However, I am an optimist. I therefore think that the sincerity with which the British relinquish power will determine how well organized the new Government will be. And the Congress, the Muslim League and the States will be well represented in it.

It hurts me to talk about the partition of the country. What will be the plight of a body if it is dismembered? Similarly, dismemberment of a prosperous country like India will utterly ruin the people. Today it is the country which is being divided, tomorrow it may be Kashmir and the day after it may be the State of Junagadh in the remote corner of Kathiawar. How is it all possible? Let the whole of India be handed over to the League. I would not mind it. That is why I believe that if, after the exit of the British power, the people of India are not awakened, India will become the battle-ground for the Princes to fight among themselves and the big ones among them will try to gain sovereignty by swallowing up the smaller ones.

My non-violence will not destroy anyone, it will only purify. I therefore tell the Princes that they need not have any fears because the Congress has always been in favour of coming to terms with them. The Congress has adopted the policy of non-violence. The Princes have to delegate power to the people's representatives of their own accord. Then the Congress will treat them with respect. We do not want to do away with the Princes. After all, they are also citizens of India, aren't they? The Princes have only to reform themselves and become servants of their subjects. The Congress will be on their side to help them. Unless they mend their ways they will be inviting their own doom.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 167-8

210. TALK WITH AMERICAN JOURNALISTS[1]

BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI,
April 8, 1947

If you are proud of your country and wish to convey that impression during your visit to another country, you should exemplify in your conduct, the innate good qualities and special features of your nation. If, therefore, you, who have come here to make a study, want to leave a good impression about your country, you will have to bear yourself accordingly. Otherwise you are liable to be misunderstood and might unknowingly be done injustice. I give the same advice to Indians living abroad. There are many good features in our country. Take for example non-violence and khadi among other industries. Therefore I cry myself hoarse telling the Indians settled abroad that even if they did not ply the charkha here, it is their duty to ply it regularly there. Even if they did not wear khadi here, there they should wear it habitually. Instead, innumerable Indians have become enamoured of silks and other things available in foreign countries. The result is that the country does not gain in moral strength. They should demonstrate to the women there that we can do without brandy or cigarettes; they should tell them what an Aryan woman stands for.

Addressing the woman journalist Gandhiji said:

Similarly you should show here that woman occupies an important place in the world and she is not merely a plaything for men, that she is courageous too. Try to leave upon the women here an impress of your culture.

I would like to make a suggestion to you which I feel would appeal to you. If you like it, you may keep it in mind and try to act accordingly, otherwise forget it. I am obliged to you even for listening to me. My suggestion is that women can play a very important role in establishing peace. Instead of being carried away by science they should follow the path of non-violence because women by nature are endowed with the quality of forgiveness. Women will never succeed in aping men in everything, nor can they develop the gift nature has bestowed

[1] Three journalists, two men and a woman, from the U. S. A. had come on a four-month visit to India.

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on them by doing so. They should neither allow their family members to have, nor should they themselves have any connection with anything relating to war. God has endowed women with hearts overflowing with love. They should utilize this gift properly. That power is all the more effective because it is mute. I hold that God has sent women as messengers of the gospel of non-violence.

Gandhiji's fair visitor was deeply moved : "If there is anyone in the world who can point the way of deliverance to womankind, it is you. . . . We realize that what you have told us today is also the answer to the challenge of the atom bomb. . . . Why do you not visit our country?"

BAPU : Yes, I would indeed like very much to visit your country. But at present I see no such prospect. If you want me to go there I would request you to help me by devoting yourself to the service of my country. Try to quell the riots that are raging amongst us and help in stopping the killing of women and children. I shall certainly be free to visit your country provided you are successful in your attempt, provided a democratic government is proclaimed here and the millions of people here are as happy as you are in your country. But this is like attempting to pluck a flower from the sky.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 169-71

211. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
April 8, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I find that you are nowadays so quiet that there is no need to thank you every day. Today I wish to speak about my own sad plight and I hope every word of mine will enter your ears and my message will touch your hearts, that is, it will move you to the depths of your hearts.

You must have seen the telegrams from Satis Babu and Haran Babu in the newspapers yesterday. Today Satis Babu has sent a telegram in reply in which he states that Jiwansingh, Pyarelal and other co-workers of mine who have been working there have decided to stick on till the last moment and everybody agrees that what I say is right. Hindus will abide by my advice. The danger is very grave and the risk to one's life is constantly increasing. They are miserable but are still preparing

themselves in a determined and peaceful manner. Now they do not like the idea of running away in fear. They think that if they have got to face death it is better to accept it as a gift from God. It means laying down one's life cheerfully, not dying after killing. All this is the result of the work done so far.

I had asked them whether they desired me to leave my work here and go to them. I have other important things to do. I have to go to Bihar. Then there is the Punjab, too. They have written to me that I should not think of going there at all.

All these people are working in different places. Satis Babu is working in one place while Haran Babu is doing a difficult job at Chaumuhani. Amtussalaam, Pyarelal, Kanu and Abha[1] have selected a village each. I am confident that they will all conduct themselves in the manner I expect them to do. And, what is my expectation? I expect that, as this girl sings in the *Ramdhun*, "May God grant good sense to everyone". I shall go on hoping that the people would realize that nothing is to be gained by force and violence. If anyone does gain something or gets something done by others through violence, his gain would not last long. This is the way of robbers and bandits. If others resort to robbery, should we also do the same? No, we shall certainly not go their way. If they want to kill us, we shall willingly die.

I am happy to see that we have in our midst brave people who are willing to meet death in this manner. Such people as well as the country will benefit from their bravery. Even while dying they will bear no ill will against those who kill them, nor will they wish to get them punished. Those who kill are not going to escape punishment. God will punish them. Who are we to mete out punishment? We would not appeal even to God to punish them, because God is all merciful. We would pray to Him for mercy for ourselves and also for our enemies, and would meet death trying to bear goodwill towards all, including those who might kill us. No matter what happens, in whatever He does, God will only be merciful.

But if anyone from among these people dies, do you think I would say : 'Oh, what a tragedy!' No, I would not. I would rather say that he had done well to have rendered such a great service. I would say that he had served the Muslims too while carrying out God's work.

But death retreats from those who show courage and are ready to die. We should hope that they do not have to die.

[1] Abha Gandhi, daughter of Amrita Lal Chatterjee, married to Kanu Gandhi

There is Suhrawardy Saheb and also other officers, big and small. God will grant good sense even to those who have taken to robbery and they will also take the warning and give up oppressing people. I even hope that all the Muslims there would come together and take upon themselves the responsibility of protecting their Hindu brethren and I would receive telegrams from the Muslims everywhere that I should have no worry and that there was nothing to fear from their side. When this happens, I would dance with joy.

A friend asks why I, though a Hindu, say that I am a Muslim [also]. This is an obvious thing. I have learnt this from the *Gita*. The *Gita* says:

> यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति।
> तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति॥[1]

That is, "he who sees Me everywhere never vanishes from Me nor I from him." For instance there is Rama in the Koran, the Zend Avesta and the Bible as well and God as worshipped by the Christians, Ormuzd as worshipped by the Parsis and Khuda as invoked by the Muslims are but different names of Ishwara. And, because I am a true Hindu, believing in Hindu dharma, I am also a Christian and a Muslim. This is no mere fancy or empty talk. This is the truth. The *Ishopanishad* also says: "I am in everything and everything is in me."[2] It further says: "He moves and He moves not."[3] Thus God has been described in various ways in the *Gita* and the Upanishads.

In another letter I have been asked to explain why I call myself a servant [of God] and if Rama and Rahim mean the same to me, why do I not choose either one of them. I give this explanation because I claim to be a servant of God. Lord Vishnu is known by a thousand names. But God is known not by just a thousand but a hundred thousand names. In fact I would say God has 400 million names. Hence, why must I call Him just Rama or Rahim? And then someone asks whether I talk like this merely to appease the Muslims.

My answer is No. I have not formulated this prayer after any deliberation. Abbas Tyabji's daughter Raihana, who is a staunch Muslim and also a Hindu, had asked me if she could teach me *Auz-o-Billahi*. I consented and said she might as well convert me to Islam. She declined and said that I was as good as her father and she was my daughter. She called me a good

[1] VI. 30
[2&3] Verses 6 and 5 respectively

Hindu and saw no need to convert me to Islam. But she taught me *Auz-o-Billahi* and since then it has formed a part of the prayer. In the same way, after [one of] my fasts Dr. Gilder taught me a Zoroastrian hymn which too has been a part of the prayer ever since. I always hunger for Ramanama. I will recite it in a thousand ways and if someone comes and forces me to recite or not to recite any particular name I will recite no names at all.[1]

Q. You said that those who have neither the courage nor the wish to die should migrate. But where should they go?

A. These few men can be accommodated anywhere in this vast country. In the first place they can create a settlement for themselves in the Punjab itself, but if that is not possible this country is big enough for them to find some place in it. I need not tell them where they should go. Let it be remembered, however, that they should not go about begging, stretching out their hands before others but should rely on their own strength.

Holding up to ridicule some letters in English, Gandhiji said that he himself did not know English well and he was like the castor-oil plant being treated as a tree in a desert. But if even he could find so many mistakes in their English how many more mistakes would be found by an English expert? In any case, what was the need of writing in English and typing the letters?

Q. Are you not ashamed of calling the police during your prayers?

A. I am really very much ashamed and every time the police have attempted to restore peace during the prayer I have stopped the prayer. Moreover, I did not beg of Sardar Patel to send the police for my protection. But if the police do come in spite of this, they also might learn a few good things from the prayer and Ramanama. Why should we resent it?

Q. From where did you bring non-violence into Hinduism? With non-violence you are turning the Hindus into cowards.

A. I cannot think even in my dream that anyone has become a coward because of me. Even the young girl Abha who used to be a little afraid before has become brave after staying with me. I told her that her husband would not be accompanying her. And now she visits the sensitive spots all by herself. Would you call her a coward? She goes there unarmed. She does not insist even on having a dagger before proceeding to such places. She hardly keeps even a kitchen knife. I have

[1] After this Gandhiji replied to some written questions.

never said that the moment you hear a danger signal you should run for your lives. We have to die and die without killing others. Non-violence is the quintessence of Hinduism. Your *Gita* teaches non-violence. I say the essence of Islam too is non-violence and Christianity too teaches non-violence.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 36-40

212. TELEGRAM TO TARALIKA[1]

[On or after *April 8, 1947*][2]

CARE KHADI PRATISTHAN
COLLEGE SQUARE
CALCUTTA

SHOCKED. KEEP ME INFORMED. ADVISE SEEING KULARANJAN[3] CARE MARWARI RELIEF[4]. GOD BLESS PANCHU AND YOU.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 8725

213. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

April 9, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI[5],

Bhai Shivabhai Amin in East Africa wishes to write and publish a book about me in the Swahili language. Please do the needful as quickly as possible to give him the necessary permission to translate, etc.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9975. Also C. W. 6949. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

[1] & [2] Satis Chandra Das Gupta's daughter in her telegram dated April 8, 1947, had sought Gandhiji's blessings for her husband who was critically ill.
[3] Kularanjan Mukherjee, a naturopath of Calcutta
[4] Marwari Relief Society
[5] Manager, Navajivan Press

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214. LETTER TO A STUDENT

April 9, 1947

Students should go to their own villages and acquaint the people with the happenings in the outside world. They should set up civil defence squads. They should realize how ill-informed we are with regard to shortages of food and clothing. They must find out how, if we so desire, we can get over these shortages and then convince others about it. They should teach the villagers, as best as they can, all the processes of cloth-making starting with the sowing of cotton to the weaving of cloth. They should give particular attention to sanitation of the villages. They must get latrines put up at convenient places so that people do not ease themselves just anywhere. People should be instructed to cover night-soil properly with earth. The villagers should be taught how night-soil can be turned into good manure. They should be persuaded to take to adult education and to give education to their children.

It is my belief that communalism is one of the many evils of city-life. It is necessarily an outcome of urbanization. Such an atmosphere is not to be found in the villages. The villages cannot even afford to be communal. Our villagers are so poor that they constantly need one another. Their mutual relations are such that they live in a kind of family atmosphere. Hence the problem does not arise there.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 173

215. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

April 9, 1947

CHI. AMTULSALAAM,

Have you boycotted me? There is not a single letter from you. Think over what happened on the last day. Forget that I was angry; try to understand the reason behind it. Write to me about the conditions there. How is your health?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 581

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216. A TALK

BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI,
April 9, 1947

Gandhiji remarked to Manu :

You should understand the whole episode as such incidents are quite common.

Addressing the woman[1] Gandhiji said:

Your husband has got the degrees of B.A. and LL.B. I would still call him ignorant. He has behaved in a manner that does not befit his education. The right course would have been to educate you and remove your ignorance. But your husband played a trick on you and you were gullible enough to believe him. I see nothing strange in it. Women in our society take pride in being led by the nose by their husbands. So long as people are not ashamed of resorting to such mean conduct we shall not reach our goal. This I have said in your defence. Now the main question is, what should you do in the present circumstances? You should devote yourself to any work of service. If you are not prepared for that you can go and join the classes that are run under the Kasturba Trust. You should therefore prepare yourself for service and forget that you were ever married.

Another alternative is, if you are not able to restrain yourself, you should find an eligible partner and marry him. Such companions are not easily found. Therefore be content in making the effort and if your efforts are good they are bound to be crowned with success.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 173-4

[1] Whose husband had remarried after tricking her into signing the divorce papers

217. TALK WITH FRIENDS[1]

BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI,
April 9, 1947

The nearer we are approaching independence, the more dependent on others, I believe, we are becoming. According to me independence means that one should not seek anyone's help for fulfilling one's own needs. Independence does not mean mere physical independence.

A businessman desires his customers' needs to go on increasing. On the one hand our needs are on the increase and on the other there is a class clamouring for ending capitalism. I fail to understand this. For instance, you know that ready-made food is available in England and America. The trend has come here also. When people invite someone for dinner they place an order with a hotel like Taj Mahal of Bombay. The result will be that the class of women that used to take up cooking as an art will gradually disappear. And I can even imagine a time when perhaps cooking will be a forgotten art for women. Let me give you a small example. If you ask my daughter here to make *bajra* chapatis she won't be able to prepare them. If the girls of today are forgetting such small things, what would they not forget in future?

All laughed looking at Manu.

That is why I hold that if one wants to enjoy independence one should oneself learn to produce the things one needs daily.

One should be able to do without the things one could not produce oneself. This increases self-reliance and one's progress. If we are not able to make good use of political freedom, what purpose would it serve? Self-reliance is the foundation of independence and dependence on others is a sign of slavery. Such self-reliant persons need never go to court or have any disputes. They settle their disputes among themselves. They will impose a small tax upon themselves and with its revenue a number of schools will be opened for children, where teachers will earn their livelihood and also get the necessary training. Such education will not be a burden on anyone.

[1] Who had come from Kathiawar

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Where is the need for army or police if we are able to protect ourselves? There are progressive and enthusiastic workers in Kathiawar. They have to be alert to shoulder heavy responsibilities in future. I have full faith that a small State like Kathiawar will set an ideal for the whole country. And the Kathiawaris have the capability to guide the whole nation. They are not very knowledgeable but are courageous and wise.

At the same time Kathiawar has many defects. The Kathiawaris as you know wear pugrees. According to a saying they have as many twists in their hearts as they have in their pugrees. If that is so, that very Kathiawar can prove to be a blot on the country.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 174-6

218. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
April 9, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Last time when I was here you heard the same *bhajan*[1] which Sucheta Devi sang just now. Its beautiful words were sung in a voice as sweet as the words. Even today while listening to it I felt as though it were new and I had not heard it before. How wonderful if our country were as described in the *bhajan* and we could say that there was no sorrow or suffering. But we know the country is in no such condition. If one after another everyone becomes good as suggested in the *bhajan*, the country would also become good. What is the strength of an ocean? After all, it is made up of individual drops. Similarly, a country too is constituted of its citizens. Today we are not in a position to sing the *bhajan* with a clear conscience. Suppose we start looking for such a country, where would we find one? Our body is such a country and the *atman* residing within is the inhabitant of that country. The *bhajan* describes the qualities that should belong to the *atman*. We ought to imbibe these qualities in us. If we are able to do so our country would surely be beautiful—whether it is known by the name of Hindustan or Pakistan, whether it has 11 provinces or 21, or any other

[1] *Ham aise deshke vasi hain*; *vide* Vol. LXXXIV, Appendix VI.

number. We must all live in such a way that everyone lives in comfort, none remains poor and none oppresses his fellow-beings.

To build such a country you have to live, all of us have to live, including myself. But what is happening now is just the opposite. The piles of letters I receive contain abuse as well as praise. We should surrender all abuse as well as praise to God and have nothing to do with either.

I think some of those who write these letters must be present in this meeting. I am glad that they are hearing my words, because listening to me they will understand me and work for the benefit of the country.

We are going to attain independence. We have not yet attained it. If we work unitedly, the Viceroy would leave this very day, or he would entrust all responsibilities to us and silently watch us or would stay on to do what we might ask of him, for his own satisfaction. He is not the kind of man who would sit idle. He belongs to the royal family and is extremely intelligent. His wife also is a talented lady. We can utilize their talents to advantage. But this cannot be done under the prevailing circumstances. He would continue to be here for another fourteen months and testify whether India behaves well or otherwise. It was with a view to seeing India that the delegates from the Asian countries had come to attend the Inter-Asian Relations Conference. But they went back with the impression that the Hindus and Muslims were fighting with each other. Nobody knows why they are fighting. I at any rate do not know what they are quarrelling about.

Are the Muslims fighting for Pakistan? They say that they would have Pakistan at any cost. Would they have it by compelling us to give it? Would they take it by force? By force they cannot have even an inch of land. By persuasion they may have the whole of India. I would welcome it if Jinnah Saheb became the first President of free India and formed his own Cabinet. But there would be one condition, namely, that with God as witness, he should regard Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and all others as equals.

One of the correspondents asks why I should not be called "Muhammed Gandhi"? And then he hurls the choicest abuses, which need not be repeated here. If we ignore the person who abuses us, he will repeat his performance once, twice, thrice, several times—only to tire of it. Being tired he would either keep quiet or, driven by anger, kill us. But what would happen after he kills us? We would lose nothing. One might ask: 'Who

would protect our wives and children?' But he should realize that there is God to protect them. Why, then, should we worry?

The best way to stop the agitation for the partition of Bengal[1] is to persuade the Hindus through reasoning and assure them right now that they would not be forced to act one way or the other. By their wholly impartial conduct the Muslims must prove that the Hindus need have no misgivings about justice and fairplay in Pakistan, that no favours would be shown to the Muslims just because they are Muslims, and while selecting men for Government jobs merit alone would be the consideration. If Suhrawardy Saheb acts in this manner, the whole of Bengal would become an independent province. Then there would be no question of dividing the province into three or four. By placating the minorities he should thus win them over. He should treat the Hindus in such a way that they insist on having Suhrawardy as their Chief Minister. He should enjoy their full confidence.

But that is not the position now. Today I have received a letter from Sushila[2] who was formerly running a school at Rajkot. Describing the situation where she is now working, she says that there was so much terror in the air that no Hindu woman ventured to go there even if escorted, not to speak of going alone. When she herself went there, the other women could go with her.

I cannot help saying that if Indians evince true courage the coercive method now adopted to achieve Pakistan cannot but fail in its purpose. I dare say the talk of achieving Pakistan by force and threats is but an idle dream.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 40-3

[1] On April 4, the Executive Committee of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha Conference had made a demand for the partition of Bengal.

[2] Sushila Pai

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219. DRAFT FORMULA[1]

[*April 10, 1947*][2]

1. So far as Pakistan is concerned and so far as the Congress is concerned nothing will be yielded to force. But everything just will be conceded readily if it appeals to reason. Since nothing is to be forcibly taken, it should be open to any province or part thereof to abstain from joining Pakistan and remain with the remaining provinces. Thus, so far as the Congress is aware today, the Frontier Province is with it (Congress) and the Eastern part of the Punjab where the Hindus and the Sikhs combined have a decisive majority will remain out of the Pakistan zone. Similarly in the East, Assam is clearly outside the zone of Pakistan and the Western part of Bengal including Darjeeling, Dinajpur, Calcutta, Burdwan, Midnapore, Khulna, 24-Paraganas, etc., where the Hindus are in a decisive majority will remain outside the Pakistan zone. And since the Congress is willing to concede to reason everything just, it is open to the Muslim League to appeal to the Hindus, by present just treatment, to reconsider their expressed view and not to divide Bengal.

2. It is well to mention in this connection that if the suggested agreement[3] goes through, the Muslim League will participate fully in the Constituent Assembly in a spirit of co-operation. It might also be mentioned that it is the settled policy with the Congress that the system of separate electorates has done the greatest harm to the national cause and therefore the Congress will insist on joint electorates throughout with reservation of seats wherever it is considered necessary.

3. The present raid of Assam[4] and the contemplated so-called civil disobedience[5] within should stop altogether.

[1] Gandhiji wrote on this in Hindi "Gandhi's draft".

[2] According to the letter to Lord Mountbatten dated April 11, 1947, *vide* pp. 254-5, Gandhiji discussed the formula with the Congress Working Committee members on the previous night.

[3] *Vide* pp. 199-200.

[4] The Muslim League had launched a large-scale invasion of Assam using Muslim immigrants to alter the communal ratio of the population in the province.

[5] The Working Committee of the Assam Provincial Muslim League had, on March 30, decided to start a civil disobedience movement in Assam.

4. Muslim League intrigues, said to be going on, with the Frontier tribes for creating disturbances in the Frontier Province and onward should also stop.

5. Frankly anti-Hindu legislation hurried through the Sind Legislature in utter disregard of Hindu feeling and opposition should be abandoned.

6. The attempt that is being nakedly pursued in the Muslim majority provinces to pack civil and police services with Muslims irrespective of merit and to the deliberate exclusion of Hindus must be given up forthwith.

7. Speeches inciting to hatred, including murder, arson and loot, should cease.

8. Newspapers like the *Dawn*, *Morning News*, *Star of India*, *Azad* and others, whether in English or in any of the Indian vernaculars, should change their policy of inculcating hatred against the Hindus.

9. Private armies under the guise of National Guards, secretly or openly armed, should cease.

10. Forcible conversion, rape, abduction, arson and loot culminating in murders of men, women and children by Muslims should stop.

11. What the Congress expects the Muslim League to do will readily be done in the fullest measure by the Congress.

12. What is stated here applies equally to the inhabitants of Princes' India, Portuguese India and French India.

13. The foregoing is the test of either's sincerity and that being granted publicly and in writing in the form of an agreement, the Congress would have no objection whatsoever to the Muslim League forming the whole of the Cabinet consisting of Muslims only or partly Muslims and partly non-Muslims.

14. Subject to the foregoing the Congress pledges itself to give full co-operation to the Muslim League Cabinet if it is formed and never to use the Congress majority against the League with the sole purpose of defeating the Muslims. On the contrary every measure will be considered on its merits and receive full co-operation from the Congress members whenever a particular measure is probably in the interests of the whole of India.

From a facsimile : *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, between pp. 128 and 129

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220. MESSAGE FOR PYARELAL[1]

April 10, 1947

I would not be able to guide him. He should act according to his lights and consult Satis Babu. It is not desirable for him to come here all the way from Noakhali merely to discuss things. I have already given all the advice I could. He should now act as he thinks proper.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 180

221. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
April 10, 1947

These people [of Russia] believe in destroying their property so that it may not fall into enemy's hands. Not only that, they are all praise for this scorched-earth policy and give it great importance. I am surprised that learned people there praise this policy. But somehow I do not as yet feel like saying anything in its favour. It is possible that my knowledge is limited in comparison to theirs. This trend is evident in our country as well. I see neither sacrifice nor bravery in eliminating the capitalists. If I were to know that the enemy were approaching I would leave my property intact instead of destroying it. I believe that would be true sacrifice and this is how love for humanity could be preserved in its noblest form. I claim that if we behave in this manner the enemy cannot but become our friend. A society as such cannot be treated separately from the individuals who constitute it. Truly speaking, we are all like brothers. At present the Government is trying to do its work as best as it can but it can refrain from doing so at will. Then the responsibility will fall on those men and women who constitute society. And if at that time we fail to realize that we are

[1] Who had sought Gandhiji's permission on telephone to come and discuss with him the situation in Noakhali

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like brothers and to act as such, there may be chaos and anarchy and no one will benefit by it.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 178-9

222. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
April 10, 1947

If we are able to judge when to use a machine and when to avoid it and if while using it we do so with understanding, quite a few of our difficulties will be solved. For instance, if we are hurt tincture iodine (poisonous medicine) is applied to the affected part. But if we are down with fever we do not take tincture iodine orally. We should be as careful in using machines as a doctor is in prescribing poisonous medicines. Machine-power can make a valuable contribution towards economic progress. But a few capitalists have employed machine-power regardless of the interests of the common man and that is why our condition has deteriorated today.

While talking with some friends today we discussed the idea of fitting rubber tyres in bullock-carts in our villages. I told them that to me it was clear that rubber tyres will not make things easy for the villagers; on the contrary they will increase their requirements and make them dependent on others. And this will become another means of their exploitation.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 179

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223. TALK WITH WOMEN WORKERS[1]

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
April 10, 1947

I would prefer women and men to work in separate fields. The work to be done among women is so much that sometimes owing to paucity of women workers men have to work in organizations meant exclusively for women. Our society has shown gross negligence towards women. We desperately need intelligent and service-minded women workers to work among them. However, I would advise you to keep it in mind that there should be no rivalry between men and women workers. Both are equally important and equally essential. There should be no secrecy between them. Their conduct towards each other should also be natural and without inhibition.

A number of workers who in the past were staunch believers in non-violence are, so to say, taking it lightly today. Even if people were to renounce and condemn non-violence, truth, constructive programme and khadi, etc., I shall continue to proclaim my faith in them till my last breath, for I see no other way for India's progress. No progress will be possible unless we make the requisite effort for implementing the constructive programme and learn to cultivate goodwill towards wrong-doers. Eminent persons have made experiments and invented armament but they fail to tempt me. With the increase in armament my conviction is becoming deeper that the power generated by non-violence is immense and incomparable. I have been a votary of this power for the last 30 years. I am not going to take this power lightly at a critical juncture as at present. Even if no one is with me I am my own companion.

India has been disarmed against her will. But if everyone in India cultivates the courage to face death bravely, India can proclaim that she can defend herself and make progress not through the atom bomb but through non-violence alone. Women alone can take the lead in this, for God has endowed them with great power.[2]

[1] The women workers had asked whether they should work only among women or also among men.

[2] At this point the workers expressed a desire to understand Gandhiji's idea of village swaraj.

Every village has to become self-reliant. Things required in a village should be produced in the village itself. Only under special circumstances should these be brought from outside. Every village should build schools, community halls and dharmashalas from money raised by the people from among themselves. If possible, even the artisans should be from the village itself. You should ensure that everyone in the village is provided with clean grain, clean water and a clean house. Under the Nayee Talim scheme education should be imparted to every child from beginning to end. Every activity should be conducted on a co-operative basis. Disputes should be settled amongst the villagers themselves. There should be no distinction of high or low castes in villages. A committee or panchayat consisting of five or seven elected adult men and women should be formed in each village. The panchayat should look after the public activities and act as the executive and legislature for the village.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 180-1

224. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
April 10, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

The *bhajan*[1] is as sweet as its meaning is sublime. It is of great significance to you as to all of us today. The essence of the *bhajan* is that even in the darkest hour we may not lose hope and faith. The lamp that is alight might go out and darkness spread around, but we must live through it. The flame that has ceased to burn, the life that is lost, these do not come back. Hindus and Muslims might take to the law of the jungle, but they ought to remember that they are not invertebrate animals but men standing erect. Hence even in the worst calamity they should not lose their faith and forget their dharma.

I have again received a number of letters today. A gentleman writes to say that both Hindus and Muslims have turned into beasts. They are fighting each other. Is there no way out? There certainly is. The one simple way out of the

[1] The Bengali *bhajan* '*Yadi tor dak sune keuna ase tabe ekla chalore*' by Rabindranath Tagore had been sung by Sucheta Kripalani.

situation is for either of the two communities to stop descending to the level of beasts. The correspondent, however, mentions one more thing. He says the important question is as to how the third party acts. He believes that the Viceroy has come here definitely to transfer power to Indian hands. It may be granted that he has come with sincere intentions; that the British have deputed this illustrious soldier of the royal family only to wind up their power spread far and wide in India and that the British Ministers responsible for deputing him are also honest in their purpose. But he still doubts the *bona fides* of the representatives of British commercial interests here. They had done everything to exploit this land. Till this day they had monopolized all our trade. What would they do now? It is a pertinent question. If the Hindus and Muslims together wish to keep them, would they stay on as our friends or would the British businessmen force themselves on us even if we did not want them? There is also the hold of the Civil Service. They have come to have such a stranglehold over us that we are not sure whether we would get freedom at all. It was by the grace of God that we adopted certain methods and the circumstances too so changed that the British are now talking of leaving. But the Civil Service is still here and also the British soldiers. If they can earn their livelihood here, why should they leave?

Another doubt is that the Viceroy's offer might quietly be withdrawn. To this doubt I can only say that under the present circumstances we can say precious little. It is as yet only the dawn of freedom; the sun has not yet come up. We have no idea how warm the sun will be. At the moment we are shivering. Our hearts are full of fear. Only when the sun shines forth will we be able to feel its warmth. In this connection I want to say nothing to you. But I would appeal to the British in India, whether civilians, soldiers or businessmen, to leave India if they wish to preserve their good name. Till now they have been riding on our backs, which was not fair on their part. They had better climb down willingly. Lord Mountbatten has come here precisely to help them do it and he is not alone. He represents the full strength of the British people. Surely they will have to suffer some losses in doing it. But they are prepared for it. In fact they have already given some proof of their willingness. We said that the civil servants should go and they are leaving, they are going to inflict themselves on their own countrymen, that is, now it will be for Great Britain to pay them their pensions, etc. On the one hand Lord Mountbatten has summoned the Governors

along with their secretaries to be briefed about the true state of affairs.[1] On the other hand Churchill and his party will not give in without putting up resistance. Even then the Viceroy maintains that he represents the British people and as per their wish they should now withdraw. The Governors, the British commercial interests and members of the Civil Services should all help the Viceroy in this task and they should leave. Those who wish may stay on with pleasure. But they should act very differently from what they had hitherto been doing. In other words, instead of exploiting us they should help us prosper. They will leave behind a good name if they act in this manner.

But news is pouring in from all quarters that their mischief was at the root of all these riots. Lord Mountbatten too has an inkling of it. He is afraid lest this popular suspicion should prove true. The British in India will now have to see to it that the suspicion of both Hindus and Muslims that the British had a hand in the riots is not substantiated. If this suspicion proves correct history will not spare them. It will be recorded in history that they were plunderers.

But they can say let bygones be bygones and now they have turned over a new leaf. Lord Mountbatten is honest in his intention but his success is in the hands of the British commercial interests, the British army and the British civilians. If they are not sincere, whatever the Viceroy has done will be undone. Let us therefore pray to God to grant them good sense. Whatever the trouble in quitting India, even if they face a dark future ahead, still I would tell them that their good lies in deciding to leave India.

Afterwards they can help us resolve our disputes, and they might even succeed in doing so. Then it will bring them good name. I pray to God that they quit India not as enemies but as true friends, and leave us to cherish friendship for them in our hearts.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 43-5

[1] A two-day conference of provincial Governors was scheduled to begin on April 15.

225. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

BHANGI COLONY, READING ROAD,
NEW DELHI,
April 11, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I had several short talks with Pandit Nehru, and an hour's talk with him alone, and then with several members of the Working Committee last night about the formula[1] I had sketched before you, and which I had filled in for them with all the implications.[2] I am sorry to say that I failed to carry any of them with me except Badshah Khan.

I do not know that having failed to carry both the head and heart of Pandit Nehru with me I would have wanted to carry the matter further. But Panditji was so good that he would not be satisfied until the whole plan was discussed with the few members of the Congress Working Committee who were present.

I felt sorry that I could not convince them of the correctness of my plan from every point of view. Nor could they dislodge me from my position although I had not closed my mind against every argument. Thus I have to ask you to omit me from your consideration.

Congressmen who are in the Interim Government[3] are stalwarts, seasoned servants of the nation and, therefore, so far as the Congress point of view is concerned, they will be complete advisers.

I would still love to take the place that the late C. F. Andrews took. He represented no one but himself. And if you ever need my service on its merit, it will be always at your disposal.

In the circumstances above mentioned, subject to your consent, I propose, if possible, to leave tomorrow for Patna.

I have not forgotten the book about tribal expeditions. I have not yet been able to lay my hands on it for I cannot

[1] *Vide* "Outline of Draft Agreement", pp. 199-200.

[2] *Vide* "Draft Formula", pp. 246-7.

[3] Namely, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, John Matthai, Baldev Singh, Jagjivan Ram, Abul Kalam Azad and C. H. Bhabha

recall the name of the author nor the year in which I read the book. As I told you it was years ago in S. Africa that I came across it. My search will continue wherever I am and as soon as I trace it, it shall be sent to you.

I must also confess a slip of memory I am answerable for in the course of our talks. I was wrong in connecting Sir Francis Mudie[1] with the late Pandit Nehru[2]. The incident I referred to was in connection with Muddiman[3], not Mudie. The charge, almost universally believed by Congressmen against the present Governor of Sind, remains unaltered—in spite of my slip of memory.

I hope these constant interviews are not proving an unbearable strain.[4]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 244-5

226. LETTER TO PRABHAKAR

April 11, 1947

CHI. PRABHAKAR,

I have gone through your papers. You should not have undertaken the fast without my consent. It is good that you have broken it. You had better do only such work as Shantabehn lets you do. More if we meet any time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9035. Also C. W. 9159. Courtesy: Prabhakar

[1] Governor of Sind
[2] Motilal Nehru
[3] Sir Alexander Muddiman, Chairman of the Muddiman Committee, formed in 1925, to examine the working of the Montford Reforms
[4] For a report of Gandhiji's interview with the Viceroy, *vide* Appendix XIV.

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227. TALK WITH KRIPAL[1]

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
April 11, 1947

Living with me is like living on a razor's edge. There is no certainty about meals, nor are there proper beds for sleeping. These girls have become accustomed to such hardships. They sleep like a log even on a mat. While with me even such soft clothes [as you wear] will not be available. One has to get up early in the morning and clean lavatories. Prepare yourself for all this. You may join me when I go to Sevagram. In the mean time you will, of course, come here whenever I happen to be in Delhi.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 186

228. A TALK

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
April 11, 1947

Your duty lies in remaining in Bengal and rendering service there. If anyone propagates any ism or forms any party, we need not worry about it or discuss it. One who serves silently with all the resources at one's command—mental, physical and material—does not do so in vain. Service consists in using God-given gifts in pleasing Him, in utilizing them properly and thus keeping oneself happy and contented. All else is hypocrisy.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 186-7

[1] Daughter of Sir Datar Singh who had expressed her wish to serve Gandhiji

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229. TALK WITH Y. M. DADOO AND G. M. NAICKER

April 11, 1947

Truly speaking, it was after I went to South Africa that I became what I am now. My love for South Africa and my concern for her problems are no less than for India, because it was in South Africa that I discovered the weapon of satyagraha, and it was there that I offered a successful non-violent satyagraha. It encouraged me in my line of thought and strengthened my faith.

India is now on the threshold of independence. But this is not the independence I want. To my mind it will be no independence if India is partitioned and the minorities do not enjoy security, protection and equal treatment. Because the independence of my dreams is altogether different. The country is not yet completely independent. If what is happening today is an earnest of things to come after independence, it bodes no good for the future. We have a proverb saying that the cradle bespeaks the child's future. I, therefore, feel ill at ease. But I am content to leave the future in God's good hands.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 187

230. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
April 11, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am sorry to have to inform you that today I have suddenly decided to leave for Bihar. You are aware that my field of work is Noakhali and Bihar. It is not that I have chosen these places. I went to Noakhali just by chance or, say, at the call of God. I had to go to Bihar also in the same connection. I could accomplish something during the days I spent in Noakhali. The Hindus there smarting under the reign of terror had some respite. But just as I worked for the Hindus, I also worked

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for the Muslims there. Today it may not appear significant; but in future when the climate changes the country will realize the value of the work done there. In a way, some benefits of the work can be noticed even now. Even today good Muslims have come to accept their Hindu neighbours as their brothers. But the number of such people has not grown as much as it should. Even so, there is no doubt that the work that is being done there today will bring many benefits in the future.

For the present I am needed not so much in Noakhali as in Bihar. I have a telegram from a Muslim friend from Bihar saying that I had stayed away from Bihar for a long time and should now return there. He says that they would feel reassured only when I go there. It is true that my decision to go to Bihar has not been prompted by this telegram. But now my mind has turned to Bihar because I had told them that I would do or die there.

By "doing" I mean that the Hindus and Muslims of Bihar should live in amity like brothers. Even if there is frenzy raging like a fire elsewhere, the Hindus and Muslims of Bihar should live in amity. There are quite a few villages in Bihar still untouched by the outside fire. Not only in Bihar but in Noakhali and the Punjab, where there has been so much trouble, there are some villages where people continue to live together in peace and with mutual trust. You will come across such villages all over the country.

You can turn round and tell me that just a couple of days ago I had talked of going to the Punjab. You can ask me why I now intend going to Bihar. You can also ask me if my talks with the Viceroy are over, as I had come here for that specific purpose. You can insist that if my talks with the Viceroy are over, I should wait at least to see the result. But why should I wait to see the result? It is not in my hands to produce any results. There are other people to take decisions in the matter. I wanted to discuss a few things with the Viceroy which I have already done. I had said earlier that in Delhi I was a prisoner of two persons, namely, the Viceroy and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Rajendra Babu had come to me. I have discussed the matter with him and also sent a message for Nehru. I have decided to go to Bihar with their permission.

It is my *svadharma*[1] to go to Bihar. I worship the *Gita*. The *Gita* ordains that one should perform one's own duty and

[1] One's own duty

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stick to one's own field of action. The *Gita* clearly states that better is death in the discharge of one's own duty and in one's own field. Running after another's function is fraught with danger.[1] Hence, staying in a place like Delhi which is another's domain is for me fraught with danger.

If I had had a call from God directing me to go to the Punjab I would have certainly gone there. You may well ask me if it is God who prompts me. That way, God does not come to me in person. But I do hear an inner voice. One who becomes a devotee of God hears His voice from within. I did not hear such a voice with regard to the Punjab.

But let me tell you that I have thought enough about going to the Punjab, and have come to the conclusion that my going there now would not serve any particular purpose, because we do not rule the Province. Even if the Muslim League had been ruling there, it would have meant our rule, because if the Muslim League members come to power there it would be on the strength of the votes of the people; and then it would be our rule. A rule established by the votes of the people would be the rule of the people. It is up to us to see whether such a rule brings happiness or unhappiness.

Supposing it were our misfortune to have Hindu rule in one part of the country and a Muslim-ruled Pakistan in the other, if both the states take the attitude that the people of the other community may not live in peace in their land, the Hindu state would become a hell and likewise Pakistan would be a *Na-Pakistan*[2]. True Pakistan is a place where there is proper justice, where there is no rule of force and where everything is done and achieved by effecting a change of heart in the opponents. But today we have forgotten our ideals.

But whether I go to the Punjab or not, I shall certainly work for it. Whatever I want to tell the people after going there can as well be conveyed to them from outside the Punjab. I want to teach only one thing which I shall never tire of repeating. And it is that every Hindu and every Sikh should resolve that he would die, but would never kill. Master Tara Singh says the Sikhs shall kill. In my view what he says is not proper. He should say that if they do not get what they want they would die for it, even if they may be only a handful, and rest only when they had achieved their goal. He should not talk in terms of killing. I need not go all the way to the Punjab to say this.

[1] III. 35

[2] Land of impurity

I could have conveyed my feelings to Bihar also from outside, but I feel that it is necessary to go there and persuade the people. For the same reason I went round in Noakhali. I was warned that I would be killed. But I tell you that even if all of you try to protect me you will not be able to save me from death. Even doctors and hakims would be of no avail. Even Hakim Lukman, quoted in today's *bhajan*[1], says in despair that the grandeur of life is only transitory. Why then should we try to run away from death? We ought to face death with courage. We must conduct ourselves in such a way that the world would condemn those who would attack us. Let the whole world ask them how they would get Pakistan by adopting tyrannical means.

The essence of satyagraha is that the satyagrahi converts the whole world to his view. I have said right from the beginning that we need not send our workers to the United States or to Britain to carry on propaganda for our cause. Truth will shine through our work right here and the whole world will come to witness it. In the same way I had won world sympathy while I was in South Africa and the British as well as Americans had upheld my stand.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 46-9

231. TELEGRAM TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

NEW DELHI,
April 12, 1947

SATIS DAS GUPTA
RAMGANJ

GOING PATNA TONIGHT. YOU HAVE DONE WELL KEEPING LOCAL AUTHORITY MINISTER AND PUBLIC INFORMED. ARUNANSHU ACCOMPANYING.

BAPU

From a photostat : G. N. 9073

[1] *Hai bahare bagh dunia chand roz* by Nazir Akbarabadi; *vide* Vol. XLIV, p. 436.

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232. A JOINT APPEAL[1]

April 12, 1947[2]

We deeply deplore the recent acts of lawlessness and violence that have brought the utmost disgrace on the fair name of India and the greatest misery to innocent people, irrespective of who were the aggressors and who were the victims.

We denounce for all time the use of force to achieve political ends, and we call upon all the communities of India, to whatever persuasion they may belong, not only to refrain from all acts of violence and disorder, but also to avoid both in speech and writing any words which might be construed as an incitement to such acts.

M. A. JINNAH
April 15, 1947

M. K. GANDHI[3]

From a facsimile : *Mahatma*, Vol. VII, between pp. 448 and 449. Also *Harijan*, 27-4-1947

233. TALK WITH SIKHS

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
April 12, 1947

Once prejudice comes to dominate reason, it is difficult to get rid of it. I hold Guru Govindsingh in high esteem. Excuse me, but I make bold to say that I am perhaps a truer follower of his than you all. Many of his *bhajans* are sung during prayers at the Ashram. But one cannot bring about any change in a person by law, it can be done only through persuasion. Therefore, no one can ever become non-violent through law. Violence is not obligatory under any religion, it is non-violence that is enjoined by all religions. But why don't you understand that before asking others to respect one's religion one must give due

[1] & [2] This was signed by Gandhiji on April 12, 1947, at the suggestion of the Viceroy and was issued to the Press on April 15, 1947. *Vide* Appendix XIV, also p. 277.

[3] The signature is in the Roman, Devanagari and Urdu scripts.

respect to every other religion? It is a pity I am unable to convince you about it today.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 191-2

234. MESSAGE FOR ARABS

April 12, 1947[1]

The Jews are a persecuted people worthy of world sympathy and India sympathizes with them. They are energetic, intelligent and progressive. The Arabs are a great people with a great history and therefore if they provide refuge for the Jews without the mediation of any nation, it will be in their tradition of generosity.

The Hindu, 1-5-1947

235. ADVICE TO A CHINESE FRIEND[2]

April 12, 1947[3]

Take to spinning. The music of the wheel will be as balm to your soul. I believe that the yarn we spin is capable of mending the broken warp and woof of our lives. The charkha is the symbol of non-violence on which all life, if it is to be real life, must be based.

Harijan, 27-4-1947

[1] From *Biharni Komi Agman*

[2] Reproduced from Amrit Kaur's "With Gandhiji in Delhi". The Chinese friend had asked Gandhiji "how it was possible to find peace of mind in these troublous times".

[3] From *Biharni Komi Agman*

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236. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
April 12, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Tomorrow is the last day of the National Week. April 6[1] was the day of awakening. On that day we witnessed how the whole country was united. The towns in any case have a kind of unity without which they cannot function, but on that day we realized that India's villages too were united.

It is really remarkable that the villages should have been so united. I had appealed to the people to fast on April 6 and the whole nation followed my call. Who was I? But it was the voice of God. That was why all the villages from Madras to the Punjab and from the Punjab to Dibrugarh in Assam were astir. India was awakened that day. April 13[2] was the day of massacre in India. That was the day when Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were all massacred indiscriminately in the Jallianwala Bagh. It was not really a *bagh*[3] but an enclosure with walls on all four sides. It was not possible to escape from the enclosure, as there was only one small exit. Here unarmed people were slaughtered, bringing the death toll to two, or may be five, thousand. The blood of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs mingled at the place. No one could tell how much blood of which community was spilt there. If a blood sample were to be sent to the most experienced doctor even he could not have determined whether it belonged to a Hindu or a Sikh or a Muslim. In other words, all the Indians became fellow-martyrs in Jallianwala Bagh.

Do not turn round and ask me how they could be called martyrs since they had not gone there with the intention of getting killed. It is true that they had not gone there prepared to meet death but they were all innocent people. Massacre of innocent people is a serious matter. It is not a thing to be easily forgotten. It is our duty to cherish their memory. So horrifying was the tragedy that the whole nation was moved. It

[1] & [2] In 1919
[3] Garden

provoked Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore to write a letter[1] to the Government and he joined our ranks. You have, therefore, to observe April 13 [as Martyrs' Day]. I shall not be able to join you here tomorrow. I am not happy about it, but I have now decided to go to Bihar.

It may be asked why I could not postpone my departure by a day. But, again, I am not going to Bihar for pleasure. There too I shall be serving India to the best of my capacity. As for fasting, it can be done even on the train. So, I shall be leaving today. You must fast tomorrow and observe April 13 in the same manner as you had observed April 6 on Sunday last.

If you have properly understood everything that was said during these seven days, then those of you who have been coming here regularly should resolve tomorrow that you would die but never kill. Why should we say that we would die after killing? Why should we also say that we would have the courage to die only if we have a sword or a gun in our hands? Do you think it brings us any credit to say that we would have no fear if we had a gun with us, but would feel afraid without one? Let us discard lathis, swords and guns and go ahead with God as our companion. Free from fear let us then go everywhere and proclaim that we Hindus and Muslims would never indulge in mutual strife.

But today we are fighting bitterly. I feel ashamed before the foreigners when they come to see me. Still I tell them that those who turn fanatics are only a few, that the entire population of 400 millions has not gone crazy and that I have full faith that a day would come when all the Indians would resolve to achieve their end not with the might of arms but with the strength of reason. If India desires true freedom, everybody should learn this lesson.

Another thing I want to tell you is that however loud our protests might be, our Press refuses to mend its ways. Today one of the newspapers has gone to the extent of stating that Gandhi is going away because of his differences with the Congress Working Committee, and now he is not able to get along with the Working Committee. This comment has appeared not in some small, insignificant paper but in a leading paper with a large circulation. I feel ashamed to see how low our newspapers have sunk.

[1] Addressed to the Viceroy, renouncing knighthood. It appeared in *Young India*, 7-6-1919; *vide* Vol. XV, p. 346.

I have explained to you yesterday why I am going and that is the real truth. What the newspaper says, despite my explanation, is sheer nonsense. I am going, no doubt; but there is no quarrel among us. Our relations are no less cordial. Maulana Saheb was here a little while ago. Rajaji, the Sardar, Nehru and Kripalani were also here. We were all talking amicably. Only Rajendra Babu[1] had not come; but does his absence mean that he had quarrelled with me? Isn't all this gossip mischievous? It can certainly be said that we have our differences. But was there any time when we had no differences? Such differences have always been there. Even father and son have their own differences. But this paper is not merely hinting at our differences; it clearly says that we have fallen out.

If I were going because of any quarrel, why should I have gone to seek permission from the Viceroy? Why did I take permission from Nehru and Kripalani? I would have just gone away without consulting anyone.

Not only that, the Sardar asked me a little while ago about my return. I replied that I would be back the moment I heard his summons. Would I talk that way if we had quarrelled? If I choose to be a rebel I can be a pretty tough one. If I would not listen to anyone neither would I do violence to anyone nor persecute anyone.

But it is a trick of their trade to create panic among the people and thus increase their sales. It is a very wicked thing to indulge in in order to fill this wretched tummy. I have also been a journalist and in those African jungles where there was none to bother about the Indians I had done a lot of journalistic work. If for earning their livelihood these people fill the pages of their newspapers and thereby harm the interests of India, then, they must give up journalism and find some other occupation for their livelihood. In the English language the Press is called the Fourth Estate. The Press can help or harm the country in so many ways. If the newspapers do not maintain a healthy attitude, what purpose would be served by India becoming free?

We too have developed such a habit that we can do without the Koran, without the *Gita* or the *Ramayana*, but we cannot do without the newspapers in the morning. Even great men have become slaves to the newspaper [habit]. If we do not get our morning paper we are upset. The newspapermen have also

[1] Who was down with fever

created this dependence on the papers by indulging in unfounded gossip. But all this gossip hardly serves any purpose.

I would suggest that you throw away such useless newspapers. If you want to get news you can enquire from people. You are not going to lose anything by not reading the newspapers. If you must read a newspaper take care to choose those which are published to serve the interest of the country and call upon Hindus and Muslims to live in amity. Then the journalists too would not be in such a mad rush to work overnight and also forgo their rest during daytime. Then there would be no rush for giving publicity to baseless rumours.

If good journalists happen to hear about any quarrel between Gandhi and Nehru or Kripalani and Maulana Azad, they must first verify it with Gandhi or Nehru before rushing to print it. Had they come to us to verify it, we would have rebuked them sternly for talking nonsense.

Today a Muslim friend has sent me a nice letter. A Hindu friend has also written me a nice thing. The Muslim friend writes to say that Satavlekarji's interpretation of the verse from the *Ishopanishad* is indeed sublime. Similar is the meaning of the verse *Auz-o-Billahi*, etc. There is no difference between the two, only, one is in Sanskrit and the other in Arabic.

My Hindu friend has asked me why, while I regard the Koran as a scripture, the Muslims do not similarly regard the *Gita* and the Upanishads. Why don't they recite from these in the mosques?

The answer is clear. As a true Hindu I regard the Koran as a book of religion because it contains words that praise Khuda. But what is the logic in forcing Muslims to regard our scriptures also as their books of religion? This would not be an act of goodness.

I hope to meet you again. I shall come back when Jawaharlal or Kripalani or the Viceroy sends for me. I shall continue to work for you and for the people of the Punjab, Bihar and Noakhali also. You should always continue your prayers with the same devotion as you have been doing all these days.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 49-53

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237. NOTE ON GRAMSUDHAR TRUST, URULI-KANCHAN[1]

ON THE TRAIN TO PATNA,
April 13, 1947

The local Trust for Uruli may be kept separate from the original Trust[2]. Only then will you be able to carry on rural reconstruction activities under it. Among these you may include farming, cow-rearing, weaving, running indigenous oil-mills, etc. The Trust will be called Gramsudhar[3] Trust. Nature cure will be a part of its activities. All the activities should be mentioned in the Trust deed. You may ask Mangaldas Pakvasa to prepare the draft. Get it done soon. Even Balkrishna[4] may prepare it. I leave to the local workers the decision whether the Trust should be an independent one or a sub-trust of the original Trust. If you wish to have an independent trust, you will have to be ready to stand on your own feet and shoulder all the responsibility. If you make a sub-trust, you will have to work within the frame-work of the original Trust's constitution. You will not, then, be able to take up rural reconstruction programme.

The trustees will be, beside myself, Dr. Dinshaw and Jehangirji (if they are willing to be included among the Trustees of an independent Trust), Maganbhai, Gulbai[5], Balkrishna and a local worker, provided he is capable. Balkrishna will have to agree to be one of the Trustees. Maganbhai is not one of the Trustees of the original Trust. He has been included only on the Uruli Trust.

If farming, cow-rearing, running indigenous oil-mills and similar activities are to be carried on through the Trust, they will have to be self-supporting. You will have to be ready to run them all [in that manner]. I should be happy if you can do without bullocks. For *goseva* work, you should utilize the services of residents of the village. Our methods of work ought not to be like those of capitalists. You may employ local workers who have the

[1] Presumably this was addressed to Manibhai B. Desai who was with Gandhiji on the train; *vide* p. 272.
[2] All-India Nature Cure Trust
[3] Rural reconstruction
[4] Balkrishna Bhave
[5] Wife of Dinshaw K. Mehta

spirit of service in them for farming, cow-rearing and indigenous oil-mills, etc. The other family members of these workers should also give their services. Oil-engines must not be used.

For all these activities, you may get the money from Sevagram. I will give a note to Chimanlal[1]. You cannot use the money of the original Trust. And the expenditure should not exceed one lakh rupees. If patients from the village do not seek admission to the hospital, you may admit outsiders. Local patients should get priority and the expenses on their treatment also should be borne by the institution. You may fix a fee for patients from outside. The standard of treatment for everybody will be simple. This should be laid down among the objects of the Trust. If any men or women workers from outside wish to join, they may come and stay in a spirit of service. They cannot be paid any remuneration. Menial staff should be employed from amongst the villagers and should be paid. You may engage ten or twelve-year old children from the village and pay them, and also arrange to teach them according to the Wardha Scheme. Get a few service-minded workers from outside. Train some servants and children from the village and admit only as many patients as you can easily look after. The workers will be subject to the Ashram rules. For the servants, you may frame lighter rules. There will be bye-rules relating to such matters. If, after his marriage, Paramanand starts an establishment of his own, we will pay him just enough to meet his expenses. We may pay something to Gokhale, too, if he needs it. Fix the amount in consultation with Balkrishna. The equipment for the hospital should also be very simple. It would, of course, be best if you got it made in the village itself. For tubs, you can even use large containers made of baked earth. Or you can get them made of tin. For beds, you may arrange bricks to form the four legs and place a plank over them. This is merely by way of a suggestion. I am of the view that non-vegetarian food has no place in the treatment. I am not here looking at the matter from a religious point of view. Instead of tea, you may serve Indian-style decoction. In any case, wheat coffee will do. We cannot supply *bidis*. Don't mind if persons addicted to these things do not come for treatment. Try to explain the reasons to the people. Patients suffering from tuberculosis, leprosy and other contagious diseases may be admitted if there is provision for separate accommodation for them. Non-violent honey should

[1] Chimanlal N. Shah; *vide* p. 272.

be extracted in the village itself. Teach the local Vagharan[1] the improved method of extracting honey. You may even start bee-keeping. Make arrangements to supply cow's milk and ghee. But in the absence of cow's milk, you can supply buffalo's or goat's milk.

You may send for Hoshiaribehn after she completes her education. For preserving good health, more expenditure may be incurred if necessary. Every inmate of the Ashram must put in at least seven years of total work. I would not like anybody to be permitted to cook his or her own meals. Decide about the Ashram rules after discussion with Balkrishna. I will write about the subject when I get time. It would be better if Bhagwat[2] gives up the idea of visiting other centres for the present.

The additional expenditure on account of the current construction work should also be obtained from Sevagram. The money may be kept in the custody of Dr. Mehta, if he agrees. It would, however, be better to keep it with a respectable banker in Uruli. There is no need just now to call any meeting of the Trustees which I must attend. This should be enough.

M. K. GANDHI

From a facsimile of the Gujarati : *Mahatma*, Vol. VII, between pp. 448 and 449. Also C. W. 2729. Courtesy : Manibhai B. Desai

238. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

ON THE TRAIN,
April 13, 1947[3]

CHI. AMRIT,

This is just a line. The crowds were thin and extraordinarily quiet. I slept the whole night without disturbance. It has been a rich, novel and pleasing experience. It gives me a new hope. And I am without a police or any other guard.

The heat is great but quite bearable.

Love.

BAPU

From the original : C. W. 3703. Courtesy : Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6512

[1] Woman of a community of Gujarat
[2] A. K. Bhagwat
[3] The date-line is in Hindi.

239. LETTER TO NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

ON THE TRAIN,
April 13, 1947

CHI. NIRMAL BABU,

Your letter is frank.[1] It does you credit on that account, but it makes me sad.

On your own showing, you were less than truthful. Had you shown the requisite courage and spoken out, I would not have let you go so abruptly as you did.

I see that I have lost caste with you. I must not defend myself. If we ever meet and if you would discuss what I consider to be your hasty judgment, we shall talk.

My Bengali continues, though slowly.

Love.

BAPU

My Days with Gandhi, p. 188

[1] Stating the reasons for his abrupt departure the addressee had written: "On 20-12-1946, . . . you said that . . . you had been telling Manu how your old life had ended and a new chapter had begun. You were going to conduct a new experiment in non-violence of the brave. . . . I determined to serve to the best of my ability in this new experiment. . . .

The fact is that . . . small but significant series of events led me to believe that you did not want to cut yourself away from your old moorings as much as I had been led to expect. . . . you permitted yourself to be weak in respect of particular persons. Hence I did not feel the same joy in work . . . as I had experienced in Noakhali. . . .

In the meanwhile, I had received a letter from the University that work was suffering on account of my absence. . . . I clearly felt that the quality or quantity of work I was doing in Bihar was less than what I would be able to put in at the University. Hence I came away on that ground."

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240. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

ON THE TRAIN,
April 13, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

I forgot to ask you one thing. I could not find the time. I now see that I must write something in *Harijan*. . . .[1] I also notice that there are frequent differences between your approach and mine. Such being the case, would it be advisable for me to meet the Viceroy even as an individual?

Please think over this objectively, keeping only the good of the country in view. If you like, you may discuss the matter with others. Please do not see the slightest suggestion of a complaint from me in this. I am thinking of my duty in terms of the country's good. It is quite possible that what you can see while administering the affairs of millions may not be realized by me. If I were in the place of you all, I would perhaps say and do exactly what you are saying and doing.

Blessings from
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
1 AURANGZEB ROAD
NEW DELHI

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine pp. 352-3

[1] Omission as in the source. Gandhiji had suspended writing for the *Harijan* weeklies in November 1946 while he was touring Noakhali; *vide* Vol. LXXXVI, p. 139.

241. LETTER TO SITA GANDHI

ON THE TRAIN,
April 13, 1947

CHI. SITA,

I will be reaching Patna today. Come and join me as soon as you can get relieved there. Do not worry about anything.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. SITAKUMARI GANDHI
KUMARIKA MANDIR
BENARES HINDU UNIVERSITY P.O.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 4999

242. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

ON THE TRAIN TO PATNA,
April 13, 1947

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

Manibhai is on the train. I could have a full talk with him only on the train. You may send from my personal account, without consulting me, any amount up to rupees one lakh which Manibhai may ask for the institution at Uruli. The money will be used for meeting the expenditure on construction of buildings as also for current expenses. If he needs more, he will try to raise the money from the Uruli village. It is Manibhai's resolve not to seek any financial help from outside Uruli. What we shall do if I live to go to Uruli and see things for myself, is another question.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : C. W. 2730. Courtesy : Manibhai B. Desai

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243. LETTER TO BALKRISHNA BHAVE

ON THE TRAIN,
April 13, 1947

CHI. BALKRISHNA,

I had a long talk with Manibhai.[1]

I understand about Manu. The consideration of possible effect of an act on others is not important in itself. It has only relative validity. And if we pay exclusive attention to it, we can make no progress. It is, of course, necessary to be sure that there is no trace of hypocrisy or untruth or pride in the reformer. More than this I need not say just now.

The burden of Uruli will be entirely on Manibhai and you. Of course, Dr. Bhagwat, Dhirubhai[2] and Gokhale are there. But they have to begin from the beginning. Even if they join, only the two of you will be there to serve till your last breath. If there is temperamental incompatibility among the workers or if they lack the qualities required for running an institution, it is bound to fail. About you, too, I have one condition, namely, regarding your health. Manibhai will tell you all about that.

He will also tell you about my limitations at present. I see no possibility of being able to free myself from them in the immediate future.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 821. Courtesy: Balkrishna Bhave

[1] *Vide* pp. 267-9.
[2] Dhirubhai Dikshit

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244. LETTER TO R. B. GREGG

ON WAY TO PATNA, [ON] TRAIN,
April 13, 1947

MY DEAR GREGG,

I have your letter. I see that for you there is no bed of roses. It is all thorns. I suppose if we read aright the lesson that a 'bed of roses' teaches us, we should do well, for there will be no discontent nor quarrel with anybody. I wish that when this letter reaches you Radha[1] will have made complete recovery. Of course you are coming back to India as soon as both of you are in a position to do so.

Here things are in the melting-pot. Brother is fighting brother when the English protest that they are withdrawing from India in fourteen months' time. I am straining every nerve to prevent this wanton bloodshed. Behind this waste of blood there are unmistakable signs of a sincere desire for peace. The result of this fight between God and Satan is a certainty. Let us all stake everything for the certainty.

Love to both.

BAPU

From a photostat: C. W. 4522. Courtesy: Richard B. Gregg

245. A LETTER

April 13, 1947

. . .[2] talked to me about your temper, and also your non-conformist conduct. A member of an organization who acts independently of it ultimately harms it. An organization can exist, sustain itself and progress only when the workers observe its rules to the letter and work within its framework.

You have ample capability. You have a fair knowledge of nature cure. But all your good qualities will be in vain if you lack the quality of fitting yourself in an institution. . . .[3]

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 196

[1] Addressee's wife; Gandhiji had given her this name and the addressee "Govind".

[2] & [3] Omissions as in the source

246. A LETTER[1]

ON THE TRAIN,
April 13, 1947

CHI. . . . ,

. . . is with me. I have a lot to write. Let us see when I shall be able to do so. Right now I am submerged in work.

. . . came and met me. I had a frank talk with him. I am not convinced. There is some untruth somewhere. But if you feel satisfied you can ignore my view.

I am still thinking about nature cure. My views tend to become stronger. The Uruli Trust should be independent and separate. It should include the whole programme of village uplift together with nature cure. I would like . . . to be associated with the Trust. It may not be necessary to trouble Nargisbehn[2]. She may join if she wants to. The development of Uruli should be along distinctive lines. The limit of its expenditure has been fixed. It is decided to accept outside help to the extent of Rs. 1 lakh, and that, through me. If anything more is needed, it should be provided by the people of Uruli. Or we may curtail our activities. Foreign equipment, etc., cannot be permitted.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 196-7

247. A LETTER

April 13, 1947

I have no doubt that the poor should never be robbed.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 197

[1] Omissions in the letter are as in the source.

[2] Nargis Captain, Dadabhoy Naoroji's grand-daughter

248. LETTER TO REGISTRAR, VISHVABHARATI

ON WAY TO PATNA,
April 13, 1947

SIR,

Received your letter dated 24th March. I humbly accept the honour which the Senate has decided to confer upon me.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

REGISTRAR, VISHVABHARATI
P.O. SHANTINIKETAN
DT. BIRBHUM (BENGAL)

From a copy of the Bengali: C. W. 10621. Courtesy: Vishvabharati, Shantiniketan

249. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

[On or after *April 13, 1947*][1]

CHI. MANILAL,

I am dictating this letter in reply to yours of March 23. Sushila and you are faced with a difficult problem. Shanti having left, Sushila will now have to think where she should stay. You have been very considerate. If you can really do without Sushila I think it would be well for her to remain here. She and Sita will be meeting me in a few days at Patna. I will know more then.

Dadoo and Naicker met me in Delhi[2]. But it was just a courtesy call. We could have no talk. However, they have promised to call again.

It is getting very hot in Patna. I am able to cope with the burden of work by snatching a little sleep every two hours. I have stopped touring for the present. I will resume it if necessary.

[1] Evidently the letter was written after Gandhiji arrived at Patna on April 13, 1947.

[2] On April 11, 1947; *vide* p. 257.

The task here is of course very difficult. It is never easy to change people's settled ways and make them see their own errors. The task has become all the more difficult in the present situation.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 4998

250. TELEGRAM TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

PATNA,
April 14, 1947

H.E. VICEROY

JUST RECEIVED MESSAGE[1]. MANY THANKS. I HAD COMPARATIVELY QUIET JOURNEY. AM OF OPINION PRESIDENT CONGRESS SHOULD ALSO SIGN. YOU SHOULD KNOW REASON FOR EXCLUSION PRESIDENT CONGRESS. HOWEVER I LEAVE FINAL DECISION YOU AND PANDITJI.[2]

GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 246

[1] Which read : "Mr. Jinnah is perfectly ready to sign statement deploring acts of violence, etc., which you signed before you left Delhi provided that your and his signatures are the only ones that appear on the document. As you mentioned that you thought Mr. Kripalani's signature might also be added, though I gathered that you did not make this a stipulation, I am not issuing statement until I hear from you. Pandit Nehru is agreeable to leaving matter to my discretion, but I feel I must have your views. Unless statement bears your signature alone Mr. Jinnah will not sign. May I therefore appeal to you to agree. Please reply urgently."

[2] The addressee wired in reply: "I am glad to inform you that Pandit Nehru also agreed to leave the decision to me. I consider it so vital that the appeal should issue that I thought it best that it should go out over the signatures only of yourself and Mr. Jinnah."

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251. LETTER TO DENIS HAYES CROFTON

PATNA,
April 14, 1947

DEAR MR. CROFTON,

Many thanks for your offer. But it would be perhaps quicker if you will kindly send the enclosed message[1] by wire.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 246

252. A LETTER

April 14, 1947

I returned here yesterday evening and read again your letter of March 12, 1947. I have an impression that I have already written something to you. Or have I omitted to write? If your insistence on certain policies had raised you high and if it is now pulling you down, you should take it that basically your insistence was obstinacy and that you had not at all risen high. There are some big men who hold this view. They think that the teaching of non-violence has proved disastrous. They believe that the way of the spinning-wheel would only take us back to the medieval ages. They think the same of village industries and Nayee Talim. Could it not be that there was something basically wrong with me which led me to have a misguided view of things all through? However, my views are the same as they have always been.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 198

[1] The addressee, Secretary to the Governor of Bihar, who was going to Delhi by plane had offered to take Gandhiji's reply to the Viceroy; *vide* the preceding item.

253. A LETTER

April 14, 1947

We shall be able to meet in thought when we have achieved identity of thought and when our thinking has become absolutely pure. When that happens we shall have conquered even death. Such a state cannot be attained without sacrifice and effort. Let us at least have an ideal. God will one day grant us the strength to attain the ideal.

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 198

254. A LETTER

April 14, 1947

It is futile to argue in terms of *ifs* and *buts*. It is wrong to say that it would have been better if such and such a thing had been done in such and such a way. And this particularly applies to one who claims to be guided by God. Only a person whose heart is pure can claim to be guided by God. I try my best to keep my heart pure. Hence I bring God into the picture.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 198

255. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

PATNA,
April 14, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You maintained good silence during the prayer. Kindly remain as peaceful till I finish speaking. In the first place I must tell you about my journey. Things went on smoothly right

[1] Held at the Bankipur Maidan

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from Delhi so that I could sleep comfortably throughout the night. Even though a big crowd had gathered at Kanpur the people were peaceful. I was fast asleep and did not know about the gathering. It was all very peaceful till I reached the Bihar border, but with my entry into Bihar the disturbances began. This was so at least in my view. I can sleep even during the day if only people would let me. I had work to do and I went on doing it. I would ask the Biharis not to behave in the manner they did. There is a limit even to love. It serves no purpose going beyond a limit. Love should not be expressed in such a way as to upset the other person.

I had gone to Delhi to meet the Viceroy. I discussed with him many things. He seems to be a man of honest intentions. He kept repeating that he was the last Viceroy and that he would be in office only till 30th June next year. But this does not mean that he has nothing to do till then. He is preparing for his departure. It is my impression that he is keen on going, whether or not we continue to fight among ourselves. The British have ruled us for more than a century. They have given us education, but have we learnt only to quarrel? On the one hand our independence is approaching and on the other we continue to fight among ourselves. A good deal of discussions were held in Delhi. Panditji, Rajaji, Vallabhbhai and all others are trying to think of ways and means to consolidate our independence which we are about to attain. They are making efforts so that there may be peace and calm in the country and the defects of foreign rule may be removed.

People ask me why I did not go to the Punjab. All I can say in reply is that I can neither go nor refrain from going anywhere at somebody's bidding. For this I need a call from within, in other words, the inner voice. There were quite a few people who said that I should go and as many advised to the contrary. I listened to both the views. But then my inner voice told me that my work lay in Bihar and Noakhali. "Better is death", it is said, "in the discharge of one's duty, another's duty is fraught with danger." The *Gita* says that one's duty, however small, is better than another's, however great. I felt that I should come here, and so I consulted the Viceroy, Panditji and other leaders. This does not mean that I shall never go to the Punjab. I shall go there when I feel I should.

I had said at Noakhali that I would either do or die. Maybe I will die, not in Noakhali but in Bihar, or, I might die not even in Bihar but in the Punjab. It would be just

as well if I succeed in Noakhali, for it would have its good effect all round. If the Hindus and the Muslims of Bihar tell me that my work here is over and that I should leave, then I shall go to Noakhali. Those Muslims who are writing abusive letters to me should be able to say that although the Hindus have misbehaved they would not do so any more. If these Muslims feel reassured, they would certainly be able to say so. Let the Hindus of Noakhali also say the same thing. When I was in Delhi, the Muslims of Bihar were asking me why I did not go to Bihar. It pained me that they did not say that they had restored brotherly relations with the Hindus and I need not go to Bihar. And now, what about Noakhali? Suhrawardy Saheb says that because Gandhi released to the Press so many telegrams it probably led to the communal explosion in Calcutta. What Satis Babu has written makes everything clear. It is another matter if the charges are false and cannot be proved. But if they are true, it will be known to everyone. What is the point in hiding the guilt? It would be better if the newspapers publish the outrages committed by both Hindus and Muslims. People should know who has committed what crime. This will show what is the truth and what is the untruth and the poison will come to the surface. Just now people only make guesses while the poison works within. Suhrawardy Saheb says that his officers give him such reports. This is not a good practice. This is what the British too used to say. They also used to believe their officers' reports that all was well. The officers in Bihar and Bengal have given similar reports, but they are not reliable. Satis Babu and Suhrawardy Saheb are old friends. Satis Babu used to go round with him during the disturbances in Calcutta. Whatever he says is only after proper investigation. It is not right to say that he gives wrong information. He gives full details of arson and looting. It is futile to say that these are lies. Because I left Noakhali and came here to serve the Muslims I have a right to go on a fast. When I was in Bengal I had said that I would undertake a fast unto death if the riots in Bihar did not stop.[1] I have a similar right [to fast] on behalf of the Hindus of Noakhali. But it is not easy to undertake a genuine fast. I do not mean that I am going to undertake a fast right from today. It will please me very much if the reports sent to me about Noakhali are proved exaggerated and Suhrawardy Saheb is right in saying that the

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 81-2.

Hindus have not suffered any loss. But what would happen to me if the fear proves well-founded and something happens to the Hindus who have stayed on on the assurance from Satis Babu and Haran Babu? I have told everyone that I would go to Noakhali, so I shall have to do something. Surely I cannot take poison nor hang or shoot myself. I can end my life only by fasting. Suhrawardy Saheb says the Hindus are in a minority in Bengal but the difference in the numbers of the Hindus and the Muslims is very small. The proportion may be 55 to 45 per cent. The Hindus of West Bengal have decided that Bengal should be divided. If I were in Suhrawardy Saheb's place I would have gone to the Hindus and asked them not to have any fears. I would have asked them what their trouble was. Why do the Hindus want separation? Let him satisfy them. You may have Pakistan or Hindustan, but it is wrong if the Hindus say that they would force the Muslims to stay on. And if the Muslims say that they would achieve their goal by resorting to force I would say that they would not get an inch of land from us. I would tell them they could turn the whole of India into Pakistan by persuading us and converting us to their view. I had said the same thing in Delhi. But what can we do in a situation as at present? Shall we also resort to violence? No, we shall lay down our lives, but we shall not let them have their way by force.

Bengal entered its New Year yesterday. India has a number of New Year days. I expect a day will come when the whole of India will observe the same New Year Day. By the grace of God may the Bengali New Year bring peace and comfort to the whole of Bengal. In the coming New Year the Hindus should learn new things. They should learn to die. They should learn to die not while engaged in plunder and arson but while pursuing dharma and serving others, for service of man is service unto God. Let all Bengalis learn this. The Muslims do not follow the Bengali year now. At one time they used to follow it. But even if only the Hindus of Bengal learn to follow the new path from the New Year, I would say it would be for the benefit of all and they too would stand to gain by it.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—III, pp. 5-8

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256. TALK WITH MUSLIM LEAGUE MEMBERS

April 14, 1947

I firmly believe that if only the British quit India, we would almost be united. Why cannot the Muslim League see that the first thing for all is to end India's slavery? We may talk about partition after that. Either the Muslims regard India as their home or they do not. If they do, then this senseless massacre of innocent people should stop, the British should be made to quit and our own Government set up. We can then settle the question of partition by mutual persuasion or fight it out amongst ourselves, if necessary. But I do not understand why thousands of innocent people are being killed treacherously. And if the Muslims do not regard India as their home, the question of Pakistan does not arise.

The Muslim League friends replied that they also condemned such killings. Bapu said:

Then you should issue a statement to that effect on behalf of the local Muslim League and write to Jinnah Saheb. That would be true service rendered to the Muslim League, and thus you will not be subjected to unwarranted suspicion.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 200-1

257. LETTER TO A TEACHER[2]

April 15, 1947

Students must not be given corporal punishment. But there should be such a rapport between the teacher and the taught that if the teacher punishes himself in some way the children, because of their affection for him, should feel sorry, their hearts should melt and they should change for the better. I am not talking in the air. This has been my personal experience. Mothers also

[1] After the members of the League had left, Gandhiji remarked that, in spite of their assurances, he was afraid nothing would come out of it.

[2] The addressee, a believer in non-violence, had posed the problem of reforming some of the difficult students without corporal punishment.

can reform their children in the same way. In South Africa I had looked after Hindu, Muslim and Parsi boys and girls. During those days I remember having only once beaten a pupil.[1] But it was my experience that my non-violent method was more successful. If the children have affection for their teacher they are bound to feel sorry when they find the teacher suffering on their account. That would soften them. But if in spite of that there is a difficult pupil, we should non-co-operate with him. But that is another method. The former is the better method.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 202-3

258. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 15, 1947

Socialism is a term of the modern age but the concept of socialism is not a new discovery. Lord Krishna preaches the same doctrine in the *Gita*. One need have in one's possession only what one requires. It means that all men are created by God and therefore entitled to an equal share of food, clothing and housing. It does not require huge organizations for the realization of this ideal. Any individual can set about to realize it. First of all in order to translate this ideal into our lives we should minimize our needs, keeping in mind the poorest of the poor in India. One should earn just enough to support oneself and one's family. To have a bank balance would thus be incompatible with this ideal. And whatever is earned should be earned with the utmost honesty. Strict restraint has to be kept over small matters in our lives. Even if a single individual enforces this ideal in his life, he is bound to influence others. Wealthy people should act as trustees of their wealth. But if they are robbed of this wealth through violent means, it would not be in the interest of the country. This is known as communism. Moreover, by adopting violent means we would be depriving society of capable individuals.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 201-2

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXXIX, p. 271.

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259. TALK WITH SHAH NAWAZ KHAN[1]

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 15, 1947

I have high hopes of you. I have to convert you into a perfect non-violent soldier with the sole weapon of non-violence. You were decorated with the rank of Colonel while serving under Netaji. I wish to make you a Colonel of non-violence. If you qualify to receive this honour, I shall have no doubt about the establishment of communal unity. Win over everyone with love. You should learn spinning.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 203

260. A TALK

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 15, 1947

There is a highly sensitive balance in science for weighing minute particles of dust and even a hair can be weighed by it. We should have a similar balance that would indicate even a hair-like minute slip in the observance of truth and non-violence. We have to put ourselves to this test and pass it. It does not therefore behove a man of non-violence to imagine anything about another person. There is no reason to believe that anyone who criticises us must be against us. For example, if misunderstanding crops up between two friends or brothers, they do not cease to be brothers or friends. There are many instances like this. For example, water is two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. Still we should experiment both ways by separating the elements and integrating them again, and if as a result we get water only then our inference about water will be regarded as correct. Similarly, in our everyday life on many occasions what appears clear as daylight may turn out to be an illusion. We decidedly violate truth and non-violence if we draw an inference without making proper enquiries. Having taken the

[1] During the morning walk

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vow of truth and non-violence we have to be extremely cautious and alert at every moment. I meet Rajas and Maharajas with due respect and welcome them, in spite of my knowledge of their numerous shortcomings. They are themselves not responsible for them, it has become their nature owing to the circumstances. We can change them only through love and then alone will they accept us as their friends; thus on several occasions they were ready on their own for atonement.

You know that Deenabandhu Andrews used to be treated with discourtesy by Government officials. But in spite of that he continued to visit them off and on with the result that some of them came to regret their conduct. Only if I succeed in my experiment in truth and non-violence here amongst you can I go to the Punjab and Sind and then I am bound to achieve success everywhere. Therefore one who has embraced non-violence should always be vigilant and constantly examine himself.

Pointing to the figurine of three monkeys Gandhiji said :

This guru of mine always teaches me never to see evil in others. That is why it has its eyes closed. The other one has closed its ears because one should hear no evil of others. [The third one] has closed its mouth because one should neither speak evil of others nor utter a single word which might hurt anyone.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 205-6

261. TALK WITH SYED JAFAR IMAM[1]

April 15, 1947

Gandhiji told him that if there was an order that the League volunteers should leave the camp, they should do so, otherwise it would be very difficult for him to plead for them with the Government.

JAFAR IMAM: We bow before your affection. The Government wants to remove the League from the camp in order to destroy its influence amongst the refugees. That would render the refugees helpless and force

[1] President, Bihar Muslim League. He explained to Gandhiji that they were not obstructing the rehabilitation work in the interest of the masses, that the Government had ordered all the refugees to go back to their villages, otherwise their rations would be stopped. The Magistrate would be going that day to get the order executed and if no settlement was arrived at, his volunteers would court arrest.

them to go back under pressure of Government threat. We feel that to attempt to weaken our organization in this fashion is not proper.

Gandhiji assured him that no one could destroy the influence of the League that way. He had even declared that he would gladly have Jinnah as the first President of free India. He had no quarrel with the League though it regarded him as its enemy. Such things only amused him. He related how in Delhi a Muslim League leader had openly declared him to be an enemy of the Muslims, but the wife of this gentleman with her sister came and had a friendly and cordial talk with him the next day. If he was sincere, he added, others were bound to understand him one day. They had fallen on evil days but he had full faith in God.

GANDHIJI : Then let us meet again and discuss the whole affair.

JAFAR IMAM : We are all going to Delhi and will not be back till the 20th April.

GANDHIJI : Then depute somebody who can act on your behalf.

JAFAR IMAM : There will be nobody here. You kindly get the order stayed till the 20th. When we are back we shall discuss the matter with you and arrive at a decision.

GANDHIJI : I shall talk the matter over with the Ministers, and understand their point of view. If after talking to them I feel that your volunteers should leave, will they do so?

JAFAR IMAM : We pray that you don't go there. If somebody misbehaves, it would be very painful to us. We would not like you to be disobeyed.

One of Gandhiji's secretaries intervened at this stage and explained that the Government order only for the time being was that the volunteers would not get Government rations or be allowed to sleep there. The order applied equally to all volunteers and was not directed against any particular community or organization.

JAFAR IMAM : Night is the only time when women and children require protection.

GANDHIJI : Suppose I or any of my representatives goes and sleeps there, would it not serve the purpose ?

JAFAR IMAM : We do not want you to take this trouble upon yourself at this age. We would only request you to get this order stayed till the 20th. That would prevent many unnecessary complications.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 323-4

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262. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

PATNA,
April 15, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

While I was in Delhi I had received many letters from Bihar, some containing abuses, some in praise and a few expressing doubt whether I would at all return to finish the work in Bihar or whether I had forgotten all about Bihar. The doubt expressed has no foundation. He who follows his own dharma commits no mistake. Praise is wholly unnecessary for him; dharma for him is a duty. One must return a hundredfold what one receives.

We must put up with the abuses hurled at us. They do not affect me. Do or Die is my motto and I must lay down my life doing my work wherever it might be. Some persons have accused me of leaving Noakhali and coming to Bihar not at the request of a Hindu but at the behest of a Muslim so that the Muslims may do what they like in Noakhali. But you know I have come here at the invitation of Dr. Mahmud. He is the son-in-law of the late Mazhar-ul-Haq and is an able person. He has rendered great service to the Congress and has been a member of the Congress Working Committee. I knew his father-in-law Mr. Mazhar-ul-Haq even before I had heard of Rajendra Babu or Brijkishore Babu. He was my fellow-student in England. I had come to Bihar at the instance of Rajkumar Shukla and my prior acquaintance with Mazhar-ul-Haq proved to be a great advantage. I have known Dr. Mahmud since the days when there was no Hindu-Muslim tension of the sort which has now developed. I have come here at his invitation for he is an old friend of mine. According to me, by summoning me here Dr. Mahmud has done good both to the Hindus and Muslims. Bihar after all is my land, it has made me. My coming here is not a new thing. I have worked here and have become attached to it. My attachment to it is as pure as to a mother. It is true I have come here at the instance of Muslims but it is sheer folly to say that Muslims are devils and have drawn me away from Noakhali to do what they please there. How is it possible for Dr. Mahmud, who has done so much work and whose father-in-law has served the country so well, to do any such thing? Are all the Muslims in the world bad ? Muslims also may say that all the Hindus are bad. So

long as there is even one good man in the world the world belongs to the good. If everyone turns evil, the world will go to Satan. But Satan has no real existence. In fact Satan is a name of evil. On reflection we will realize that even if there is one good man the world will go on as a result of his noble endeavour.

I stay in Dr. Mahmud's house and all the persons in my party are treated as members of his family. Mr. Muztuwa, Dr. Mahmud's secretary, takes great care to make us feel at home. Both Dr. Mahmud and Qaiyum are your ministers. Are they good for nothing ? If you recognize that they are not true servants of the Congress you may remove them but they have been chosen by Hindu ministers. Ministries can be formed without Muslims being included if no honest Muslim is available; but it would be dishonesty not to have them when honest Muslims are available. Our good lies in taking all good men along with us. The Muslim League people who met me also say that non-League Muslims are not their enemies. The Bihar Muslim League President, Jafar Imam, is in fact a good friend of Dr. Mahmud. Badshah Khan is also a Muslim but he is a *fakir*. Khudai Khidmatgars are also Muslims but they have given complete protection to the Hindus though the Hindus there are fewer even than the Muslims here.

People may write to me what they like but this you must understand, that whatever may be the deterioration in the situation in the Punjab, Bengal and Sind, Hinduism will be saved if Bihar at any rate follows the right path. Even if the Muslims in the Punjab, Bengal and Sind harm the Hindus there, and if Bihar shows true courage in protecting and comforting Muslims and their children, Bihar will have raised India in the estimation of the world.

To protect the minorities is not to appease them. This I expect from Bihar by right of service and because of its people's deep devotion to Rama. I have been constantly on the move but the doctors have advised me not to tour in this heat; they want me to go to a cooler place during summer, but I shall tour as long as my health permits. The tours will have to be curtailed. A lot of work remains to be done in Patna. I do not want to leave in a hurry.

I have many more things to tell you. But since these things must be properly explained I shall try to tell them tomorrow or some other day.[1]

[From Hindi]

Bihar Samachar, 17-4-1947

[1] Gandhiji's speeches at prayer meetings were published by the Bihar Government in *Bihar Samachar*, a daily bulletin, for distribution in the villages.

263. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

PATNA,
April 16, 1947

CHI. LILI,

I am happy that you are with Sushila.

You did well to let me know your ideas. I do not approve of them. But where is the time to explain why ? Moreover, your ideas are fleeting. You do give vent to your feelings. There is no harm in your doing this before me. But behave like a grown-up before others.

Since you wish to keep nothing secret, I don't mark your letters as confidential. I apply the rule strictly to Sushila's letters.

Write to me regularly.

I hope you understand that it is for your own good that I have forbidden you to come here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9607. Also C. W. 6579. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

264. A TALK[1]

PATNA,
April 16, 1947

The way to true repentance lies in making a firm resolve not to soil one's hand with evil in future. If ever again you happen to commit a wrong you should not sleep over your confession. It is human to err. Therefore one is bound to commit an error, but that in itself is not a very grave matter. The danger lies in hiding that error. When a person resorts to untruth to hide his error he commits another folly. If one continues to make mistakes one after another, it can be very harmful. If there is an abscess in the body, one can press it and remove the pus. But if the poison is not removed and it spreads in the body it may result in death. The same is true of a person who commits a sin but

[1] To a person who had confessed his guilt

does not confess it. A sinner may commit many sins but if at the last moment there is sincere repentance, God forgives him. One should pray for the well-being not only of human beings but of all creatures, which also are the creation of God. And the only way to attain this strength is to meditate upon God morning and evening. The prayer for the welfare of all includes our welfare as well.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 209-10

265. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

April 16, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I can only tell you this today. While I was in Delhi I met the Viceroy a number of times. I also met him just before coming here. He showed me an appeal[1] which he wanted me to sign. I told him I could do so with the consent of Pandit Nehru and the Congress President. Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah was also to sign it. The purport of the appeal was that we are both in agreement that the recent acts of lawlessness and violence have brought the utmost disgrace to the fair name of India and the greatest misery to innocent people and unleashed a reign of terror everywhere. We are not to consider who were the aggressors and who the victims. We denounce for all time the use of force to achieve political ends and we call upon all the communities of India, to whatever persuasion they may belong, not only to refrain from all acts of violence and disorder but also to avoid both in speech and writing any word which might be construed as an incitement to such acts.

To obtain my signature on such an appeal is not of very great significance, for I have all along been saying the same thing and will go on repeating it. But it is significant that the Quaid-e-Azam has also signed it. Everyone should now take care that riots do not take place. Though they break out even now we have now a right to expect that the riots will not occur in future. The Muslim League people are also here. They can assure me that my work has been completed and that I could now return and resume my work. My signature was not necessary at all, for

[1] *Vide* "A Joint Appeal", p. 261.

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I represent nobody. I am your servant because I have served Bihar. It is for you to tell me that having committed a sin once you will not repeat it. You may ask me why Pandit Nehru and Kripalani did not sign the appeal. I do not want to go into this matter but you must realize the significance of my signature. It will be very bad if you now kill any Muslim. It should not be that you applaud me and kill innocent people. Such applause would be my undoing. How long would you applaud me?

I had said the other day[1] that I had a right to undertake a fast on behalf of Bihar but after coming here I have earned a similar right in case of Noakhali also. It is a different matter if I do not go to Noakhali or don't exercise my right. But the Hindus and Muslims of Noakhali must know that I have got that right and I may sacrifice my life for them. I have also received an anonymous telegram which says that if I have to go on a fast I should do so immediately. But I do not act at other people's bidding. I shall undertake a fast when my inner voice prompts me to do so, for the inner voice is the voice of God. I have signed the Viceroy's appeal. The implication of my signature is that I shall be responsible if Hindu-Muslim riots break out anywhere in India. I have no power, no army, I have only my life which I can sacrifice. I do not represent the Hindus. I claim that all religions are equal. You just heard in the prayer about equality of religions, which means all religions are equal and I shall have to atone for the crimes committed by the people irrespective of their religions. I have taken a tremendous responsibility on my shoulders. You should realize my responsibility; Hindus and Muslims should live like brothers for ever. I can make a similar claim on behalf of Shri Jinnah also. Today he speaks for the Muslims alone but there was a time when he was regarded as a representative of the whole country. He was a Congressman and had a high position in the Congress. He had put up a brave fight against the Governor of Bombay single-handed and the latter had to yield.[2] The Jinnah Hall in Bombay stands as a memorial to his good name. He can speak for everyone even today because the appeal is addressed to all the communities irrespective of their faiths.

[1] *Vide* p. 281.

[2] Presumably the reference is to the anti-Willingdon demonstrations held to protest against the Governor's provocative statements regarding the Home Rule League leaders at the Bombay Provincial War Conference on June 10, 1918. *Vide* Vol. XIV, pp. 425-31.

I would also appeal to the Press to refrain from publishing reports which would incite one against another. A great burden has fallen both upon Shri Jinnah's shoulders and mine, since the appeal has been signed only by the two of us. Had the appeal been signed by 25 persons the burden would have been less. It is now the duty of every Hindu and Muslim to realize this and explain it to others.

The Viceroy has taken a very good step; we must thank him for it. But it would have been much better had Shri Jinnah and I drafted the appeal jointly and signed it. It would then have been a great thing. But the Viceroy who is an outsider had to initiate it. How good it would be if we agreed to act upon it! How great would India's reputation be! Let us bear no more ill-will against each other nor hurt others by any thought, word or deed of ours. Lest the world should look down upon us we should not profess one thing and practise another. We should admit our mistake and decide not to lose our heads again.

My understanding of the situation is that the Congress and the League should together open a new chapter. It would have been excellent if they could have arrived at an agreement without the intervention of a third party. However, I hope there would be no enmity or misunderstanding between the Congress and the League even if they were brought together through the good offices of the Viceroy.

[From Hindi]
Bihar Samachar, 18-4-1947

266. TALK WITH WOMEN WORKERS

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 17, 1947

You should have faith in yourselves and in God and thus build up your self-confidence and courage. Everyone frightens the timid. Therefore if you continue to be timid you will not be able to make any use of the strength with which God has blessed you, the strength to cultivate courage in oneself. In order to utilize your strength you have to realize the power inherent in you.

God only knows who invented the word *abala*[1] for the women of India. To call them *abala* is to condemn the inherent strength

[1] Weak, helpless

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of women; in my view it is an insult to them. If we peruse the history of the Rajput, Moghul or *Mahabharata* period of our country we shall come across marvellous instances of bravery shown by women. They not only exhibited their bravery through arms, but by building up their moral courage they developed immense strength. If women resolve to bring glory to the nation, within a few months they can totally change the face of the country because the spiritual background of an Aryan woman is totally different from that of the women of other countries.

We hear reports, not only from Bihar or Noakhali, but from everywhere about goondas having molested or abducted women. I feel terribly upset hearing such sorry tales. I wonder why our women have become so timid. Their glory has been diminishing and for this you women are yourselves responsible. You should have such boundless faith in God, as Draupadi and Sita had. You should get rid of the distinctions of Hindu, Mussalman, Parsi or Jew. Follow the religion which appeals to you. Who are the persons who violate the honour of women? Are they not your brother, father or son? After all they are all our countrymen, aren't they? You should restrain your menfolk from committing such atrocities and warn them that if they violated any Muslim woman it would be tantamount to violating your honour, because she is after all your sister. But today even women have stopped thinking on these lines. Instead, some women take pride in their son, brother, father or husband killing or molesting other women. I have seen a number of such cases. But remember that those who are dishonouring other women today will treat you in the same way tomorrow. As a result even a brother and sister might be forced to follow immoral ways. As I see it, this will be the outcome of the massacre that is going on. I do not wish to live to witness this. I would plead with you not to become an instrument in dragging India's ancient culture into the mire. You are only twelve or fifteen but you are all workers. If you can carry my voice, I would like to convey my anguish to every woman in the country.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 214-6

267. TALK WITH CONGRESS WORKERS[1]

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 17, 1947

Only this morning I poured out my anguish before some sisters. I did not expect that you also would be the cause of similar pain. It is a bad habit with us that whenever we call a meeting to discuss some work, we start indulging in personal recrimination, lose our tempers and thus waste our time. It seems there is a growing inconsistency between the public and private life of a Congress worker. The result is that goondaism, lack of discipline and carelessness are increasing day by day. As preparations are afoot for transferring the Government into our hands, our responsibility is also increasing. We must get rid of anger, intolerance, etc., otherwise we will not be able to stand on our own. Not only this, we might be caught up in a bigger bondage. I want a swaraj in which the millions of illiterates in our country will realize its benefits. You have to cultivate the strength to achieve that. The government [under swaraj] should be such that people may clearly see the distinction between the arbitrary and autocratic British rule and the democratic government run on non-violent lines. I am an optimist. I maintain that once the reins of Government are transferred to us we will realize our responsibilities and all the artificial barriers existing at present will vanish.

My faith in non-violence and truth is being strengthened all the more in spite of the increasing number of atom bombs. I have not a shadow of doubt that there is no power superior to the power of truth and non-violence in the world. See what a great difference there is between the two: one is moral and spiritual force, and is motivated by infinite soul-force; the other is a product of physical and artificial power, which is perishable. The soul is imperishable. This doctrine is not my invention; it is a doctrine enunciated in our Vedas and Shastras. When soul-force awakens, it becomes irresistible and conquers the world. This power is inherent in every human being. But

[1] The workers who had called on Gandhiji in the afternoon started accusing one another. Gandhiji listened to them for some time but when things went out of hand, he gave them a piece of his mind.

one can succeed only if one tries to realize this ideal in each and every act in one's life without being affected in the least by praise or censure.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 216-7

268. MESSAGE TO MAHARAJA OF DARBHANGA

April 17, 1947

Be a servant to your subjects. And spend no more than you need from the State exchequer, considering yourself a trustee of the entire property.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 217

269. TALK WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF JAMIAT-UL-ULEMA

PATNA,
April 17, 1947

BAPU : Instead of being anxious to find out how many Muslims were killed by the Hindus, your primary duty is to find out how many Hindus the Muslims had killed and where and persuade them not to commit such atrocities. Similarly you should go among the Hindus and serve them. You should assure them that all Muslims are not bad and thus remove their fear. If the nationalist Muslims of India did just this at the risk of their lives they would raise Muslims and Islam to greater heights and Khuda would shower His choicest blessings on them. But today who listens to me? If out of the four crore Muslims I could have only a hundred such brothers and sisters, they would be able to render great service to the forty crore Hindus and Muslims of India. Now, tell me, is any one of you prepared to take up this mission ?

What our brethren are doing is, of course, wrong but we never support them.

BAPU : It is our sorrow that we always think in terms of mine and thine. You should realize that a wrong committed by

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even a child of India is a wrong committed by each one of us. Till we imbibe this spirit, we shall not have peace.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 217-8

270. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

April 17, 1947

Explaining why he was late by 15 minutes Gandhiji said that he wanted the prayers to start 15 minutes later than scheduled because it was the time for *namaz* for the Muslims. He also said that even if the Muslims came in small numbers we must keep their *namaz* in mind.

We should respect all religions. In our prayer we also recite some portions from the Koran. I have heard that some boys ridicule the recitations from the Koran. We should not ridicule anybody's religion. If we do so, other people will ridicule our religion, too, and that would lead to strife. I cannot give up reciting from the Koran in the course of my prayer. The whole prayer consists of recitations from several scriptures. Not a single item can be omitted from it even if it comes to discontinuing the whole prayer. Even if you do not participate in the prayer, you must listen to it carefully, and even if you do not understand it you should not ridicule it.

After the prayer Gandhiji said:

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Some Muslims came to see me today and they gave me some painful news. They said that in Patna city the Hindus have done considerable harm to the Muslims, and are still not repenting what they have done, and that they continue to threaten the Muslims. I had a similar report about Bihar-Sharif. There too the Hindus bully and threaten the Muslims in the same way and the Muslims are afraid to return. It is our duty to rebuild the houses that have been destroyed. How can this be done when the Hindus harass even those who go there as labourers? What would the Muslims do? This is a very complicated question. I was surprised to hear this and felt ashamed. At one time the Hindus and the Muslims of Bihar used to live as brothers. But now they treat each other as enemies. I have received complaints from other places too. I could not go to Monghyr

and Bihar-Sharif, but I hope to go to other places. I have grown weak and it would be more difficult on account of the heat. There was a time when I did not bother about these things. But I have now grown old. You can spare me that trouble if you wish. If you can carry my voice up to Bihar-Sharif, tell the Hindus there that they should not go on troubling an old man like me. My work can become easier if you wish. Some Muslims have demanded rifle licences. Personally, I would not like anyone to have a rifle. A rifle may be used for hunting. But we have no danger of tigers here. Today rifles are used by the Hindus and the Muslims to kill or intimidate each other. If proper arrangements are made, rifles and guns would not be needed at all. It is said in the Bible that we should look forward to an age when no swords would be needed and the material used for making them could be diverted to make other useful things. It is said in the *Ramayana* that when Rama was asked how he would fight against Ravana, Rama said that he would have the armour of purity and his noble endeavour would stand by him. In my view the Muslims should not even think that they can have protection against the assaults from the Hindus if they possessed rifles. The Hindus should tell them that so long as they are alive no harm will come to the Muslims. They must tell the Muslims that their sisters and daughters are as much their own sisters and daughters and they will protect them.

Some big Hindu landlords came to see me today. Then some Muslim landlords also met me. I do not wish to convey to you everything they said to me. I shall speak about these things to the Ministers who can do something about them. Even so, I do wish to tell you a few things. I have come to know that the peasants and the workers have started thinking that they have become the rulers, and therefore they are free to abuse the landlords. They think that they can withhold the revenue and deprive the landlords of their due. This would do them no good. The peasants are harming their own interests. Even if they kill a few landlords, how is it going to help? The peasants and workers are too many and the landlords too few. What is the point of riding roughshod over the landlords and wanting to finish them off? It is said that the peasants are doing everything in the name of disobedience to law. But disobedience to law as taught by me does not involve ruining and annihilating others. I am leaving aside the Muslims just now. We cannot win freedom in this way. We must be friendly to all. Granting that the landlords

had been plundering the peasants till now, it does not mean that now that we have achieved power we should plunder the landlords. Will the peasants remove the landlords and occupy their positions? We should do everything in a proper manner. If we follow violent methods we shall only spread violence. And, when that happens, you yourself would turn round and ask if that was what Ramarajya meant. You would say that you were comfortable during the British rule and have no peace now. I should like to tell all the peasants and workers that they should not create chaotic conditions. Let them not think that they are the sole masters of the country. They should not think that just because the railways belong to us they can pull the chain and bring the trains to a halt wherever they want, or that they can travel without tickets and rob others. This is not a proper thing to do; it is rowdyism by which we can achieve nothing. We therefore must do everything possible to stop such things. Let us go to those who indulge in such activities and persuade them to desist from such actions and explain to them that no one stands to gain by acting in this manner.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Samachar, 19-4-1947

271. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA[1]

PATNA,
Evening, *April 17, 1947*

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your letter. I understand what you write about Hoshiari. I am enclosing a letter for her, too.[2] In my opinion there is no need for you to go to Khurja. Your duty lies in staying on at Sevagram and doing whatever you can. Gajraj[3], I hope, is doing well. I am pleased to know that Krishnachandra is making good progress under Vinobaji. What can I say about the dairy? It is almost impossible for me to go to Sevagram in the near future. It will be possible only if I can free

[1] The addressee, being unhappy about the deteriorating condition of the Ashram dairy and not having enough work to keep him occupied, had requested Gandhiji to come and set right the affairs at Sevagram or permit him to go back and work in the villages near Khurja.

[2] The letter is not available.

[3] Hoshiari's son

myself from Bihar and Noakhali. It is very hot here. Let us see how God keeps me.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1974

272. LETTER TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY

PATNA,
April 18, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

Many thanks for your letter of the 9th instant.

I cannot endorse your insinuations. I have never subscribed to hush-hush policy. Publication of false news I hold to be a crime against humanity. If true news gives rise to conflagration there is something wrong with society and its leaders.[1]

I began publishing the wires received from Noakhali when I despaired of getting a hearing from you and when living outside Noakhali I felt helpless. Probably my presence in Noakhali would have made no difference in the situation. Only I would have derived the satisfaction from the fact that I was in Noakhali sharing the trials of its people and my co-workers.

It surprises me that you should discount the statements of facts supplied by Shri Satis Chandra Das Gupta. The culprits may never be traced but the facts of arson and loot could not be disputed, nor could the community from which the culprits are derived be disputed. The rulers whether democrats or autocrats — whether foreign or indigenous — forfeit the right to rule when they fail to deal properly with crimes even when the culprits are able to defy detection.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: G. N. 9074

[1] The addressee had banned throughout Bengal publication of the wires exchanged between Gandhiji, Satis Chandra Das Gupta, Haranchandra Ghosh-Chowdhary, and himself, on the ground that their publication would have brought about "another conflagration". *Vide* pp. 221-2.

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273. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

April 18, 1947

. . .[1] Even to avoid causing pain to dear ones, one cannot stop what one considers a *yajna*. But where one is both the doer and the deed one must realize the difficulty of a neutral attitude and accept any step that may be taken against one. My ideas are what they have always been. In fact I am becoming more and more convinced about them. I see nothing wrong about them. . . .[2]

From a copy of the Gujarati: G. N. 10460. Also C. W. 6898. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

274. LETTER TO M. S. ANEY

April 18, 1947

DEAR BAPUJI ANEY[3],

Only today I am able to attend to your letter of March 16. I read your loving message for the New Year[4] the moment it arrived, but had no opportunity to write a reply. I could have certainly found time but I do not keep all my papers with me while travelling. The result has been that the letter remained unanswered till today.

The situation here is quite serious. People have ceased to trust each other. In such a situation any message from a person like me can only be a cry in the wilderness. I take consolation by reminding myself of the last words which Vyasa had put in the mouth of Dharmaraj[5] and which you had once conveyed to me.

[1&2] Omissions are as in the source.

[3] Madhav Shrihari Aney (1880-1968); member, Congress Working Committee, 1924-25 and 1931-34, acting President of Congress, 1933; member, Central Legislative Assembly; India's High Commissioner in Ceylon, 1943-47; Governor of Bihar, 1948-52

[4] According to the Saka calendar *Chaitra Sud* 1, which fell on March 23

[5] Yudhishthira, the eldest of the five Pandava brothers

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Is it possible to do anything there[1]? Did the Asian Conference have any impact ?

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 221-2

275. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

April 18, 1947

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

Who will now sign the cheques concerning the Jallianwala Bagh[2] since Malaviyaji[3] is no more? As the Sardar happens to be there, consult him and let me know.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 222

276. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

PATNA,
April 18, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

Arunanshu Babu writes to you, so I do not write. He is thinking of going over there; it is good.

You have to preserve your health for the sake of service. Write to me if you feel you need my presence there. I think if I can achieve anything here it will surely have its effect there. But there are difficulties everywhere.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

What shall I write about Taralika becoming a widow? Out of our selfishness we regard death as a cause for grief. I have written to Taralika.[4] I hope Hemprabha is calm.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9075

[1] In Ceylon
[2] Jallianwala Bagh Memorial Trust
[3] Madan Mohan Malaviya
[4] The letter is not available.

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277. TALK WITH SYED MAHMUD AND OTHERS

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 18, 1947

You should make it a point to meet the Muslim families whether they belong to the Muslim League or not, take them into your confidence, talk to them and win over their hearts. Rioters are not the only murderers. Bigger culprits are those who instigate these riots and are still regarded as honourable men. If we can reform these gentlemen, the poor people will be prevented from acting as their instruments, since they commit the misdeeds merely from greed for money and not because they relish them. It would be a great achievement if you could win the confidence of these Muslims. You should also have a talk with Ansari.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 220

278. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI[1]

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 18, 1947

I will have no regrets if the money invested in these machines is reduced to dust. True India lies in its seven lakh villages. Do you know that big cities like London have exploited India and the big cities of India in turn have exploited its villages? That is how palatial mansions have come up in big cities and villages have become impoverished. I want to infuse new life into these villages. I do not say that all the mills in cities should be demolished. But we should be vigilant and start afresh wherever we happen to make a mistake. We should stop exploiting the villages and should closely examine the injustice done to the villages and strengthen their economic structure.

I have no doubt that we have gained much strength through truth and non-violence. The country would never have risen high had it not adopted the weapon of non-violence. But truth

[1] Manu Gandhi asked Gandhiji what would be the fate of factories in big cities if people adopted village industries, following his advice.

has not been followed by the people to the extent it ought to have been. I am often surprised to see so much untruth prevailing in the country. No doubt our practice of non-violence is far from perfect, but if we had not adopted it, we would not have progressed so much. Our goal is truth and truth can be reached only through the observance of non-violence. Non-violence is only a means. Speaking truth is a habit I have formed right from my childhood, but I had to make efforts to practise non-violence. If we adopt non-violence, truth can be followed along with it. Sometimes good comes out of evil, but that is divine dispensation. Human experience is that as good comes out of good, only evil comes out of evil. Retaliation cannot end violence. If humanity is to rise above violence there is no alternative but to adopt non-violence. Love alone can conquer hatred. The principles of truth and non-violence are nothing new; they have been in existence from the beginning of creation. After 60 years' experience my faith in these ideals is growing stronger day by day.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 220-1

279. TALK WITH ZAMINDARS

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 18, 1947

Zamindars or capitalists will not be able to survive if they continue to suppress peasants and labourers. Now you should behave towards them not as their masters but as partners and friends, and act as their trustees; then alone can you survive. For a long time during the British regime you have been exploiting the labourers and peasants. Therefore I advise you in your own interest that if you do not see the writing on the wall, it will be difficult for you to adjust.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 222

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280. TALK WITH PEASANT AND LABOUR LEADERS

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 18, 1947

If labourers aim at asserting their rights, they can do so only by co-operating with zamindars, not by harassing or killing them. Abolition of zamindari is not a very difficult task. We have only a handful of zamindars here. But if you take the law into your own hands you will be striking at the root of your own interests. You can place your complaints before the Government but you cannot take the law into your hands and resort to violence. One who seeks to destroy others invites one's own doom. There are numerous such instances. The best known is that of the Yadavas[1]. If you work whole-heartedly during your working hours, your employers will have to pay you your proper wages. But if you harass them in any manner you will not earn anybody's sympathy. I told the zamindars who were here a little while ago what I thought right and I tell you the same. It is my nature. I cannot act otherwise. I must tell you what I think proper.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 222-3

281. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

PATNA,
April 18, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Some landlords came to me yesterday and brought several complaints, one of which was that the peasants and labourers were out to ruin them. In this connection I said yesterday that this was a dangerous thing to do. By indulging in such acts they are only harming themselves. Abolition of zamindari is but a small matter. When the zamindars and the peasants develop cordial relations the former need not be eliminated. The

[1] Shri Krishna's kinsmen, who destroyed themselves in internecine fighting. *Vide* also the following item.

landlords are like a drop in the ocean. It is no great problem to dispense with them. But this should not be done by force. The *Mahabharata* tells us that the Yadavas were themselves annihilated when they were out to destroy others. They took to drinking, and fighting among themselves destroyed each other. Similarly, if the peasants and labourers will think of destroying others, they will themselves be ruined.

A gentleman told me today that I was not fully aware of the situation. He said that the peasants and labourers did not try to force their way, still the landlords oppressed them. I told him that if the landlords and the capitalists still exploited the peasants and labourers, they were harming their own interests. They would never survive if they behaved like masters. They could if they agreed to act as trustees.

If I am a millionaire, I should spend my wealth on those who help me in my accumulation of the millions. It is only when I do this that I can be called a trustee. But I cannot be called a trustee if I appropriate Rs. 1,000 and indulge in luxuries when I actually need only Rs. 5 or Rs. 50. I can also take money for the upkeep of my children as for my own. But I cannot give my children shares worth 5 or 10 lakhs so that they own four or five cars and live in grand style. You should not find fault with me if I say that I cannot manage on Rs. 5, that I cannot take *sattu*[1] and need fruit and milk in order to be able to work. You should let me have the money to meet my needs. But I should not take even a pice more than I need. I had demonstrated in Champaran how labourers could assert their rights. The indigo planters virtually ruled the place. They had their separate colonies and the poor were not supposed to cross their way. But I saw that their rule came to an end. People did not set fire to the houses of the planters to end their rule. Nor did they kill the planters. They only refused to work. Today also the proprietors must march with the times.

Some visitors told me today that a punitive tax had been imposed on them. A punitive tax is one imposed by the Government on the people of an entire village or neighbourhood. Suppose we harbour three goondas in our village and they misbehave with and kill the Muslim women and children of the village, the Government cannot arrest us because we are respectable people. Even if we are arrested the courts will acquit us for want of evidence. The rowdies also cannot be arrested because we harbour them. And so, the Government imposes a collective

[1] Flour of roasted grain

fine on the whole village by way of punishment. If some of us confess the crime and undertake to pay the tax, then the Government would not impose the tax on the innocent. But we do not reveal the names of those guilty of arson and assaults.

The visitors also complained that the persons responsible for the riots, who had attacked the Muslims and ruined them, were still at large and moving about freely. They said they could not return to their villages. I had said at Jahanabad that those who had caused the ruin and destruction should themselves help rebuild the houses they had destroyed. We should go to the Muslims and confess our guilt and ask for their forgiveness. We must reassure them that we would now protect them and act as their guards. We should ask them to return to their homes and should offer to meet their expenses. The people of the villages where the punitive tax has not been imposed should also inform the Government of their willingness to pay the tax. They should tell the Government that they would rebuild the houses of the Muslims and ask the Government to provide wood and bricks at the villagers' cost. But the Government should not sell it at a profit. This will be Bihar's atonement for the grave crime committed by it and it will thereby rise to great heights.

The villages harbouring such culprits should confess their crimes and seek forgiveness. For the Government can arrest a few criminals, but how can it apprehend a mob of thousands mounting an attack? If this is done the Muslims also would not clamour for retaliation against the Hindus. And if some miscreants create trouble, the other Muslims would stop them. Even the Muslim League supporters would stop them because Jinnah Saheb has expressed his view against the use of force in politics. Newspapermen should also refrain from inciting one community against the other. They can render great help in maintaining peace if they so desire.

If we honestly admit our crimes we would be reducing the burden on the Government. Just now the Government is overburdened. The present Government is a people's government. If the Ministers are not leaders but servants, they must inspire such confidence among the Muslims that they would testify that they would never leave Bihar, that they had nothing to fear here and that they would continue to live here of their own will.

There is a third point which, God willing, I shall talk about tomorrow.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Samachar, 20-4-1947

282. TALK WITH MUSLIM STUDENTS

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 18, 1947

I greatly value the magnificent role played by students in the fight for freedom. But today this enthusiasm has taken a different direction. If you make a firm resolve you can be of great help in my effort for Hindu-Muslim unity. Befriend the Hindu students. Treat their sisters as your own sisters. If they are in difficulty, go and share their misfortune and build your character. You are the architects of the future India. It was from amongst people like you that prophets like Mohammed Saheb came. Why need I go further? There are living examples right in front of your eyes, aren't there? The non-violent and truth-abiding workers like the Maulana[1] and Khan Saheb[2] are from amongst you. Now they have grown old. You have therefore to develop the strength to shoulder the responsibility of running the government when it is transferred to you. And to acquire this strength you should have strength of character.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 223-4

283. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

PATNA,
April 19, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI,

There was a wire from the Sardar today stating that neither you nor anyone else in our circle has any objection to my writing in *Harijan*. I should like to interpret this to mean that you want me to write. If that is true, there should be no restrictions whatsoever.[3] I do not regard myself the proprietor

[1] Abul Kalam Azad

[2] Abdul Ghaffar Khan

[3] In February 1947 portions of Gandhiji's prayer speeches in Noakhali, referring to his experiment in *brahmacharya*, were not published in *Harijan*. *Vide* Vol. LXXXVI, p. 420.

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of *Harijan*. You people there are the real proprietors, for it is you who keep it running with your conscientious work. I am fully aware that whatever right I have is purely moral.

I am getting ready to start writing, but please do not hesitate to let me have your views.

When should an article reach you at the latest? Pyarelal is far away from me, and so it is I who will have to look after all this.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9976. Also C. W. 6950. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

284. TALK WITH WORKERS[1]

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 19, 1947

We cannot fully enjoy the freedom of our country unless we bring about a fundamental change in our education system. Education should be imparted through the means of crafts. Today we pass our examinations studying the text-books prescribed for us. Instead of wasting time over those worthless books we should carry out experiments. For example, we should study how to grow cotton and make experiments in all the processes, right from cotton-growing to weaving of cloth. And then we can find out the names of the different varieties of cotton grown in various countries and also show their samples to children. Knowledge of history, geography, arithmetic and language can easily be imparted through this craft. And thus we can get rid of the lethargy that has overtaken us and can become industrious. If this craft is made compulsory in a large number of schools, we can easily achieve our object. University education does not serve much purpose. On the contrary it is harmful because an educated young man then can think of nothing except taking up a job. There are quite a few such young men who, to my knowledge, are totally ignorant in spite of their education and are unable to earn a single pice. On the other hand an illiterate artisan is quite capable of earning at least Rs. 60-70 a month. These college-educated

[1] Of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh, the All-India Village Industries Association and the All-India Spinners' Association

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young men without jobs are driven from pillar to post. They do require, nonetheless, a minimum standard of clothing, shoes, etc., to suit their education. Thus parents first spend money on their education and then spend as much again to keep up their 'position' even during their unemployment. Our students today are in such a state of bankruptcy—and as a result the plight of the people is equally miserable. In order to improve the lot of our people, therefore, it is essential to launch a campaign for education through crafts. But such changes cannot be brought about merely by making speeches or issuing official circulars. No doubt they will help to some extent. But if the leaders, i.e., those in power, were to devote regularly an hour or so daily to some craft, it would have a tremendous impact. How was it that a handful of Englishmen could keep us in bondage for so many years? One of the reasons was that they introduced a system of education that could produce only clerks.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 225-6

285. TALK WITH ENGLISHWOMEN[1]

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 19, 1947

The foreign power will be withdrawn before long, but for me real freedom will come only when we free ourselves of the domination of Western education, Western culture and Western way of living which have been ingrained in us, because this culture has made our living expensive and artificial, both for men and for women. Emancipation from this culture would mean real freedom for us.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 226-7

[1] Two Englishwomen had come to see Gandhiji.

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286. TALK WITH BIHAR MINISTERS

April 19, 1947

1. Ministers and Governors should, as far as possible, use articles manufactured in India, have khadi alone to wear for themselves and their family members and keep the wheel of non-violence going and help the crores of poor earn their bread.

2. They should learn both the Nagari and Persian scripts, abjure use of English among themselves and use Hindustani for all public occasions. They should also encourage the use of provincial languages. Hindustani should be their medium for all official purposes and all their office orders and circulars should be issued in it so that the enthusiasm to learn Hindustani grows and it may automatically become the *lingua franca* of India.

3. They should be completely free from the taint of untouchability, casteism, and nepotism. Those holding high positions should be impartial towards all, whether the person be his own brother, son or an ordinary citizen, be he an artisan or a labourer.

4. Their personal lives should be models of simplicity. They should perform body-labour for at least an hour daily either in the form of spinning or growing food or vegetables to help the country to make good the food shortage.

5. They should not live in bungalows or have cars. They should live in simple houses. They might make use of a motor-car but sparingly, only for special reasons, such as going long distances. Although the need for a motor-car will always be there it should be used as sparingly as possible.

6. By living in one place or close to one another, Ministers, their families and their staff would come into closer touch with one another. This would ensure better co-ordination among them.

7. They and their family members should, as far as possible, avoid the use of servants and do their own domestic chores.

8. The use of costly foreign furniture, sofa sets, almirahs, glossy chairs, etc., should be avoided, particularly in view of the prevailing conditions when, let alone carpets, crores of people do not have enough to cover themselves.

9. The Ministers should be free from all vices and addictions.

If they set an example in plain living and high thinking, they would need no bodyguards. I am sure people themselves

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would provide all the security they might require instead of their having to take security measures in the form of half a dozen policemen. Ministers wedded to non-violence ought to feel embarrassed by such arrangements. This would mean a lot of saving.

But who will heed my advice? Nevertheless I cannot remain silent as I do not want to be an unprotesting witness to what is taking place around me in the country today. It is up to the Bihar of Dr. Rajendra Prasad to set an example in this regard.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 227-8

287. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

PATNA,
April 19, 1947

I intended to talk to you about two letters that I have received. One of the letters is written by a Bihari gentleman. He has mentioned his name but not his address. He writes: "There is no doubt about your being a great man. Everyone calls you Mahatma. And you are a god because people worship you. Who would challenge you in politics?" Poor Chanakya's[1] spirit must be running from place to place in fear! Then he suggests that I should retire to the Himalayas. He asks me, "What is the crime of the Biharis?" Again, if the Hindus of Bihar have oppressed the Muslims, why don't I look at the Punjab where the Muslims are perpetrating so much tyranny? He says I am turning the Hindus into cowards. The other letter is from a woman from the Punjab, well known to me from her very young days. She tells me that she had till now believed in my creed of non-violence but believes in it no longer. Her letter expresses her anguish. Then she goes on to say that we need brave men today. Both these persons have written with great consideration. Of course they are both angry. The second chapter of the *Gita* says: "Wrath breeds stupefaction, stupefaction leads to loss of memory, loss of memory ruins reason and ruin of reason spells utter destruction."[2]

[1] Also known as Kautilya; Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya and author of *Arthashastra*, a treatise on politics

[2] II. 63

Those who are possessed by anger would find even my plain words harsh. It is said that women's honour can be protected if their menfolk are brave and always keep their swords drawn. But let me tell you this is not true. Even if there are millions of brave men around, strife persists in the world. Even if India's 400 million men turn brave nothing can be expected to happen, unless the women themselves become brave. When the women become brave no one will dare raise his eyes to them. You have seen how the people of Champaran suffered hardships for a century because of the custom of *tinkathia*. The indigo planters who ruled the province were not concerned about them at all. But when the peasants and labourers fought non-violently against their rule of terror, in six months their rule came to an end. The people of Bihar do not have to go far. They can learn a lot from Champaran.

Now, I too have signed the peace appeal along with Jinnah Saheb. God alone knows what the result will be. What I am doing in Bihar today is something which cannot be postponed or dismissed. I am serving Bihar more this time than I did during the Champaran days. I appeal to you to give up this madness and make genuine atonement which will help Bihar raise the reputation of the whole country and set an example to the world.

The meetings of the Charkha Sangh and the Talimi Sangh will be held from today and will continue for the next four or five days. Today was the first meeting of the Charkha Sangh. I want to tell you something about khadi. The late Jamnalal Bajaj had started the khadi work while I was still in prison. He had also set up the Khadi Board. In the early days khadi was given primary importance in the Congress. But later the parliamentary programme was given priority and the constructive programme secondary importance. Khadi was made the centre of the constructive programme. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru called khadi "the livery of freedom"[1]. Our flag also carries the emblem of the charkha. From the time the Congress evolved its flag I had been saying that we would win swaraj with the help of the charkha. Today it appears that the British rule over India would end more or less within the next twelve months. The British soldiers will also leave the country. The British could stay on in free India but as our friends, as servants of India. Whether people accept it or not, khadi has contributed greatly towards our freedom. Had all the people truly believed in khadi, every Indian would have

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXV, pp. 446 & 473.

been wearing khadi today, and there would not have been a single textile mill in the country. Khadi found a place in the Congress, but we did not give it the place in our hearts we ought to have. Today the khadi work is progressing very well and because of khadi several crores of rupees have gone to poor men and women.

You must understand the place of khadi very well. Khadi is widely used in Bihar. But if everyone had known the real significance of khadi we would not have witnessed the madness that prevailed here. People in the Punjab, Bengal, Bombay and Ahmedabad had fallen victims to a similar madness. They are in the grip of such madness even today. The hearts of those who wear khadi should be as spotless as the khadi they wear. Had people sincerely adopted khadi they would not have let themselves be swept away by such frenzy. Khadi shows to what extent we are non-violent at heart, although God alone knows what we are truly at heart. But we ourselves cannot know our own hearts. He who does is the wise one. There is a saying in English that he who knows himself knows all. This means that we do not know ourselves.

Khadi is a symbol of non-violence. Hence, right from the time khadi came into vogue I have been saying that khadi ought to spread to the seven lakhs of villages of India. Once I was asked if khadi, being a sacred thing, could be used by prostitutes. I said it could be. Khadi is for wearing as food is for eating, whether by the pure or the impure.

Those who wear khadi should never commit an impure act. You might say that there would be barely half a dozen such individuals in the country. That is why I say that everyone should wear khadi. Today people wearing khadi caps are respected. They make their way into the assemblies and the Congress. Some people even deceive others by wearing khadi. I have heard that in Bihar people wearing khadi have even committed murders. Today we do not give khadi the respect due to it. That is why such things have been happening.

Khadi is a symbol of non-violence. Man makes God in his own image. God makes man, no doubt; but man also makes God. The God of the murderers prompts them to commit murders. We have made great efforts to make khadi the symbol of non-violence. In spite of my being a member of the Charkha Sangh, I must admit that even though much work has been done to propagate khadi, much more remains to be done.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar— III, pp. 21-4

288. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

PATNA,
April 20, 1947

CHI. AMRIT,

I have your letter. I am quite clear that Dr. Ambedkar's[1] demands cannot be conceded. Please look up what is known as MacDonald Award[2] at the Round Table Conference which was born of a wicked conspiracy against Indian nationalism. For the first time it created a division amongst Hindus and Hindus while granting separate electorates for the so-called scheduled classes. It was against this vivisection of Hindu society that I had prophesied revolt.[3] As a result reservation of seats was very considerably increased and primary elections were separated but the total separation was undone. In my opinion this was the utmost that could be conceded to the separatist tendency and the attempt to break up Hinduism. The opposition and the influence of caste Hindus in joint electorates is in my opinion nonsensical. Joint electorate means the influence of the party with which the electorate becomes joined. Such evil as there is in joint electorate can be obviated only by right type of education and enlightenment. If Dr. Ambedkar's objections were upheld for any length of time, be it ever so little, it would undermine Hinduism. The fear of boycott, therefore, should produce no consternation.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3704. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6513

[1] B. R. Ambedkar

[2] Announced on August 17, 1932. *Vide* Vol. L, pp. 383-4.

[3] *Vide* Vol. XLVIII, p. 298. Gandhiji went on fast against the Award on September 20, 1932 and broke it on September 26. *Vide* Vol. LI.

289. REMARK TO MANU GANDHI

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 20, 1947

If there is some misunderstanding I expect you also to remove it and bring about reconciliation.[1] You have this ability in you and should make use of it. Mahadev was like that. This is an ordinary matter. Mahadev had an amazing capacity to reconcile the parties even in serious matters. Pyarelal too can do that. But this quality deserves to be cultivated particularly by women, for I have no doubt that if women develop this quality, they can serve the nation through the families or the communities to which they belong.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 231

290. TALK WITH WORKERS[2]

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 20, 1947

I give more importance to cultural education than to knowledge of the three R's. Good cultural background should be evident from the minutest detail of children's daily behaviour—from the way they sit, talk and dress, and so on.

I go a step further. In a poor country not a single pie should be spent unnecessarily, otherwise no distinction would be felt between our Government and the British Government.[3] Even a foreign pin should not be used in our offices. If we need pins we should use Indian pins, or else do without them, i.e., we should stitch papers together with needle and thread. This is only by way of an illustration. I go even to the extent of saying that Ministers and Governors should take a vow along with their

[1] Two workers of the Talimi Sangh who had called on Gandhiji earlier had been complaining against each other.

[2] The Gujarati version in *Biharni Komi Agman* has been collated with the account in *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*.

[3] The workers had sought Gandhiji's opinion regarding the use of the A.I.V.I.A. products by the various Ministries.

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oath of allegiance that they will insist on only swadeshi goods being used for their personal and office requirements.

But who listens to me today? Maybe I am growing old and perhaps even senile. (Bapu laughed heartily.)

If I were the Chief Minister of Bihar, my first act would be to make the wearing of khadi compulsory for all Government servants and the people at large, not by purchasing it from the khadi shops but by making it a rule that no ration-card holder would be entitled to draw his ration unless he span for half an hour daily.

It was clear to him, he said, that if they all learnt to spin and to weave, India could not only become self-sufficient in the matter of cloth without dependence upon mills but could even clothe the world. It was simple arithmetic. And if knowing all that, they could not get even that much done, what were the Ministers good for and what was their statecraft worth ? He was afraid, they had developed the habit of making simple things which admitted of very simple solutions unnecessarily difficult and complicated. What they needed was not costly and elaborate machinery or highly paid technicians and experts, but plain common sense, combined with the will to go down to the masses, share their lives, think in their terms and win their confidence. They should teach them by personal example how they could in the immediate present provide themselves with what they so sorely needed but had hitherto lacked. The masses would instinctively feel that the era of the common man had arrived.

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 231-2, and *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 123

291. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

PATNA,
April 20, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today again I shall talk to you about khadi. The second meeting of the Charkha Sangh was held today. Had I been your Chief Minister like Shri Babu and had I been in a position to have ministers of my choice I would have told you plainly that you would get no mill-cloth. I would have asked you to provide your own clothing. I would have given you all facilities for the purpose. I would have provided you cotton, spinning-wheels and all the other things. I would have also arranged for the repair of the spinning-wheels when they went

wrong. And I would have told you that you had to make your own clothing as also your own slivers and weave the cloth as the Assamese women do. Assamese girls cannot find grooms unless they learn weaving. But the weaving in Assam is very poor. Assam grows a lot of cotton but it is not of good quality. However, things are improving now. The Trustees of the Charkha Sangh are very efficient and they are now introducing changes to improve the weaving. If our country can make good progress in weaving, we would be able to clothe the whole world because ours is a vast country. In the past we used to import Japanese textiles in large quantities. But now Japan is almost out of the picture. Even Great Britain does not produce enough cloth to meet the requirement of the whole world. Just as we arrange to cook our own food at home we should also do the same to meet our requirement of clothes. At one time it used to be so in our country. It was so during the medieval period. We often call it the dark age, but I do not agree. No doubt there were some disgraceful practices prevalent then. But we cannot describe the present age, either, as the age of truth. Today the black market thrives throughout the world. We should not close our eyes to the remarkable features of that age by calling it a dark age. Let us forget its bad points and follow the good ones. Even today, if we start substituting home-made *roti* by the biscuits manufactured in Britain or in India, we are going to ruin our health. As in the case of food, we should stop getting our clothing too from outside. Had I been in Shri Babu's place, I would put a stop to black markets. No accounts are kept for the *roti* cooked in the house. The flour is made in the house and so also the *roti*. In the same manner, we would provide a charkha to everybody and there would be cloth for everybody. But no one is going to make me a minister! I have to address my words to those who are already occupying the ministerial chairs. I would tell them that no new textile mill should be set up in Bihar. The existing mills should not be burnt down, but all the cloth produced by them should be exported. In this way people all over the world would be happy and would praise us for sending to them finished textile goods while opting for hand-woven material for ourselves. Thus we should earn as much foreign exchange as possible. But if we let black-marketing flourish even in this trade the result would be bad. Even now if the people resolve to manage with a few clothes only and cut down their requirement, something can be achieved. Today Bihar has been left completely free. It means now the work has been decentralized.

The work of the Charkha Sangh in Bihar is now being looked after by Lakshmi Babu and his colleagues who have been entrusted with the entire Charkha Sangh work in the province. They may produce as much cloth as they like. They may work with the help of Shri Babu and his colleagues so that khadi is produced in the villages and consumed locally.

You might ask what the people of Patna would have for themselves. But the villagers can provide khadi for the citizens of Patna too. But even if they do not you can produce your own khadi if you wish. There are many schools and colleges here where boys and girls go to study. The boys go to study the English language but hardly achieve anything worth while. They may obtain the M.A. or B.A. degrees, but most of them cannot write English. They just manage to speak a little English, and consider themselves great. If all the students learn spinning and weaving for an hour or two daily they would be doing all the work themselves in a few days. If even those who are not studying give an hour or two to khadi work while sitting idle at home they can produce more khadi than they would need. Khadi does not need coercion. If you do this work voluntarily, you can produce khadi of every kind. The village people have been exploited enough. The townspeople consume the cloth produced by them. But I wish villagers to consume the cloth they produce. It should be so even for the townspeople.

Everything that goes with the mills comes from outside; so much so that even the spindle of the mill's spinning-wheel is not produced here. The textile engineers also come from outside. But all the components of the charkha can be produced here. If khadi is woven in the villages, every village can become self-sufficient and meet its own requirements of food and clothing.

Bihar is now free from [the supervision of] the Charkha Sangh. Lakshmi Babu will demonstrate how decentralization works. If he fails I shall ask him if the people of Bihar are capable only of plunder and massacre and can do nothing good.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Samachar, 21-4-1947

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292. LETTER TO SUDHIR AND SHANTI GHOSH[1]

PATNA,
April 21, 1947

CHI. SUDHIR AND SHANTI,[2]

I have had all your letters. The work in front of me leaves little room for correspondence that is not absolutely necessary. I have little to say to you. I have to listen to what you may have to say. You must have seen all I had to do with the Viceroy. We have come to like one another. Events will show of what he is made. He is certainly working hard as behoves a naval man.

Both of you are on your trial there. I have no doubt you will come out well through the ordeal. How is Shanti keeping in health ? What is she learning there?

My work is very difficult. I have no business to grumble. When I approached it, I knew the difficulty. I suppose you are getting some Indian papers.

Give my love to Agatha[3] and other friends. I do hope Carl Heath is better.

Love to you both.

BAPU[4]

SHRI SUDHIR GHOSH
INDIA HOUSE, ALDWYCH, W. 62
LONDON, S.W. 1

Sudhir Ghosh Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

[1] A copy of this letter sent to the addressee carries the following post-script in Gandhiji's hand : "This is a copy of the letter that was posted to you yesterday stupidly to the wrong address. Not wishing to run the risk of delay I had the text copied out. The original was written in my own hand."
Later the original letter was also received by the addressee.
[2] The superscription is in the Devanagari script.
[3] Agatha Harrison
[4] The subscription is in the Devanagari script.

293. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

PATNA,
April 21, 1947

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

Please do not worry about Manu in the least. Her mind has improved considerably, but not to my satisfaction. I think her health depends on her mind. She seems to be keeping back something, but I have not been able to understand what. Perhaps she herself does not understand. I think of her all the time. My hopes are very high. This is enough for today.

Pyarelal is working hard in Noakhali. But we do not understand why he has not written to anybody here. I see that Manu's mind is completely normal now.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

294. LETTER TO MADALASA

PATNA,
April 21, 1947

CHI. MADU,

I have your letter. Radhakisan[1] and Jajuji are here. You know there was a meeting of the Charkha Sangh.

Get rid of your unsteadiness and your stupidity. If you submerge yourself in Shriman your own self will be revealed to you. For you there is no other way but this. Have you understood this man who signed a blank sheet for you?[2]

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, pp. 332-3

[1] Radhakrishna Bajaj

[2] The addressee's husband, Shriman Narayan, had given her a signed blank sheet, when she asked him for a reward, to be filled in by her at will.

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295. A NOTE

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 21, 1947

Saralabehn[1] is the wife of a mill-owner but she has embraced poverty for the sake of the country and that too not under any pressure but voluntarily. It can be truly said of her that there is no woman equal to her in India. She ought to be taken on the Board of Trustees[2] because then alone the attitude of mill-owners will undergo the change I desire. I know that my friends in the Charkha Sangh will not agree with me. Saralabehn perhaps is the first woman among Gujaratis who is rendering service silently. She is a good worker and an equally efficient housewife. She is the wife of a millionaire but she is the living image of simplicity and sacrifice.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 234

296. LETTER TO SARALADEVI A. SARABHAI

April 21, 1947

The day before yesterday the Board of Trustees discussed your name. They were nearly unanimous that at a time when khadi was under a cloud and when the khadi policy was obviously operating against the mills, the inclusion of the wife of a textile king on the Board was sure to cause an uproar. In spite of it the Board of Trustees might have agreed to your appointment if I had insisted on it. I refused to ask for a favour in this manner. The Trustees were happy. I therefore withdrew your name. But my calculation in this case went slightly awry. I have often of late noticed that my word does not carry weight with my co-workers and colleagues as it once used to do. In a way it pleases me. Maybe, I was stifling their reason before and it has now found its freedom! Or, is my thinking out of tune with the

[1] Wife of Ambalal Sarabhai
[2] Of the A.I.S.A.

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times? Be that as it may, I have fully opened my mind to you. Such is my regard for your purity. What I expect of you is that you will continue to take interest in developing the science of khadi as if you were actually a trustee of the Spinners' Association and belie the doubts and fears of the sceptics by showing to them that the wife of a mill-owner can be as much a lover of khadi as the most ardent of khadi workers.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 234-5

297. A LETTER

April 21, 1947

The kind of work which had to be done before attaining independence was different and now that swaraj is on its way we need the co-operation of each and every Indian to carry on the affairs of the nation. For instance, Girijashankar Bajpai. You do know, don't you, how in 1942 he had circulated blatant lies regarding Ba's death, not to mention those about me. But now we ought to utilize his talents. And it is being done. This is how organizations for the constructive programme should function. It is essential that everyone should give up past prejudices and contribute one's mite in laying the foundation of a strong country. That is why I wanted . . .[1] to be taken on the Board of Trustees.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 236-7

298. A LETTER

April 21, 1947

The words "I have lost interest in everything" are not proper. One who regularly recites Ramanama cannot say any such thing. Where is happiness? Where is unhappiness? What is happiness? What is unhappiness? Are you rendering service? I see no obligation for you to go to Gujrat[2]. I would have gone

[1] Omission as in the source. The reference is to Saralabehn Sarabhai; *vide* the preceding item.

[2] A district in the Punjab

but I was prevailed upon not to go. I shall talk about it some other time. If I could fulfil my duty here, it will certainly have an impact on Gujrat, rather, on the whole world.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Biharni Komi Agman, p. 236

299. A LETTER

April 21, 1947

Why were you worried by the young man's vulgar words? If you are a brave woman you will die before anyone molests you. We are all prepared to die; that alone is our duty. You have the armour in the form of Ramanama. How can you have any fear? . . .[1]

[From Gujarati]
Biharni Komi Agman, p. 236

300. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

PATNA,
April 21, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I have your letter.

(1) It is necessary to make arrangements for rehabilitation, but if the Government or the Muslims do nothing what can we do ?

(2) What work can we possibly offer if the Government extends no help?

(3) It is my firm belief that we will not get mill yarn. What little [yarn] we might get will not serve our purpose. We should produce hand-spun yarn. The weavers should spin themselves and so should others.

(4) If all the detenus are released we should not bother about bringing an action. It is outside our field.

(5) I read Abha's letter. I attach no importance to it. Dr. Mahmud has arrived there. Let us see what he does.

[1] Omission as in the source

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I am eager to go there. I am watching the situation here.

Will it be better if I write in English? I can also get Sailen to write in Bengali. I shall do as you say.

What shall I write about Amiya ?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9076

301. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

April 21, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today also I wish to speak to you about khadi. Its secret lies in hand-spun yarn. Spinning used to be the occupation of women who were regarded as slaves. Who would pay the poor souls the wage that was their due ? In the middle ages women were compelled to spin for a mere pittance. Except in Assam, weaving everywhere was considered to be man's occupation. Weaving has survived even today, but if hand-spinning is not revived weaving too is certain to die out in course of time.

If every man and woman does not regard spinning as his or her dharma, that is, does not do carding, or make slivers and spin himself or herself, khadi is bound to die. I shall not call it khadi if a few wear it by way of fashion. My definition of khadi is that it should replace mill-cloth throughout India. I do not have the words to describe the strength it is bound to generate.

This will remain but a dream if men do not spin by way of atonement and the injustice done to women does not cease. The wages payable to women for an hour's spinning should be the same as are paid to men. There should be no inequality in the wages paid to men and women. The times have changed when man was regarded as woman's master. That we do not admit this is a different matter. God has made man and woman one complete whole. One must not lord over the other. An endeavour is being made to establish this truth through khadi.

Time will come when a mill-owner's wife will herself become a worker and a carding woman. Then there will be no need

[1] It being Gandhiji's silence day, his written speech was read out.

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for mill-cloth. Women should prepare themselves to hasten the advent of such a day.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Samachar, 24-4-1947

302. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 21, 1947

I am against machines just because they deprive men of their employment and render them jobless. I oppose them not because they are machines but because they create unemployment.

That boy will grow into a courageous, healthy and service-minded boy, provided he gets a wholesome environment.[1] His body as well as his mind will develop in right proportion. He will be free of any fraud or immorality. Staying in the village he will serve the villagers and will be content to live on the subsistence provided by the villagers. Through his service and the knowledge acquired by him he will provide proper guidance to the people around him and thus train more young men. I expect that a student trained under the Nayee Talim would develop on these lines.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 238

303. A LETTER[2]

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 22, 1947

Excessive liberty leads to terrible consequences. Those who wish to go in for a love-marriage may get engaged provided they have their elders' approval but should avoid any personal contact for at least three years and should continue doing their respective work during that period. I have no doubt that young men and women who act on these lines are bound to be happy in life.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 239-40

[1] Manu Gandhi had asked how a boy would shape if he got training under the Nayee Talim up to the age of 14-16 without going to any school.

[2] The addressee wanted to marry a college mate of hers.

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304. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

PATNA,
April 22, 1947

CHI. BRAJKISAN,

I have your two letters. My going there is not certain. Do not believe the newspapers.

If I invite the Socialists there will be an outcry in the country. It would be better that Jayaprakash sees me whenever necessary. The whole situation is getting out of hand. No one knows how it can be remedied. You should not worry. It will be as God wishes.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I got the list.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 2502

305. LETTER TO GOVIND DAS

PATNA,
April 22, 1947

BHAI GOVINDDASJI,

I have your letter. Congratulations on getting a grandson. May your grandson have a long life and may he become a true worker.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI GOVIND DAS
RAJA GOKULDAS MAHAL
JUBBULPORE, C.P.

From a photostat of the Hindi: C. W. 10422. Courtesy: Seth Govind Das

306. DISCUSSION AT HINDUSTANI TALIMI SANGH MEETING

PATNA,
April 22, 1947

ZAKIR HUSAIN[1]: In the morning session we heard the reports from the provinces. The budget was sanctioned and the question of how much aid we should seek from the Government was discussed.

GANDHIJI: The Government would be prepared to give us as much as we ask for. But the very move to seek Government aid would mean the end of Nayee Talim.

ZAKIR HUSAIN: No, the question was only regarding the students' fees. The point under discussion was how many students should we admit. If we take more students it will naturally help us in meeting the expenses but then we would be ruining our cause.

GANDHIJI: Of course, that is obvious. We should take only as many students as we want—not more. I have quite a few things to say about the budget. I would like Ashadevi and Aryanayakum to sit and discuss it with me and make whatever alterations they possibly can in it. After three years nothing should be expected either from me or from anyone else. If we fail to achieve this, Nayee Talim will not work. If you want to make it self-supporting you should prepare your budget accordingly. And if at the end of three years we do not succeed we will have to declare our bankruptcy before the country. We should not keep silent lest we lose the credit we have earned. True credit lies in success.

ZAKIR HUSAIN: We have received a request from Madras[2] that the Talimi Sangh should run a school there. The Government is prepared to bear its expenses. They have asked for Ramachandran to take up the responsibility of conducting Nayee Talim under the Ministry.

GANDHIJI: Ramachandran hasn't come, has he? I shall have to talk with him about this. As regards the school we should take up the task only if we are capable of fulfilling it, otherwise we shall be putting the Government in a fix. Today we

[1] President, Hindustani Talimi Sangh
[2] From Avinashilingam, Education Minister

have our ministries and crores of rupees have come into our hands. We can spend the amount any way we like. If our own conscience does not question it, perhaps no one else would. This can work for a year or two. But in the absence of any concrete achievement it is not going to last long. I would, therefore, advise you to accept this responsibility only if you feel you are competent enough to shoulder it. If we are not, we ought to admit that we can teach [Nayee Talim] only at our centre and that the provinces are beyond our reach. Instructors from Madras are welcome to come and have a look at the work going on at Sevagram.

Our system of education has three aspects. It leads to the development of the mind, the body and the soul. The ordinary system cares only for the development of the mind. Our system, I claim, purifies the mind and is conducive to its harmonious development. Moreover, it provides nourishment to the soul as well. What does it matter if we do not impart religious instruction? Religious teaching—that again from books—is not indispensable for the soul. Through practice we shall teach the boys the noble principles from all the religions.

Nayee Talim is not confined to teaching spinning and sweeping. Though indispensable, these in themselves are not sufficient for our purpose. We shall have to give them up unless they promote the development of the soul. Here I am engaged in other tasks. But Nayee Talim has never been out of my mind.

The charkha occupied an important place much before Nayee Talim was even conceived of. I knew almost nothing about the charkha when I first referred to it in South Africa in 1908. It was only later on that I learnt more about it. Afterwards came the days of civil disobedience and the Ali Brothers, and the charkha continued to hold an important place. Yesterday in my prayer meeting[1] I had drawn before you the picture of khadi as I visualize it. Khadi of my conception is that which can take the place of all mill-cloth. I would not insist on including khadi in Nayee Talim, if you could suggest some other means for the eradication of poverty. In that case I would gladly admit my mistake. I had discussed this point with Vinoba, Krishnadas[2] and Narandas. To me it is a simple calculation. I feel that if everyone spins for an hour daily all would be able to have the cloth required. If, however, it would require six hours a day from everybody to achieve this, khadi was bound to perish. For people have

[1] *Vide* pp. 325-6.

[2] Son of Chhaganlal Gandhi

to do other work also. They have to produce food and do some intellectual work as well. Moreover, Nayee Talim would lose its meaning if one was ever to toil like a bullock under it. An hour spent in spinning is an hour of self-development for the spinner. When Saiyidain Saheb[1] said that at least in the post-basic stage the mechanical processes in the mills would have to be taught, I could not accept it. I hold that if khadi is sound as a foundation for basic education, it ought to be further developed during the post-basic stage. Yesterday Dev Prakash showed me an article which he had written on the *takli* and the broom. He has done some work under Nayee Talim. If all that he writes is true, a lot of knowledge—including the knowledge of higher engineering—can be gained through Nayee Talim. But only when we have assimilated all this knowledge can we impart it to others. We have not evolved the science of these essential crafts. The British cloth mills evolved out of our *takli* and loom. They planned the mills because they wanted to exploit us. We do not want to exploit anyone. We do not, therefore, need mills, but we must build up the science of the *takli* and the loom. If India were to copy Europe in this matter, it would mean destruction for India and the world. Of course, if you are in favour of mills then let us talk about them.

ZAKIR HUSAIN: [The difficulty is that] the boys who graduate from our schools look to the mills for employment.

GANDHIJI: The boys that will come out of the school of my conception will not look to the mills for employment. As a matter of fact mill-cloth should not sell side by side with khadi. Our mills may export their manufactures. In Lancashire you do not get the cloth manufactured there. The whole of it is exported. But perhaps our mills may not be able to sell their product for long even in foreign markets.

You are right when you say that you cannot help it if the whole atmosphere around is surcharged with the idea of mill-cloth, and even our own ministers are interested in opening mills. The way for us is to die in living up to our faith. If we believe in the truth of khadi we must spread it and convince the ministers that we are doing the right thing and will continue to do so. We are not going to accept defeat. The Congress created the Talimi Sangh but never took any interest in it. Similarly the Congress was instrumental in setting up the Charkha Sangh but it never

[1] Khwaja Ghulam Saiyidain

adopted its programme. Who cares for these institutions today? When Congressmen had a little money and some experience they paid some attention to the constructive work. No doubt, they did some constructive work too. Today, however, the entire Government has come into their hands. They have not yet digested the power it has brought. They will take time to do so.

ZAKIR HUSAIN: We are faced with a great difficulty. To run a school under Nayee Talim means bringing about a new order. Moreover, all the power is in the hands of the ministers who do not fully share our views.

GANDHIJI: No doubt about it. After all schools in the cities cannot be created out of nothing.

ZAKIR HUSAIN: Either you help to co-ordinate the activities of the Government and the Sangh or let us be on our own.

GANDHIJI: I confess I no longer command the same influence as I used to. I do not blame the Government for this. They have inherited a set machinery which they have to work. If I had been a minister, perhaps, I too would have acted similarly. Still, I am talking things over with Jawaharlalji and others. I have to talk and convince them about the work of the Talimi Sangh, haven't I? I pray to God either to call me to Himself or endow my words with such power that they are able to carry conviction to the people and their representatives.

You should give up Nayee Talim if you do not believe that it is full of potentialities. Some people come to tell me that now my work is over. So far ahimsa was followed but now the time has come for me to leave. They are not going to listen to me any more.

ZAKIR HUSAIN: But Bapuji, the Congress ought to have explained its policy regarding the Talimi Sangh to the ministers. It never did. I met Maulana Saheb before coming here. He had expressed sympathy and said that he would like to meet the Sangh. The Sangh has now decided to see him.

GANDHIJI: They should have invited you before this. Let Mr. Sargeant[1] work but he should work under your guidance. In fact I have advised them to invite Zakir Husain Saheb and suggested that only after discussing things with him should they plan their work.

ZAKIR HUSAIN: We feel that with a little effort it could have been done but we never did make that effort.

[1] Sir John Sargeant, Educational Adviser to Government of India

GANDHIJI: Today the whole machinery of the Congress is crumbling into pieces. Everyone does not realize it but I do.

ZAKIR HUSAIN: In my view facilities should be provided and time apportioned for religious education in our schools, so as to enable those well versed in religion to come and teach there. If the Government decides to undertake more than this it would only increase misunderstanding and friction. Supposing Maulana Saheb prepares the curriculum, not everyone will be prepared to accept it.

GANDHIJI: You should talk it over with Maulana Saheb. I do not subscribe to the view that the Government should provide religious education. If there are some Mussalmans who want to give religious education of the wrong type, you cannot prevent it. If you try to do so, the result can only be bad. Those who want to give religious education, without expecting any remuneration for it, may do so on their own. We will only teach ethics based on the fundamental principles of all religions.

ARYANAYAKUM: One more question remains to be discussed. We have to grant certificates to the boys who have just completed their seven years' course. What should we state in the certificate and what name should we give it?

GANDHIJI: Please prepare a draft in Hindustani and have it in both the scripts so that it is understood by all. Clearly state the boy's qualifications in it. Supposing we mention that our boy is more qualified than a matriculate, we have to be specific about it. The name should correspond with the qualification certified therein. Giving a thing a high-sounding name when its worth does not correspond to it reflects no credit on the giver.

ZAKIR HUSAIN: We may certify that the boy has completed a full course of basic education.

GANDHIJI: I would rather have a precise word for it just as the Hindi [Sahitya] Sammelan has precise names for its different diplomas.

AVINASHILINGAM: Though the Talimi Sangh follows the policy of co-education, we in the South do not want to introduce it there.

GANDHIJI: In that case you have the option to say that as it will not be convenient for you to adopt Nayee Talim fully in Madras you will be implementing it only partially. If you have co-education in your schools, but not in your training schools, the children will think there is something wrong somewhere.

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AVINASHILINGAM: I think there is no harm if we have co-education among the grown-ups, when they know their own minds. But, in my view, it is not proper for girls of 15 or 16 when they join our training camps.

ZAKIR HUSAIN: The Sangh has not made co-education obligatory for the training schools.

GANDHIJI: Your (Avinashilingam's) arguments, I am afraid, fail to convince me. Even if my children have a tendency to go astray, I would let them run the risk. We shall have to rid ourselves one day of this sex mentality. We should not seek examples from the West. Even in the training schools if the teachers are competent, pure and filled with the spirit of Nayee Talim there is no danger. If, unfortunately, some accidents do take place, we should not be frightened. They are bound to be.

ZAKIR HUSAIN: We are not familiar with the conditions prevailing in Madras. If you feel that the atmosphere there is not favourable for co-education you should wait till it changes in its favour. For the time being you can send your girls to Sevagram.

AVINASHILINGAM: Another difficulty facing us is that we do not have the requisite literature for Nayee Talim. If we can have it ready at one place, it can be adjusted according to the needs of the different provinces. The Talimi Sangh should take up this task. It can get the blocks made at cheaper rates, have the pictures printed and do such other jobs.

ARYANAYAKUM: There were ten such persons, among those who attended our last training camp, who were competent to produce the literature. Two of them are in Madras. Let us have them for this job.

AVINASHILINGAM: With your permission I would suggest that these books should have beautiful get-up.

GANDHIJI: Basic education does not imply work of inferior quality.

AVINASHILINGAM: The books should have such a get-up that they attract the children by their very appearance.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 9-11-1947

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307. TALK WITH BIHAR MINISTERS

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 22, 1947

I am seriously considering what is my dharma in the present circumstances. Nevertheless, it is my firm belief that God will show me the way through it all. What I say regarding non-violence has no impact today. I do appreciate the love people shower on me. But the only way for me to return that love is that I should place before the world the truth as revealed to me by God. We adopted the weapon of non-violence to drive away the powerful British Government from India. Now if we resort to violence against our own brethren we will be regarded as cowards and will be condemned by the world. You are wearing crowns of thorns on your heads, not of diamonds and pearls.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 243

308. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

April 22, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Till yesterday I talked to you about khadi because the meetings of the Charkha Sangh were being held all this time. Today there was a meeting of the body formed for Nayee Talim, viz., the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. I wish to tell you about Nayee Talim today. Through you it would be known to the people of Bihar and then the information would spread throughout India. Nayee Talim is now seven years old. There is Congress rule in many provinces. In some provinces[1] the Muslim League is in power. But actually, in all provinces, it is the people who rule.

The Congress introduced the Nayee Talim. Actually the Nayee Talim scheme was prepared some time earlier, but the Congress put its own stamp on it. Let us assume that where

[1] Namely, Bengal and Sind

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the Congress is in power the scheme of Nayee Talim would be carried out by its own workers. We shall carry it out since we have decided to do so. Even if the Congress does not adopt it, those who have accepted Nayee Talim would carry it out. Others would follow if they are convinced.

Now if everyone in Bihar understands how Nayee Talim works, no other scheme can be implemented. If we teach khadi work to all the boys and girls according to the Nayee Talim scheme we shall be able to produce khadi without difficulty. And then Nayee Talim includes many other things as well. People say that the Congress does not carry out all those things. The Charkha Sangh and the Hindustani Talimi Sangh are the Congress organizations; then, why does the Congress not carry out those things? For the present I do not wish to go into this controversy. During the day today the Nayee Talim workers held a meeting. Dr. Zakir Husain was also present. Zakir Saheb is all in all at the Jamia Millia.[1] He has also received training abroad. Without his whole-hearted devotion the Jamia Millia could not be run as it is run now. The Jamia Millia came into being during the Non-co-operation days, when we had called upon boys and girls to come out of their schools and colleges. During those days the trustees of the Aligarh Muslim University said that the students were free to leave the University if they wished. A large number of Muslim students then gave up studies. Then came the problem of their future. It was then that the Jamia Millia was born. I also played some part in it. The Ali Brothers were then with us. Zakir Saheb was not there. But people had their eyes on him. When he came he took upon himself the responsibility and developed Jamia Millia into a great institution.

Aryanayakum and Asha Devi of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh have also come here. Nayee Talim includes a great many things. I shall not talk about all of them. Nayee Talim means training our boys and girls through the medium of such handicrafts as are to be found in India and thus contributing to their growth and development. There should be harmonious development of the body, mind and soul. If everyone is given this type of training, there would be no fighting among ourselves such as is going on in the country today. Countries like England, Germany, Japan, Italy, etc., rely on the sword. Hence training of their children also follows the same pattern. You

[1] He was the Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia.

would be convinced if I explained all the points to you. These countries train their people in the light of the course they want them to follow. Under such training there is almost no scope for spiritual development. It emphasizes only physical development and the people with such training are appointed to high posts in the army and the government departments.

We have followed the opposite course here. We followed the path of non-co-operation and achieved our aim through non-violence and truth. This in itself was Nayee Talim. When I called upon students to come out of their educational institutions I hardly had an idea about what was to be done with them. When we attained power, which was hardly of any use, I thought about our course of action and then we hit upon Nayee Talim and it came into being.[1] The most wonderful thing about Nayee Talim is that under this scheme the students have to spend nothing on their training. Another remarkable thing is that it is self-supporting, i.e., it does not need funds from outside to run it. I shall elaborate on this point tomorrow. Only if everyone understands the importance of Nayee Talim, it can become true training. It does not need investment of crores of rupees. It is said that we would require crores of rupees if we try to train everyone in the country. But, in my view, it is futile to talk in terms of millions and billions of rupees. That is not the way to go about training 400 million people. From where are we going to get so much money? Nayee Talim has so many possibilities that it costs nothing [to carry it on]. These days education costs a lot, but true Nayee Talim is one which would be self-supporting.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Samachar, 24-4-1947

[1] The Hindustani Talimi Sangh was formed on April 23, 1938.

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309. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

PATNA,
April 23, 1947

DEAR DAUGHTER,

I have your two letters. What you say is not right. I can say what I had said in Delhi laying stress on what was reported from Kanti and Devdas. I never bestow undeserved praise still. I will say nothing about you, if you cannot stand what I say.[1]

Your stomach must return to normal. It is imperative to boil the water. Utensils should be cleaned with boiling water.

Abha should consider it a sin to remain in ignorance. How long will she stay with you?

As desired by you, I tore up your letter of yesterday. Your second letter is good.

If the Muslims have cleansed their hearts and the Hindus have regained confidence as you say, there can be no cause for worry. But then what about the reports from Satis Babu? Did you have a talk with Satis Babu?

Sita and Sumi[2] are here. Today Sita is going to Akola.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 582

310. TALK WITH MUSLIM LEAGUE MEMBERS

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 23, 1947

If the League wants to make progress it has to change its objective. I request you to search your conscience. Although the League has joined the Interim Government,[3] still things are not running as smoothly as they should when two brothers

[1] According to a report in *Harijan*, referring to the addressee in his prayer speech on April 8 Gandhiji had said she was "physically frail but a true Muslim and a Hindu too".

[2] Sumitra, Ramdas Gandhi's daughter

[3] The Muslim League had joined the Interim Government on October 26, 1946.

work in perfect unison. If you are true representatives of the League you should frankly tell Jinnah Saheb or Liaquat Ali Saheb that they are going in the wrong direction; only then you would be serving the League faithfully. Noakhali, Bengal and the Punjab are still witnessing massacres by Muslims. I do not deny that Hindus too are perpetrating such crimes, but both Jawaharlal and I have been strongly condemning their misdeeds and publicly appealing to them to desist. Has any representative of the League made any such appeal to Muslims? Let the leaders fight if they want Pakistan. But how is it possible to carry on if everyone takes the law into his hands? Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah Saheb has given the assurance that full protection would be given to the minority community. But I must tell you that so far this assurance has not been fulfilled. I claim to be a faithful friend of all and I have to prove that friendship. It is my sincere appeal to you to treat Hindus as your own brethren. It will lead to your progress.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 244-5

311. DISCUSSION AT HINDUSTANI TALIMI SANGH MEETING

PATNA,
April 23, 1947

ZAKIR HUSAIN: The report from the U.P. was read out to us. Everyone felt that we should take over the basic schools from the local boards and run them ourselves. In a way it is desirable that the local boards alone should run such schools. But you are aware how they work. Even now it is the Government that plans out the programmes whereas the local boards are expected to implement them. The local boards embezzle funds and do not make regular payments to the teachers. It would therefore be better if the Government ran these schools.

GANDHIJI: At present I know nothing about them. Only after examining the working of the local boards will I be in a position to say something on this point. Just now I won't commit myself to anything. I would only suggest that if the Government feels that it can shoulder this responsibility and the local boards are willing to hand over the schools, it should take them over.

ZAKIR HUSAIN: Then the report about the post-basic education was read out. After one month's [training] the trainees are equipped to earn 8 as. daily by working for 5 hours. Moreover, we have just commenced our work. Only after some time would it be possible to make a correct estimate about it. The third point is regarding being self-supporting on which Jajuji will speak to you.

JAJUJI: Seven years have passed since we introduced Nayee Talim. Even now it is doubtful whether the students passing out of the basic schools can be self-supporting. The wages they can earn vary from craft to craft. A student can earn two to three rupees if engaged in carpentry whereas spinning is a much less paying occupation. These days one earns much less if one does with the hands the work otherwise done in mills. They can, of course, earn 6 or 8 as. a day at the Charkha Sangh rates. But if we succeed in opening basic schools all over the country, the Charkha Sangh will not be in a position to buy all the yarn produced in these schools. Even today there is a large quantity of yarn which the Sangh is unable to buy. And we shall get very little if we sell the yarn at the market rate. The Government may buy all the yarn spun in these schools. Under such circumstances which craft, do you think, should we adopt?

GANDHIJI: We should not think in terms of money as we do now. Khadi is the centre of our activities because we all need cloth and we have before us the question of clothing the seven lakhs of villages. Today, we get our yarn woven by offering higher wages to lure the weavers. It was wrong of me not to have insisted on everybody weaving as I did in the case of spinning. It must, however, be seen that it does not require more time than can be spared for it. If it takes up all the time one can spare we shall have to think anew. The teacher under Nayee Talim will be a craftsman, not merely a wage-earner. His wife and children too must join him in his work. Only then will true co-operation be born. It would be a great achievement if we could take Nayee Talim to every village in India.

Some people ask me why agriculture could not be the centre of Nayee Talim. The answer is that through agriculture no handicraft can be taught. The function of Nayee Talim is not merely to teach an occupation, but to develop the whole man through the teaching of handicrafts. It aims at helping the students to understand the essence of life. Nayee Talim endeavours to remove the imperfections of man.

But though I do not begin with agriculture, it is bound to come in ultimately. We cannot do without it. One, of course, gets enough mental training in learning to grow fruits and vege-

tables. Moreover, we also have to grow wheat for the students and provide them milk. All this cannot be accomplished under the old system. The field of Nayee Talim is more comprehensive. It has to determine the pattern of a whole life. A teacher of Nayee Talim should be a first-class craftsman. All the boys of the village will naturally live in the village and in co-operation with the teacher produce all they need in the village itself. In this way, the education would automatically become free and universal.

Today the condition of India is such that the vegetables and fruit grown in a village are not consumed by the villagers themselves. The villagers of Travancore cannot use the coconuts that are grown there. They are collected at one place and sent to the towns. In the places where basic schools are opened the fruit grown will be first available to the villagers and then to others. Again, today we cultivate cash crops such as tobacco, cotton, indigo, etc. Those trained in Nayee Talim will cultivate crops which are essential for life.

ZAKIR HUSAIN: The All-India Congress has appointed the Constructive Programme Committee with Nayakum, Jaju, Kumarappa, Shankarrao Deo, Jugal Kishore, Prafulla Babu[1], Jairamdas Doulatram and Sucheta Kripalani as its members.[2] In a meeting of the Committee held at Allahabad it was decided that the Talimi Sangh should run a training school and a basic school for a specified area in every province.

JAJU: In accordance with the programme chalked out it was agreed that the work should be carried on by the Provincial Congress Committee, which would be allowed to raise funds for it. In this way we plan to train one lakh students in the country who will be self-supporting as regards cloth.

GANDHIJI: Today the Congress organization is not functioning smoothly. Wherever the Congress is in power, the Provincial Congress Committee and the Government should work in perfect co-operation and be a source of strength to each other. Today, each wishes to have his own way without having any regard for the other. They should work as one organic whole.

SAMPURNANAND[3]: This is not feasible. The Congress Ministries are keen to take up such tasks; you should get the work done by them. But you cannot accomplish this work through the Congress Committees. Today, the Congress Committees want to boss over the Government and this cannot be.

[1] Prafulla Chandra Ghosh. The source has "Nirmal", evidently a slip.

[2] The Committee appointed on March 7, 1947, also included R. R. Diwakar among its members.

[3] Minister for Finance and Education in the U. P.

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GANDHIJI: It might be suggested that the Government should define their area of jurisdiction. Today, we cannot raise funds from the people. They would refuse to pay as they would have already made their contributions to the Government. We should tell the Ministers that so much funds are required for such and such constructive activity. If they refuse, we should protest to them and put before the people the correct position. But we cannot ask the public to donate for the work which the Government is capable of undertaking.

AVINASHILINGAM: We do collect funds for the Harijans, don't we?

GANDHIJI: That is a different matter. It is our atonement.

AVINASHILINGAM: The Government do not have enough funds to execute all the plans.

GANDHIJI: Of course, people should take up such work as the Government cannot, and also raise funds for it.[1]

If we want to serve, our service should be in one direction alone.

We have to cross an ocean. This is the time of our trial. We have to disperse the thunder-clouds gathering from all sides. There is no better guide than the Supreme Helmsman who can help maintain the balance and steer our ship in the right direction. Therefore everyone of us should gird up his loins and be prepared to perform his duty without finding fault with others.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 9-11-1947, and *Biharni Komi Agman*, p. 246

[1] What follows is translated from the Gujarati in *Biharni Komi Agman*.

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312. TALK WITH PEACE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 23, 1947

We all want freedom. The Congress has ceaselessly striven to attain it and made tremendous sacrifices for it. I feel we have become indifferent in our loyalty to such a noble organization. If it is true, we had better disband the Congress or sever our connection with it. Do we want to let the splendid achievements of the Congress slip out of our hands? If you do not have the courage to follow the path of non-violence but whip the person who has flogged you, I can understand. But how can an Indian, being afraid of those who flog him, commit the crime of flogging the innocent by way of revenge? Even the use of violence is subject to certain rules and regulations and failure to respect them leads to one's own destruction. If I am unable to make you see this point which is clear as daylight, the fault is mine. If a man can meet death in the right manner, I would regard it as the fulfilment of his life. But the ill omens I am seeing before the advent of freedom, will lead to a greater slavery than the one you have been subjected to for the last 150 years and you will never get peace.

The peace prevailing in Bihar at present is due to the force of the military, and I do not call it peace at all. When your peace brigade is able to influence people and they realize of their own accord that every Hindu or Muslim is their brother, sister or daughter, then alone will this peace endure. But you will be able to exercise your influence only if your dedication is one hundred per cent true, otherwise it would serve no purpose. Please do nothing just to please me. You are welcome to leave me alone if my words fail to carry conviction with you. But if after joining the peace brigade its soldier continues to think of revenge of any kind whatsoever, it would deeply hurt me. If either in retaliation or to avenge some evil done, you stoop to kill people professing religions other than your own, it would be regarded as an unmanly act and you will be endangering the freedom of India.

If you want to cultivate the non-violence of the brave, you have to purify your hearts and discard cowardly thoughts from

your minds. Why should one who has adopted non-violence be afraid of anyone? He will clearly explain his viewpoint to others without losing his temper at all. Therefore if you have any doubts, you can certainly ask me or Shribabu. I am happy to see Muslim brothers here in the Peace Committee. I will advise them also to frankly state whatever they consider proper and right. They should have the courage to tell Jinnah Saheb publicly that by following the way of fighting and violence he will not be able to make Pakistan a holy land. If we continue to fight among ourselves we will have to forget freedom and some third power will come to subjugate us. Have you ever paused and thought what a golden land our India is? Instead of fighting over petty matters we should broaden our outlook. We have rich minerals, valuable metals and untold wealth of material in our country. We should make India prosperous by utilizing our time in discovering all this wealth. Instead, whither are we drifting, have you ever thought? Others will take advantage of our folly. If you have grasped what I have said, think over it and follow it in your lives. This will automatically help the people come into their own. A great moral responsibility lies on the shoulders of the workers. If you lack the requisite strength, admit it humbly otherwise carry on the responsibility you have undertaken, faithfully utilizing all your resources, physical, mental and material.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 246-8

313. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

PATNA,
April 23, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I keep my eyes closed during the prayer. Hence, I do not know if people take part in the *Ramdhun*. But Manubehn tells me that the women do not join the *Ramdhun*, nor do they beat time correctly. Those who come for the prayer meeting must abide by the rules of the gathering. *Ramdhun* is a collective prayer. When all men and women present at the prayer collectively utter Rama's name and meditate on it, they feel the love of God kindled in their hearts. If all the people do not join the *Ramdhun* its purpose is not fulfilled. One must practise the *Ramdhun* even at home.

Ramdhun occupies an important place even in Nayee Talim. Nayee Talim begins at the age of seven and till the fourteenth year basic training is imparted. But what should a child do till he is seven years old? Actually, the mother should start training the child from the time she is carrying him inside her. This is not my experience but of the whole world, that while the child is still in the womb the mother's work and discipline have a great influence on the child's life. This means that the mother can train the child from the time of conception till he is seven years old. This is followed by basic training till the child is fourteen years old. But Nayee Talim is necessary even for the old, in fact, for every man and woman as also for a labourer.

But from where to get crores of rupees for educating the entire population? India is a very poor country. And we must spread literacy among the whole population of 400 million and the education of the child is to start from the time he is born. One's head starts reeling when one thinks about making all the necessary arrangements, finding so many teachers and the resources to pay them. You might ask me if my head too starts reeling. I should say, no. You might then think that either I am a stupid fellow who understands nothing, or I am very wise and know everything about it. This, in fact, is true. My head does not reel. Nor am I given to talking in the air. Congress Ministers are ruling in seven Provinces. In some Provinces the Muslim League is in power. Let them be considered separate for the time being, though I do not regard them as separate. One day they are bound to be united with us. True, they might not agree to give this type of training and the Congress wants to implement the programme of basic education. But how can I tell Suhrawardy Saheb that I want to impart basic education in Bengal? He would ask me what right I had to make any such suggestion. I can also work a lot in Sind. If we can give basic education to the people there the whole face of the province would change. The Hindus want to run away from there. They come to me and ask me what they should do. What they should do is another thing.

All this time we had been having foreign education which also imposed a foreign language on us. This was because the British needed men to carry on their work and wanted their empire to expand. They needed clerks. I would have done the same thing if I were in their place. If I had needed doctors, engineers, etc., from where could I have found Englishmen for all these professions? How could Englishmen have communicated

with the people of Bihar or those of Madras who speak Tamil? And so, they established big colleges and universities for the spread of English education. They started producing doctors and engineers, but in fact, they were turning out only loyal slaves. Even today we are living in the same age. Times cannot change merely by wishing. We are still enamoured of the English language. Work even in the Congress offices is being done in English. The notices I receive are also in English. Things have taken such a course that we cannot free ourselves from English easily. For that very reason the scheme of basic education has been prepared. It is a living education and a true education. English has not been given a place in it. A boy who has had basic education comes to his parents and proudly tells them what he has learnt. But if I study in an English school and my father from the village asks me what I learnt I would tell him only about England and the English people. If he asks me anything about my own place, about Bihar, I would not be able to tell him anything. But it does not imply that I should go on abusing the English people. As it is, I do not abuse anyone. The English say that this is our country and that they are going. When recently the Viceroy asked me to sign the peace appeal I said that I would sign in Hindi, Urdu, and I put my signature in Hindi, Urdu and English. This pleased the Viceroy.

Our average income today is Rs. 60-62 a year. Some people have an income of Rs. 60,000. This means that out of 400 million there must be so many without an income and they must starve. How can we educate all of them? Today we are almost paupers. How can we go on if our children do not get ghee, milk and clothing? We have to increase our income with the help of the right kind of training. Today our men and women have nothing to cover themselves with. I saw the same thing in Noakhali too. And let me tell you, in the old days—when I was in Champaran—the women had nothing but a single sari. The women told me that they did not have more than one sari. How then could they bathe and what could they have to wear? And things were then far better compared to the present. Today cloth is so scarce. Food is also scarce. You must all get food to eat and clothes to wear. But the Government will not provide all these things for you. You must produce the grain yourselves. You must produce ghee and milk. You must make your own clothes. Your children would help you.

You have to make education self-supporting. Otherwise you cannot yourself become self-reliant. This virtue is to be

found in Nayee Talim. The aim of Nayee Talim is not to make our children slaves. Nor does it aim at making them leaders. Its aim is to make all of them Indians.

There should be food for everyone; but food does not mean only a handful of grain, a pinch of salt. As a matter of fact everyone ought to have pure ghee and milk and enough clothing. Today all this appears to be a mere dream. But it would not remain a dream. Nayee Talim will not make all students barristers, engineers or doctors. It aims at developing the students into good human beings. And we have to make them nothing less than good human beings.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—III, pp. 33-6

314. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

PATNA,
April 24, 1947

CHI. LILI,

I have your letter. I have written to Su. at the hospital address. I did not remember Pya. Gupta's address.

You are silly. I have not forsaken you. When you feel that you can no longer stay away from me, come over. I myself am without any home just now. But come wherever I am. You have served Sushila but that's in your nature. Work hard without being impatient and read carefully and intelligently, and you will pass with good marks. There is no reason at all for you to give up hope or feel defeated. If you lose one year, there will be no harm. You will learn more.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9608. Also C. W. 6580. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

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315. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

PATNA,
April 24, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I have your letter. You have done the right thing. It is no use trying to hide what has happened.

I have been summoned to Delhi again. I shall have to leave on May 2. I hope that now there will be no need for my presence there[1]. Even here I am doing what needs to be done there and I hope I shall be doing the same in Delhi.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9077

316. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

PATNA,
[*April*][2] *24, 1947*

CHI. BRIJKRISHNA,

I hope to leave this place early in the morning on May 2 and to reach there on the 3rd. I had a telegram from Panditji.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 2501

[1] In Noakhali
[2] From the contents. *Vide* the preceding item.

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317. TALK WITH HOULTON[1]

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 24, 1947

We should have only one colony set up for the refugees. You need not build *pucca* houses. You can have the houses built with mud and mortar as is the usual practice in villages. I would rather wish that people built such houses themselves and the Government paid them their proper wages. I consider it a sin to distribute food free.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 250

318. ADDRESS TO WORKERS

SADAQUAT ASHRAM, PATNA,
April 24, 1947

Lakshmi Babu's complaints against the workers are a shame for Biharis. The subject of decentralization[2] is being discussed for the past three years. I had mentioned it after my release from jail.[3] There was some mental reservation about it in the beginning. But now it is all clear to me. Lakshmi Babu had welcomed my suggestion right at the beginning. Only if you explain to me your difficulties in the plan for decentralization will I know where the trouble lies. It is not that the sales can be pushed up only under the patronage of the Charkha Sangh. It would only mean the ruin of khadi. Let khadi be for those who spin, so that there could be only genuine khadi-wearers. And I need only such genuine workers. This would mean the saving of the crores of rupees invested in the Charkha Sangh. Bihar has greatly increased the importance of spinning in India. The age of machines started only 200 or 300 years ago. Before that we used to do all the work with our hands and cheerfully too. With the advent of the

[1] The Relief Commissioner. The source however has "Walton", a slip.
[2] Of khadi work
[3] On May 6, 1944. *Vide* Vol. LXXVII, p. 263.

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machine age our hands have been cut off. Handicrafts and body labour are disappearing with the result that we have become lazy. Khadi will lose all its value if we turn the Charkha Sangh into a commercial body. People, whether in towns or in villages, should spin and wear khadi. It should be as natural as cooking one's own food which is done in every home. This is not a very big thing. We shall all perish if we do not practise this. We are facing starvation because we do the things we ought not to do. India is a country poorer than even China. We appear to be human beings, but actually we live like animals. What would happen to the cow if human beings turn into animals? If every village in India became self-sufficient in the matter of food and clothing, we would easily save a billion rupees. I have no doubt about this. We would require no help from anyone, and the whole of India would become a co-operative enterprise. There are co-operative organizations in Japan and Germany. We too have among us ideal men like Lakshmi Babu and we must strengthen his hands. Decentralization is a teaching in itself. It has a wonderful significance like the daily lighting of the stove in every home for the day's meals. If we are all ready for it and become self-sufficient in our khadi production, the experiment which Lakshmi Babu wants to carry on may well be the first of its kind in independent India. Vichitra Babu[1] in the U. P. has also made some efforts. But it would all be in vain unless we make all our villages self-sufficient.

It is possible to develop yet another industry here. It is possible to produce beautiful cloth out of the stems of linseed. I have not the time, otherwise I would have proved that mill-cloth is like poison in effect, while khadi is like nectar. Khadi is meant for everyone. Even a depraved man, a sinner, a drunkard, a gambler, anybody, can wear it. But the sacred quality of khadi is that it is a symbol of freedom. Those who wish to live in free India ought to wear khadi. And those who wear khadi will be satyagrahis. They must be *sattvika* in the true sense of the term as described in the *Gita*[2]. Khadi carries that quality.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 250-1

[1] Vichitra Narayan Singh

[2] XVIII. 26

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319. TALK WITH HARIJAN WORKERS

SADAQUAT ASHRAM, PATNA,
[*April 24, 1947*][1]

In the meeting with the workers of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. . . a challenging poser was presented. The Harijans were asking why, if the caste Hindus were sincere in their professions of equality between the "touchables" and [the] "untouchables", no inter-marriages were being celebrated. What should be the caste Hindus' answer to that? Gandhiji replied that the Harijans had a right to ask that question. He had already conceded their point. Marriage was a strictly personal affair. While nobody could be compelled to contract a marriage against his or her will, on the ground of caste there should be no bar to such inter-marriages. He reminded them how he had long ago made it a rule not to be present at, or give his blessings for any wedding unless one of the parties was a Harijan. Untouchability in the sense of pollution by touch had already become a thing of the past. What was needed now was the cultural and economic uplift of the Harijans, so that the very distinction between "touchables" and "untouchables" would be obliterated.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 121

320. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

PATNA,
April 24, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today I kept my eyes open during the *Ramdhun* to find out who among the women beat correct time and joined the *Ramdhun*. I found some women moving and clapping their hands, but they were not keeping the time! This wouldn't do. I had told you yesterday that if all of you want to recite the name of God in unison and with single-minded concentration, you must learn the rules of collective prayer. When everyone recites the name of God with genuine feeling and with one voice, the blissful notes would give rise to a very pleasant, delightful feeling. I can see the women because they sit right before me. But the

[1] From *Biharni Komi Agman*

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men stand at a distance and I am not able to see them well. The dais on which I sit has been made like the stage in a theatre. There is special lighting arrangement so that people can have a good view of me, as of an actor on the stage. But the men stand in the dark. The light should be directed at the people. After all we are all in a way actors on the stage of life. I cannot see their hands but I can make out from the sound that they do not all join the *Ramdhun*. This is not good and it should not be.

Some Harijan workers came to me this afternoon. I talked to them for an hour. We had a long discussion. Then I went to the Sadaquat Ashram where a meeting of the Harijan Sevak Sangh was held. The Harijan workers told me that there was very little feeling of untouchability in Bihar. But I have heard that it is not true. Yesterday a shameful thing happened here. I came to know later that a few Harijan women had come to the prayer meeting, but some women did not allow them to sit down. They let their contempt be known and the Harijan women left the place. Had I known it yesterday, I would have talked about it. Today Harijan workers, both men and women, came to me. After hearing their tales I felt sad realizing that if those who considered themselves high caste, did not give up their fancied superiority and did not discard their unfounded pride, we would not be able to preserve our freedom even if it came.

I say this not only for Patna or Bihar, but for the whole of India. Your Ministers are your elected representatives and they ought to guide you. Some people asked me if it was enough to touch the untouchable. I said no. The feeling of untouchability cannot be wiped out just by touching the untouchable.

There was a time when the Hindus who considered themselves high-born never even touched the untouchables. But the people are now fairly enlightened. It is because of this awakening that we are now at the threshold of freedom. People no more mind inter-dining. But inter-marrying is still unmentionable. There are a number of high-placed men in Bankipur. If the untouchables come to their houses they are received with respect. They consider these men worthy of honour. But the untouchables cannot go to the houses of orthodox Brahmins or sanatani Hindus. These distinctions of touchable and untouchable are man-made. Otherwise there is no such label of untouchability tagged on to anyone. I ceaselessly go on telling everyone that unless the blot of untouchability is removed Hinduism would be completely wiped out. I hope that the activities of the Charkha Sangh and Nayee Talim would be very useful in this field too.

Actually we have committed a great crime, for which we ought to atone. I am sticking to this place in the hope that Bihar will do as much good as it has indulged in wrongs. The Hindus should so placate the Muslims by their conduct that they should be convinced that the Hindus committed a mistake once but that they are really not such senseless people.

Another thing is that we must completely eradicate untouchability. I have already told you that Bihar is now independent of the Charkha Sangh. The headquarters of the Charkha Sangh are at Sevagram. Now Bihar has withdrawn itself from the central body and is free to produce as much khadi as it wants. Now you must think how Bihar should work. Bihar should take a concrete step in the right direction. I told you yesterday that Nayee Talim was a lofty tree and under its cool shade we could live in great comfort.

Let the women remember that they should not repeat their mistakes. And those who committed the mistake should make amends by each one bringing with her one untouchable woman a day.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—III, pp. 37-9

321. TALK WITH BIHAR MINISTERS

April 24, 1947

. . .[1] says one thing to me, and does something else. We shall not be able to preserve our freedom at this rate. After all, how have you people reached such a high position? By whose efforts have you done it? Have you not been trained by me? If there can be such confusion in Bihar which belongs to Rajendra Babu, it seems I shall be able to say nothing to anyone. I do not like it. It pains me that even. . .[2] Babu is not able to clarify the matter. He is efficient and noble-hearted. If he is seeking only my guidance, why are these strange things happening? Do people say yes to me merely to please me? If you do so, you would betray your own country. It makes no difference to me, but betrayal of the nation would bring no good. There is no reason to believe that all that I say is correct, but saying yes to whatever I say would make both of us guilty. Your

[1] & [2] Omissions are as in the source.

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consent should spring from your heart. If you are not convinced by my words you must try to persuade me. But we should not agree with anyone just in order to please him. The things that are happening in Bihar are extremely shameful. Please note it down in your diary that if things go on like this, once again India will have to be under the domination of the big three, viz., Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union. It would not be wrong if I say that the events in Bihar, Bengal and the Punjab are hindering India's freedom. You are the leaders here. If the leaders themselves lack unity, harmony and principles, how can I expect these in others?[1]

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 252

322. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL[2]

PATNA,
April 24, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

There is a telegram from Jawaharlal that I should go there in the beginning of May. I therefore propose to start from here on the 2nd[3], arriving there on the morning of the 3rd. I will have the same people with me, and stay as usual in the Bhangi Colony. Please inform Ghanshyamdas, Maulana and others.

I hope you keep good health.

I received your telegram about *Harijan*.[4] I am now preparing to start writing. I wrote to Kishorelal and Jivanji[5].

[1] According to *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, when the Ministers met Gandhiji again on the last day of his stay in Bihar, he made amends by telling them that what he had said to them on the previous occasion must not be taken as condemnation but only as a measure of his jealous concern for them. "I do not hope to be able to find better colleagues than you. I entertain high hopes of you. It hurts me, therefore, when I hear anyone criticizing you with good reason."

[2] According to *Biharni Komi Agman* this was written after 10 p.m.

[3] From *Biharni Komi Agman*. The source however has "27", obviously a slip. *Vide* p. 347.

[4] *Vide* p. 271.

[5] *Vide* pp. 308-9.

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Just now we have been having meetings of the Charkha Sangh and the Talimi Sangh.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 353-4

323. LETTER TO SYED ABDUL AZIZ[1]

April 25, 1947

My opposition to the formation of colonies is restricted to the Government co-operation even to the extent of land acquisition. I should have no objection to affected Muslims congregating in Muslim areas. There should be no check on free movement or migration.

Your legal acumen should have prevented you from making the sweeping remark that I had ever denied the right of self-defence. That right does not and ought not to carry with it the licence to bear arms. A moment's reflection would show you its futility. What you want probably to convey is that it is the right of the citizen, however humble he or she may be, to demand protection by the State against thieves, robbers and miscreants. A Government that fails to perform that duty forfeits all claims to govern. Let me add, too, that neither during my stay in England nor for 20 years in Africa did I ever know a Westerner feeling incompetent to defend himself without arms when and if the occasion arose. Like several superstitions this one you name seems to be confined only to this unhappy land of ours.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 319

[1] In reply to the addressee's letter which read: "Your opposition to the formation of small colonies in which the Muslims . . . could live [in] safety and your determination to disallow even a few guns to the needy Muslims have deeply depressed me and many others. . . . You have . . . repeatedly said . . . that you could not allow anyone the right of private defence. . . . Muslims faced with overwhelming majority in seven out of eleven Provinces, feel that your law, if practised, would spell disaster for them."

324. A LETTER

April 25, 1947

I too have been watching with an anguished heart what you write about the Congress. Let us hope that ultimately it will be God's will that will be done and Satan will be overcome.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 255

325. TALK WITH ENGLISHMEN[1]

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 25, 1947

Sooner or later India is bound to get its freedom. Having made such tremendous sacrifices our earnest endeavour is not going to end in failure. But if the League co-operated with us we could win freedom tomorrow. The League representatives who have joined the Interim Government at present have not done so willingly. It would be a happy union if only it is a sincere union. The world today needs action, not speeches. Our beliefs will have any value only if we put them into practice. Otherwise it is difficult to achieve anything. We have no doubt fought our battle with the weapons of truth and non-violence. Though, I must confess, I have not reached the ideal of my conception—as far as preparing the people on those lines is concerned, but so far as I know my own conscience I have myself striven through thought, word and deed to reach the ideal and am still striving to do so. If unconsciously I have been guilty of a lapse, I am not aware of it. But no society of men can ever be happy at all without following the path of non-violence. This doctrine is not of my invention, it is something that has been followed from time immemorial. A country like Russia which stood by the rights of its people has been caught up in establishing an imperialistic State. How tragic it is! I hold that he who invented the atom bomb has committed the gravest sin in the

[1] Gandhiji had a talk with two Englishmen during his morning walk.

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world of science. The only weapon that can save the world is non-violence. Considering the trend of the world, I might appear a fool to everyone; but I do not feel sorry for it. I rather consider it a great blessing that God did not make me capable of inventing the atom bomb.

It is wrong to say that the people in the West have gone crazy about the atom bomb. There are also people among them who are having second thoughts about it. I can make this assertion in full faith and with conviction that people will be happy and content only where truth and non-violence are followed. Though at present both appear to have disappeared they have not disappeared entirely. You inquired about foreigners. I may say that ultimately they can stay here only if they are willing to stay as Indians. Otherwise there is no place for them here. After India achieves freedom, we have to cultivate friendship with the people of other countries and avoid all discord. We are aware that we might commit many mistakes and face innumerable difficulties in safeguarding our freedom. It is quite possible we may fall short of the expectations of our people. But I see no danger in that. We will learn only through our mistakes and trials. But if the Congress renounces truth and non-violence, its moral strength and its prestige are bound to suffer. But truth and non-violence have to be followed willingly. Then alone can they endure. Nothing done under compulsion will endure. Such rules are not written in a constitution. I can go to the extent of saying that just as it is essential to wear clothes—irrespective of whether they are good or bad—and we have accepted the principle of covering our body, similarly it is imperative that every human being should adopt truth and non-violence.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 253-4

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326. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

PATNA,
April 25, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am going to speak to you today about something which has just come to my notice. It is a subject close to the hearts of the Hindus, viz., cow-protection. I wrote a book called *Hind Swaraj*[1] when I was in South Africa. That was in 1909[2], that is, 40 years ago. In those days too I held the same views as I do now. There was a statement in the book saying that I considered the cow as our mother and I have an honoured place for her in my heart because she gives me milk. If I want to protect myself, I must also protect the cow. The cow is worshipped even in Bihar. But, as I wrote in 1909, even though we claim to protect the cow, in fact we are killing her. Many Hindus were angry with me for making such a statement. But I was firm in my view.

Nowhere else in the world is the condition of the cow as poor as in India. If we look at the way we treat our cows, it would be clear to us that even though we claim to worship the cow, in our hearts we have no true respect for her. We treat the cow very harshly. Look at it from my point of view and think of the hard work we extract from the bullocks. It is a mute animal and cannot complain. But we yoke the bullocks to the cart and load it so heavily that we do not even bother to think that the cart might give way. And, when the bullocks cannot move we beat them mercilessly. We give no thought to the health of the bullocks. When I see their bones sticking out, I wonder how they manage to walk at all. The bullocks' condition is similar to the poor people's. Just as a poor man does not get ghee, milk, and so on, the cattle too do not get proper fodder. Experts say that either the animal world will destroy us, or it will be our duty to kill them in order to survive. If that happens people will ridicule us that we, the cow-worshippers, have taken to cow-slaughter.

However, for protecting the cow, instead of laying down our own lives we kill others. And whom do we go and kill ? The

[1] *Vide* Vol. X.

[2] The source has 1908, a slip.

British ? Of course not. How can we kill them ? They are powerful, and even though they are few in number, they are the rulers. They possess arms. They consume as many cows as they wish. They trade in beef. They take away from India any number of cows of healthy and good breed to slaughter them. These cows are not sold by the Muslims, for they do not keep cows in such large numbers. It is you who sell the cows to them. Then they sell beef tea to us which we consume. Our children consume it too because the doctors recommend it. I have a Vaishnava friend who had beef tea saying he had to take it because his doctor said that he would not survive without it.

I have heard some Bihari Hindus complain that the Muslims slaughter our cows. Why then should the Muslims not be killed, they ask. Even in 1908 when I was in South Africa I used to be amused at the Hindus' claim that there were several societies for cow-protection. Here too people go about collecting funds for cow-protection. But how can we protect the cow when we kill our own brethren ? You cannot kill the British because they are strong. Today if they are going it does not mean that you have grown stronger or that they have grown weaker. They have decided to leave because the force of our satyagraha has compelled them to go. It will have to be accepted that they are honest, because in the matter of leaving the country they have shown much honesty. When they came, you could have told them that they should not eat beef. You could have told them that if they ate beef, cow's ghee or milk would not be available and that they could manage to live without beef. But in America and England where people freely eat beef the cow is very well protected. They raise the cows very well and milk them properly, and they sell pure milk. But as for you, you sell ghee by adulterating it with fat. You also sell vegetable ghee. You consume beef tea and beef extract too; but if the Muslims eat beef you kill them. I once stayed with Maulana Abdul Bari Saheb of Firangi Mahal at Lucknow. He left us long ago. He said that if the cow was so useful to us, it was our duty also to protect her. In those days the Hindus and the Muslims used to be united and they had no quarrels. Had we maintained the same friendly relations, the Muslims would have given up beef-eating. You also said that a large number of cows were saved in one year. Nowhere in the Koran is it said that it is one's duty to eat beef. But if we forcibly stop the Muslims it would become obligatory for them to eat it. I wish to tell you about it because complaints have been made not by one but many Hindus. If we

wish to create an atmosphere of harmony, we ought to give up such methods of coercion.

Some work of cow-protection is being done in the U. P., Bihar, Gujarat, the C. P. and other places. For that matter there are also some Hindus who insist on eating beef. They also quote a Sanskrit *shloka* which shows that in the ancient times even Brahmins used to eat beef. That is not incorrect either. It is another matter if the passage is interpreted differently. No one ever mentions cow-protection in Andhra and Madras. If we want to protect the cow we must know our dharma, know what true compassion is, learn how to look after cattle. In our country this is not done properly even in the dairies. I have had a hand in the setting up of the Goseva Sangh.[1] It is our duty to protect the cow. In fact, I would say it is the duty of every human being, because taking cow's milk and ghee is beneficial to everyone. Even the non-vegetarians have to take ghee, milk, and so on. Buffalo's milk is not as good as cow's milk. But that does not mean that I do not wish the buffalo to exist. If the cow is saved, the buffalo would be saved too. But the cow cannot be saved in the way we are trying to do it at present. We are blinded by selfishness and a feeling of animosity. We ought to learn from England and America how to rear cattle. Our knowledge of the subject at present is very poor. There is need for us to learn from other countries how to rear cattle, what fodder we should give them and the proper way to milk them. First of all we must try to cultivate humility in order to protect the cow. Let us not be angry with anyone. On the contrary, let us try to protect the cow by persuading others. That alone would render our efforts successful.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—III, pp. 40-3

[1] In February, 1942. *Vide* Vol. LXXV.

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327. TALK WITH SITA AND SUMITRA GANDHI[1]

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 26, 1947

One may give up everything but not prayer. Prayer is the broom that sweeps clean our minds. If we stop praying, all the rubbish and cobwebs will accumulate in our minds and make our inner being impure. I expect all of you who are in the college to get up early and create an atmosphere for prayer. It has been my wish—and will always be wherever I am till I breathe my last—that every member of the Ashram, boy or girl, man or woman, wherever he or she may be, should create the atmosphere of the Ashram. If nothing else, at least spinning, simple food, simplicity, khadi and prayer ought to become the permanent features in one's life after one has stayed in the Ashram. But what can you do in this respect? Not all the desires of man are ever fulfilled. It seems the fault is only mine and this is only a reflection of my imperfection.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 257-8

328. LETTER TO HORACE ALEXANDER

PATNA,
April 26, 1947

DEAR HORACE,

Your letter. You may expect me in Delhi (D.V.) on 3rd proximo at the latest.

BAPU

FRIEND HORACE ALEXANDER
24 RAJPUR ROAD
DELHI

From a photostat: G. N. 1444

[1] Who could not get up in time to attend the morning prayer

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329. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

PATNA,
April 26, 1947

CHI. SUSHILA,

I have been working under such heavy pressure that I could not find time even to write a letter to you and send it with Sita. I meant to write yesterday but could not. I read just now Manilal's letter which you had sent to Kishorelal and which the latter had forwarded to me. Such is my condition. God, however, has preserved my health so far and will preserve it as long as He wants to take work from me.

Since Sita had come and met me, she herself told me that there was no need for me to write a letter, but that an oral message would suffice. I agreed with her. I have discussed the matter with her as fully as possible. There is no need whatever for you to worry about her. You must have seen the letter she wrote to Krishnakumar and the one I wrote to him. You will learn everything from them. Please therefore do not worry about her at all. And as Kishorelal suggests, it is now desirable that you should go and join Manilal. If you wish, you may come and see me. I shall have to go to Delhi on May 2. You may come and see me there if you like. But it is very hot now. If you wish to escape the heat and don't wish to come, you may not. We may discuss the more important problems through correspondence and should be satisfied with that.

I am returning Manilal's letter. My heart endorses the different view which you two have taken. Since I am the property of the masses, they have a perfect right to search me inside out. But, even so, if the masses seek to press their point of view on me, I would feel suffocated.

About Kishorelal and others it is a different matter. They are, after all, co-workers who seek guidance from me. If they disapprove of any action or views of mine today, they should have the right to discuss them fully. The painful thing in this matter is that their approach and mine to the question seem different. Conduct based on such [different] approach is bound to be at variance [with their views] and cannot but give pain. My ideas and conduct are not new. I can say that they go back

to fifty-five years ago. It is possible that I might not have been able to express my ideas clearly in my writings or talks. I don't say positively that I have written on the subject, only because if I could spare the time to go over all my writings I might be able to quote the statements I have made from time to time. But what is to be gained by doing so? The action has already been abandoned for the present. As for my views, Kishorelal and I have been discussing them [through letters]. That discussion need not be stopped, nor need it upset anybody. If there is any error in my reasoning, the discussion may help to remove it. Or, if there is no possibility of either of us changing his view, we will put up with the difference in our views and also in our conduct. I am hopeful that that will not be the outcome. One or the other will correct his error and both will come to the same view. I am hoping, however, that Kishorelal and others who are non-co-operating with me partially will withdraw their non-co-operation.

I hope you are all unperturbed.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5000

330. LETTER TO CHAMPA MEHTA

PATNA,
April 26, 1947

CHI. CHAMPA[1],

I got your unhappy letter. I was surprised to learn that Shashi[2] and you had to suffer so much. But we should never think of happiness or unhappiness. The incident shows that for those who have linked their fate with mine, Sevagram is the only place. Those who are resolved to live or die there will alone swim. The rest will sink.

I sent two wires, one to you and the other to J. A. Bulsaria. The latter has been writing to me. If you have been able to see him, the problem must have been solved.

God alone knows whether or not you did right in sending for Gatimama from Rajkot. If he has arrived, his presence will certainly comfort you.

[1] Wife of Ratilal P. Mehta
[2] Addressee's son

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Write to me occasionally and keep repeating Ramanama.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 1054. Courtesy: Champa Mehta

331. A LETTER

April 26, 1947

I have gone through your report[1]. If it had been a statement expressing your personal views I would have complimented you and would have made some important suggestions too. You are a great economist and a learned man and you are running a flourishing business. But I know more about village industries. Hence we have proceeded on the understanding that I am qualified to instruct you. Even if there were no such understanding, I, at any rate, have proceeded on that assumption. In doing so I have not been prompted by my ego. But such is the situation today. What I have read concerns the Committee appointed by the Government of Bombay, and you are presiding over it. From that point of view I have much to say about the statement. Fortunately we had here meetings of the Trustees of the Charkha Sangh and members of the Nayee Talim in which Kumarappa[2] and Dhotre[3] were present. Hence I could exchange views with both of them. . . .[4] I am not able to look up *Harijan* at present. I do not send for the matter before it is printed. Pyarelal too has not been writing for it.

I do not approve of the very resolution which has led to the appointment of the Committee. In my view Lakshmidas[5] and Dhotre cannot function under that resolution. Before passing the resolution the Government of Bombay should have consulted the Charkha Sangh, the Gramodyog Sangh and the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. You are probably not aware that all these three organizations have the backing of the Congress and are known as Congress organizations. No other organization in India has or is likely to have more experience in the field of village

[1] Of the Gramodyog Samiti. *Vide* also the following item.
[2] J. C. Kumarappa
[3] Raghunath Shridhar Dhotre
[4] Omission as in the source
[5] Lakshmidas Asar

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industries. But I still cannot say how such a mistake could happen. Considering your intelligence I feel that you ought to have stopped Lakshmidas and Dhotre from signing the report. I would also say that even you could not have prepared such a report by yourself, because, if you prepare a report disregarding certain basic facts, it would be like raising a structure on sand. This is what has happened with regard to this report. At the moment I am not in a position to suggest anything more. If you have the courage I would suggest that you write to the Government of Bombay that the report is incomplete and should not be implemented straightaway. Dhotre has withdrawn his endorsement. He must have sent you a copy of his letter. I have a lot more to write but don't have the time. Why say more to a wise person?

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 259-60

332. LETTER TO LAKSHMIDAS ASAR[1]

April 26, 1947

. . . must have written you a detailed letter. You have given your name for the Gramodyog Samiti of the Government of Bombay. But in my view you could not have done so as the Samiti would be functioning under the instructions of the Government. Moreover, you should have consulted the Charkha Sangh, the Gramodyog Sangh and the Talimi Sangh and sought their opinion. There is much to be said about its merits and demerits, but I leave it out. If your views have undergone a fundamental change, it would be an altogether different matter. But I do not think this is the case. In my view, you must put your signature to the letter Dhotre has written to Balasaheb[2]. Before the Government starts acting on the report, it must clearly understand our policy. I have also written to Bhai . . .

You must be keeping good health. Does your health permit you to do your full work?

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 260

[1] Omissions in the letter are as in the source.
[2] B. G. Kher

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333. A LETTER[1]

April 26, 1947

CHI . . . ,

I have your letter of the 20th. I am awaiting your detailed reply. Your words breathe love. I need not say anything if you feel the same way I feel towards you all. But your letters have left a different impression on me.

I have come to the conclusion after reading your letters that . . . should go to . . .

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 261

334. A LETTER[2]

April 26, 1947

I myself can do nothing about Chi. . . . Pandit Jawaharlal is scrupulously fair. All those applications are considered on merit. No recommendation would be necessary for . . .

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 261

335. LETTER TO ARUNANSHU

PATNA,
April 26, 1947

CHI. ARUNANSHU,

I have your postcard. You have made a good attempt to write in Hindustani. How nice it would be when I shall be able to write as much in Bengali. My Bengali lessons continue and nowadays Bisen is my instructor. Manu sings a Bengali *bhajan* in the morning. Let us see what happens in the end.

I learnt from Satis Babu's letter that Nirmal Babu will be here in a day or two. If he does come it will be fine.

[1] & [2] Omissions in the letters are as in the source.

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It is pretty hot here. We have screens of *khas*[1] put up on the windows, which makes the heat bearable. I shall have to go to Delhi towards the end of this month. I do not know how long I shall have to stay there.

Didimony[2] has not written anything to me. Does she remain very sad? Or does she avoid writing to me in order to save my time? If it is so, tell her that I do not want to have my time saved in that manner.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 8727

336. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

PATNA,
April 26, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I have your letters. Now I know that Nirmal Babu will be here in a day [or two]. I will have a clear picture of the situation there when he comes.

I am afraid arrangements are being made for my going to Delhi. Perhaps I may have to leave as early as the 30th. Let me see what happens. I hope now there will be peace in Noakhali.

I hope you are well. You must preserve your health. What is the arrangement for water supply in this hot season?

Abha needs must improve her health. She is a very delicate person.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I have a telegram and shall therefore leave on the 30th.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9079

[1] Roots of a kind of grass used in summer as screen for cooling the air
[2] Taralika. *Vide* p. 302.

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337. A LETTER

April 26, 1947

Received your letter. Why is it in English? If you do not know Hindustani, you could have written in Marathi. I am so far away.

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 261

338. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

PATNA,
April 26, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Since I have to visit the Muslim brethren I do not wish to give you the whole of my time today. You must have heard of Maulana Shafi Daudi. I came to know about him when I had come to Bihar for the first time. Later I went to his house also. On his invitation I have promised to attend a meeting of the Jamiat-e-Islam. I therefore wish to leave early.

Please remember what I told you about the cow yesterday. I told the *goshala* people who came to see me today that they should all come to me together. Then I would tell them what could be done to improve the breed of the cow. They too agree that the condition of the cow anywhere in India is not as bad as in Bihar. This is an exaggeration, for the condition of cattle in some other parts of India is found to be worse than in Bihar. All the same, according to me, it would suffice to say that the condition of cattle in India is the worst in the whole world. This is a matter of great shame and a blot on us since we call the cow our mother and worship her. If we had been following our dharma India's name would not have been tarnished. We must remove this blot.

I hope you will think over what I have told you, for I shall say no more today.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—III, p. 44

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339. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

[After *April 26, 1947*][1]

CHI. SUSHILA,

I am sending herewith a copy of the letter I wrote to you. You did get the letter. If you had sent that to Kishorelal, send this to Manilal.

Su. has already written about Sita.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5001

340. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

PATNA,
April 27, 1947

CHI. AMRIT,

This I am writing after prayer and my Bengali lesson and *Gita* for Manu. It is now 5.50. I must be off for the walk at 6 a.m. Meanwhile these lines to tell you what you know already. I hope to be there the morning of 1st May.

The heat is trying here, must be there too. I keep myself in good order by sleeping several times during the day and reducing food rigorously.

Hope you are all well.

The rest when we meet.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
C/O SARDAR PATEL
1 AURANGZEB ROAD
NEW DELHI

From the original: C. W. 3705. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6514

[1] This is written below the letter to the addressee dated April 26, 1947.

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341. LETTER TO TARALIKA

PATNA,
April 27, 1947

CHI. DIDIMONY,[1]

I do not know how best to address you.

I have been daily expecting your letter. It comes today.

You will come whenever you wish. I am off to Delhi on 30th for a few days.

Hope the girls are composed.

Am glad Charu is with you. You must even from now apply yourself to some service of man and through him of God.

Love to you all.

BAPU

SHRI DIDIMONY
3 ALIPORE PARK AVENUE
ALIPORE
BENGAL

From a photostat: G. N. 8728

342. A NOTE[2]

April 27, 1947

1. The land will belong to the village organization and will be under the control of the Housing Society. Building work should be carried on subject to the Society's approval. Those shareholders will become members of the Society who will pay their contribution and will abide by other conditions. Such members as pay their contributions, be it just one rupee, will alone be entitled to put up buildings. First a co-operative bank should be formed and then the work should be started. But such a bank will not be like a commercial bank. Loans will be raised partly from the people. We will pay interest at the rate of 3 per cent. If more money is needed I can be approached. The workers of the Housing Society will act as its trustees and will not make profit in a commercial manner.

[1] The superscription is in the Devanagari script.
[2] Regarding Sevagram

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2. It may not be right to divide the newly purchased land into plots and sell them. This will be a commercial practice. Nor should buildings be put up with a view to earning rent. It does not matter if we are required to pay land revenue. Proper arrangements must be made first. So long as this work is not carried on on the principle of trusteeship, it should be kept pending. Earning money is certainly not the underlying idea. In the meantime [the society] can take up co-operative farming.

3. Let the work of revenue collection be carried on in the name of the village organization. There is no harm in drawing from it whatever money may be needed for the expenses.

It should be remembered that all my views are *ex parte*. . . .[1] I have not heard the other side.

It is my view that we must make the whole village a health resort. The hospital has no place in it. We must be satisfied with what little we may be able to do in the prevention of disease. Present-day doctors have no place in the scheme of my conception. We must be content with medical herbs available in our villages and fields. Ramanama is the unfailing remedy.

M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 264-5

343. TALK WITH MUSLIM WOMEN

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 27, 1947

Now we can hope that India is shortly going to become free. If women were to make a resolve, they could demonstrate the remarkable strength bestowed on them by God. And it is essential for it that you should pray daily. But today prayer has come to be regarded either as a pastime of old women or of those who have retired from life. And I can quote such instances where young men and women regard prayer, *bhajans* or discourses as something ridiculous and worthless. This has led to our present degeneration. But if we can understand the secret of prayer, we would realize its wonderful power. Our independence will be stable if we attain it through prayer. But spiritually inclined men and women should also understand the secret of non-violence.

[1] Omission as in the source

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We should realize that if our non-violence is the non-violence of the weak, our independence will not be stable. And it will further prove that we cannot protect ourselves even with weapons, for we have neither arms nor training in their use. We have the wonderful and unrivalled weapon of truth and non-violence. Not only for winning freedom but also for preserving it there is no alternative to ahimsa. Those who regard us as their enemies, can be won over by love and non-violence alone. Women can easily accomplish this. Let me give a simple example. You marry your daughter aged fourteen, fifteen or sixteen into a strange new family and hand her over to a stranger; the girl becomes one with the new family or after a short while even becomes the mistress of that household. How does this happen? God has blessed her with a loving heart. She can win over everyone with her love, affection and non-violence. This is our every-day experience. Similarly in the larger context of society, if you learn to treat your Hindu sisters as your friends and try to emulate their good qualities they will certainly reciprocate. Women have the remarkable capacity for sacrifice.

Under varying situations in life and in order to advance or strengthen your country you should learn to efface the self and meet death bravely with prayer in your heart, whenever the occasion demands it. In order to cultivate the courage to meet death, prayer is the first and the last *mantra* of the art of dying. Implicit faith is essential for it. Without faith, no satyagrahi can ever succeed. Rama, Rahim, God or Allah—call Him by any name you like, His Law is universal.

Think over what I have said. You have come in purdah but the real meaning of observing purdah is that you should guard against lust, anger and attachment. That is, one has to exercise restraint over oneself. This outward purdah is mere hypocrisy. Its observance is meaningless if one's heart is impure.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 266-7

344. TALK WITH I.N.A. MEN

April 27, 1947

Should we not refer to the I.N.A. as non-violent I.N.A.? This is because you cannot expect to hear anything else from me. Subhas Babu was like my own son. Even though there were differences in our views, I admire his capacity for work and his patriotism. We shall be able to win freedom only through the principles the Congress has adopted for the past thirty years. We should not look upon anyone as our enemy. We must give up the feeling of animosity and vindictiveness and we shall have to become *sthitaprajna*[1]. As I am saying this you may be thinking that you are not *mahatmas* after all. But this principle is not meant for *mahatmas* alone. Anyone who wishes to be happy has no alternative but to adopt this principle in his life.

It is all very well that you fought with arms in foreign countries. But you saw the result. You have gained nothing thereby. Of course, you faced many hardships with courage. But Netaji himself has said that while in India you have got to work within the Congress. Just as you had tried to defend your army with force of arms in Burma and prepared for the attainment of freedom, you must now work to wipe out communal differences with the force of love and non-violence. You must eschew all differences of caste and creed and considering every woman your mother, sister or daughter you should accomplish the task which Netaji began. A remarkable spirit which Netaji has inculcated in the I.N.A. is that there are no distinctions among the soldiers. You must carry that spirit to every home.

You must thoroughly convince yourselves that developing spiritual strength is a thousand times more difficult than developing the strength of the sword.

As far as food, sleep and so on, are concerned, there is no difference between human beings and animals. Even so, today we have a choice only between human life and animal existence. We in India have wonderful religious treatises. But let me tell you that all that spiritual preaching has been of no avail. We are not able to translate anything from those scriptures into practice. I venture to state with all humility that the path of

[1] Man of steadfast awareness

non-violence is the path leading to God and only the brave can follow it as the poet[1] says: "The path of God is for the brave." Who is this God? He is not a corporeal human being. You should develop this strength of the brave. You will then be able to perpetuate Netaji's name in every village and every corner of India and keep it alive for ages to come. That means that Netaji lives even though he may not exist in the body. It is wrong to think that only an embodied person exists and that a dead person does not. A person whose name has become immortal, who rendered incomparable service and who used to rush to help the poor, lives for ever even after death.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 267-8

345. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

April 27, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

The *bhajan*[2] you heard just now was sung before also. I want to give you something of the background of this *bhajan*. It first echoed in my ears when I went on a fast while in jail. But while fasting one's memory becomes weak. None of my co-workers remembered the *bhajan* fully either. And so I sent a telegram and the *bhajan* was sent to me telegraphically in the Roman script. The *bhajan* delighted me so much that I forgot my fast. My grandson Kanu was with me at the time. At my request he sang it for me. There is nothing special about this *bhajan* by Tulsidas. He only says that he lives by two syllables[3]. Everything, he says, is accomplished only with the help of Rama. All other gods are amenable to offerings. For, when people go to worship the deities they offer a couple of pice before offering their prayers. The mother of a sick child offers a little money before praying for the recovery of her child. Another woman offers money to Lord Mahadeva pleading to be spared the

[1] Pritam

[2] और नहीं कछु काम के,
मैं भरोसे अपने राम के ।
दोऊ अक्षर सब कुल तारे,
वारी जाऊँ उस नाम पे ।
तुलसीदास प्रभु राम दयाघन,
और देव सब दाम के ।

[3] Namely, *Ra* and *ma*

nightmares she goes through. Some other woman who has too many daughters prays for a son. But all this is futile. Tulsidas says that God needs no flattery.

I told you yesterday that I was going to a meeting of Muslims. It was a function of Jamiat-e-Islam. In a way it is an association of *fakirs*. But they are not the *fakirs* who live by begging. They do not beg for money but they are *fakirs* at heart. If they eat at somebody's cost, they first do some work for him. They say that all human beings are servants of the One God and all should abide by His command. One cannot meet God merely by visiting a mosque or a temple; the real thing is to do His work.

I felt that someone might now think that since Bihar has just 13 or 14 per cent Muslim population and the rest are Hindus, why placate the Muslims? But I say that if the Muslims invite me with love I shall go to them even barefoot. But, born though I am in a Hindu family and brought up in the Hindu tradition, I will not go to visit a big Hindu if he orders me to do so. But here the Muslims are few in number, and so I would walk barefoot to their houses. Yesterday I went in a car because I had to go very far and I would not have otherwise reached there in time. If the Hindus think that I am trying to give undue importance to the Muslims, they are mistaken. I have come here only to see that they get what is their due. The Congress is in power here and it was not strictly necessary for me to come and see to it myself; but I came just the same.

It is also wrong to quarrel with anyone over the names—Rama or Rahim. For, whether we say Rama or Rahim, Krishna or Karim, God or Allah, we mean the One God.

There was a mention of the child Rama in the *bhajan* which was sung yesterday. Tulsidas has sung to the glory of Ramanama so much that you would find his *Ramayana* recited wherever you go in the country. Although there are many other epics in India they are not so steeped in devotion. On seeing an image of Krishna, Tulsidas is believed to have said: "Tulsi's head would bow down to you only if you take up the bow and arrow[1]." He was a devotee of Rama. Hence he insisted that he would bow to Krishna only if he appeared before him in the form of Rama. Even you, if you are worshippers of Rama, should love everyone. There was a time when it used to be said that if one wanted to know what true religion was, one

[1] Weapons associated with Shri Rama

should visit India. That was because the Hindus did not kill anyone. But now there are robbers, dacoits and also murderers among the Hindus. Let me warn you, however, that if you let the fact of the Hindu majority turn your head and attempt to eliminate other people, Hinduism is not going to benefit in any way. On the contrary, it would perish.

Let me wind up by referring to the point about two syllables. If you are worshippers of Rama, you must also accept that Rama belongs to all. He is the Saviour of all, whether Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Parsi. And whoever wishes to worship Rama should do so sincerely.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—III, pp. 45-7

346. A NOTE

PATNA,
April 28, 1947

I have read the note left with me by Mr. Houlton.[1] I am quite clear in my mind that those Muslims in the affected areas who by reason of fear or the distressing memory of their dead kinsmen do not wish to return to their homes should have the option of settling where they like even outside Bihar against compensation being given to them for loss of land and tenements, which will revert to the State. Compensation will consist of the sum fixed by valuators at the present rates of land and habitable tenements in place of those destroyed by the rioters. The valuation of the tenements must not exceed Rs. 1,000 at the outside. The above having been conceived purely in the interests of the sufferers, it presumes every previous effort being made by the State to dispel all fear of repetition of tragedy by adequate police protection and ridding the place of known marauders, etc.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 10561

[1] The Relief Commissioner had expressed the fear that "if the Government declared that in all cases where a refugee refused to go back to his old home, he would be given the cash value of his land and house, . . there would be a temptation . . . to take the money and go to another province".

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347. LETTER TO SYED ABDUL AZIZ

April 28, 1947

If any of my actions were based on the attitude of the Ministers I should be of little use here.[1] I have come, if I can, to serve the Muslim minority of Bihar as I was in Noakhali to serve the Hindu minority. In so doing my fond belief was and is that I should serve the majority, too. Thus I was, and am, against pockets promoted by authority in either case and so against firearms. That way lies strife, not friendship, whose roots are firmly fixed in love, not fear. Man can but perish in the attempt. Success is from God.

If the Hindus are to be considered as a hostile community for all time I confess that segregation is the safest policy. That is the logic of Pakistan which I have opposed knowing full well that I might find myself in the minority of one.

When Ministers and I cannot live without armed guards, you undoubtedly prove our cowardly impotence but do not sustain your argument for possession of firearms by impotent men.[2] Fancy me carrying a pistol for self-defence! ! !

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 321

348. LETTER TO SECRETARY, MUSLIM LEAGUE

April 28, 1947

. . .[3] Such Muslims as regard India as their home will always be welcome to stay here and it will be the duty of the Government to give them full protection. At the same time the Muslims too should be conscious of their own duty and must realize that if they continue to harbour hatred in their hearts against the Hindus, it will jeopardize the future of the crores of Indian

[1] The addressee had written: "If your opposition to the formation of colonies is based on the attitude of the Bihar Government and not on the merits of the proposition, we would feel that you have not exercised your vast influence with them."

[2] The addressee had referred to Gandhiji and Ministers having armed guards.

[3] Omission as in the source

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Muslims. I have received complaints that the harassment of the minority community in the Muslim majority areas of Bihar has the passive support and sympathy of other Muslims. I see no good coming out of it, if it is true.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 270

349. LETTER TO SHIV BALAK BISEN

April 28, 1947

CHI. BISEN,

I read your letter again. I do not wish to lose any of you. Whoever goes, will go of his own accord. You do have the capacity to work. I like that, but the lack of harmony among you all pains me. You ought to be keen to have it removed.

I see no need to do anything [in this matter] till I return from Delhi. Nor do I wish to show your letter. This is a matter which you should discuss with them. You should listen to what they have to say. If you do not have the courage nor the desire to do so you should forget the thing. If you wish to come to a decision before I leave for Delhi, you should yourself discuss the matter with them immediately today, or take whatever other action you wish to.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 7725

350. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

PATNA,
April 28, 1947

CHI. LILI,

I have your postcard. You are studying, but you have not learnt to use your common sense. You wrote to me and asked me to write to you at the Hospital address. I did so, and now you complain of not having received any letter from me. Sushila is ill, and so I try to write daily. If you are going to value my love from the number of letters I write or your being able to meet me, I must acknowledge defeat right from the beginning.

I write to Manilal at long intervals and only when necessary. To my own sister I never write, and to Devdas I write once in four to six months. Tell me now, with what are you going to measure my love? Do learn to use some common sense.

I still do not know whether or not you have gone to the Hospital.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9609. Also C. W. 6581. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

351. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

PATNA,
April 28, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I have your letter. Now I can go there only after my return from Delhi. We shall know more after Nirmal Babu's arrival.

There is a report in the *Hindustan Standard* about some incidents in Comilla. Do you know anything about it? I have passed it on to Sailen. Dr. Mahmud has not yet returned. He is coming on Wednesday. Perhaps he will travel with me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9078

352. ADVICE TO STUDENTS

PATNA,
April 28, 1947

If we could shake off our lethargy we would be true socialists. But we haven't yet done that. If I were to ask you I am sure to get the reply that all fifteen of you have servants in your homes.[1]

Well, then I fail to understand your desire to serve others —which you call socialism—when you do not do your own personal work in your homes. If you want my advice, I may

[1] All the fifteen students replied in the affirmative.

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tell you that students while they are studying should not involve themselves in any ism. They may by all means read about every school of thought, think over it, put as much of it into practice as possible, but they should not endeavour to become leaders. If we want to banish exploitation and violence from our society, we ought to do body-labour and manual work. And naturally it ought to be undertaken by all. Unemployment is rampant in our villages which were [once] regarded as happy and self-sufficient units; this is because of our subjugation and feelings of high and low as also caste distinctions.

Our political slavery is now nearly coming to an end. Hence we now need to become all the more vigilant and in this process the students can prove very helpful. For example, (1) when you get up in the morning you can roll up your own bedding; (2) help in preparing your breakfast and milk, etc., whatever you take, without waiting for your mother or anyone else to prepare it and serve you; (3) give a helping hand in sweeping and scrubbing; (4) do your own laundering; (5) help your mother with the cooking and cleaning the dishes; (6) make your own cloth by spinning regularly every day; (7) keep your books clean and neatly arranged, economize on exercise-books as much as possible; (8) learn to do with a pen-holder and ink costing two annas, instead of a fountain-pen costing Rs. 50.

If you adopt a number of such rules in your life you will not need to bother with any ism. And if every student in the country does it, I am sure the guardians' burden will be lightened a thousand times and without making any other effort we will be called socialists. But I doubt if you will follow what I say. All the same, when you return home please reflect if there is any sense in the few lines that this experienced old fellow wrote out for you on his day of silence.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 270-1

353. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

PATNA,
April 28, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am sorry to let you know that I shall have to go to Delhi by the morning train the day after tomorrow. There is a call from Pandit Nehru. Congress President Shri Kripalani has also sent a telegram from Rajputana that I should be in Delhi by the first of May. The Congress Working Committee is to meet there the next day. It pains me to have to leave you at this stage. I do not relish the idea of leaving Bihar unless the Mussalmans have completely shed their fear and both the communities allow me to leave cheerfully. I felt the same thing when I left Noakhali. For both these places I have the same motto before me "Do or Die". The cause in both the places is the same. My non-violence bids me dedicate myself to the service of the minorities. It would be a new birth for me and would give me new strength if the Hindus and the Mussalmans of both these places become friends and shed their animosity. God alone knows what will happen ultimately. Man can only try and perish in the attempt to do God's work. God is all in all. We are only zeroes. The same mission takes me to Delhi, that is, to work for Hindus and Muslims. I hope to return within a short time and be among you.

You may be astonished to learn that I continue to receive letters charging me with having compromised the interests of the Hindus by acting as a friend of the Muslims. How can I carry conviction with the people by mere words if the sixty years of my public life have failed to convince them that by trying to befriend Muslims I have only proved myself a true Hindu and have rightly served the Hindus and Hinduism? The essence of true religious teaching is that one should serve and befriend all and should be enemy of none. I learnt this in my mother's lap. You may refuse to call me a Hindu. I would only quote a line from Iqbal's famous song which means "Religion does not teach us to bear ill will towards one another".[2] It is easy enough to

[1] It being his day of silence, Gandhiji's written speech was read out.

[2] मज़हब नहीं सिखाता आपसमें बैर रखना।

be friendly to one's friends, but to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy is true religion. All else is mere business.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—III, pp. 48-9

354. REMARK TO MANU GANDHI[1]

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 28, 1947

How can we afford to forget the charkha? The spirit behind spinning implies equality of all. The charkha teaches us the unique lesson of identifying ourselves with the forty crores and be in perfect harmony with them. It will not admit of any distinction of high and low, master and servant, which is the cause of conflict in the world today, isn't it? The charkha warns us against it. How can we, therefore, fail to worship God in the form of the charkha?

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 273

355. LETTER TO SYED ABDUL AZIZ

April 29, 1947

You are less than right when you say that "the policy of the Government supported by you should help Muslims to decide either to surrender completely to the Congress or to abandon the Province for good". My policy is no fire-arms to civilians in the ordinary course and perfect protection to every citizen, be he poor or rich. If I know anything of the Government of Bihar, they do not want Muslims or anyone else to surrender to the Congress or leave the Province for good.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 321-2

[1] Gandhiji had gone to sleep at 9.30 p.m. and since he was exhausted on account of the extreme heat Manu Gandhi did not remind him about spinning. After a little while, however, Gandhiji got up and made this remark while spinning.

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356. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

PATNA,
April 29, 1947

CHI. MANILAL,

Yesterday I got your letter of the 14th. Who knows when the final deluge will come? Sooner or later that day also will come. Why need we worry whether, when it does come, one or two will have survived or all will have perished? If we but do our duty from moment to moment, we shall be able to face the Supreme Judge.

I think Sushila will now join you at the earliest opportunity. If Sita keeps her promise, four or five years will soon pass. I think she will keep her promise. I will look after her. None of you, therefore, need worry about her.

I should, of course, be very happy if you could live on boiled vegetables and fruit. It should be quite easy to do without ghee, oil and butter, since you eat curds. If you eat them in sufficient quantity, together with vegetables and fruit they make a balanced diet. That diet will sustain your energy and keep your brain perfectly clear. The vegetables and fruit to be consumed should be properly selected. Do you eat dry fruit or nuts? If you do, which ones? I shall be happy if you write to me in detail, for am I not taking special interest in nature cure? This diet must make a change in your complexion too. Dadoo and Naicker have not called again. I am leaving for Delhi tomorrow. Perhaps they may look me up there.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5002

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357. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

PATNA,
April 29, 1947

CHI. SUSHILA,

I got your letter of the 26th, together with Manilal's. I have enclosed a reply to Manilal, which please forward to him. You will learn about yourself also in that letter.

I think I shall know about Arun's[1] result in the next letter. Why don't you ask them both to write to me? Do not let them be lazy.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5003

358. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

PATNA,
April 29, 1947

CHI. BABUDI,

I got your unhappy letter just now. I will only say this about you for the present. If Chokhawala willingly permits you, you should go to Sevagram with a resolve that you will not return to Chokhawala if you do not get well. Stay at Sevagram in whatever condition you may have to. At present Sankaran is in charge there. Others also are there. Go there first, we may be able to think of something else there.

Chokhawala himself is so busy that he cannot attend much to you. We shall have to think about Anand[2]. If he can be looked after in Surat and if Chokhawala is eager to bring him up, you may leave him there. For doing all this, you will need firmness of mind.

Forget for the present about Calcutta.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 10077. Courtesy: Sharda G. Chokhawala

[1] Addressee's son
[2] Addressee's son

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359. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

PATNA,
April 29, 1947

DEAR DAUGHTER,

I got yesterday your letter of the 6th which you had sent to R.K. It is a good letter.

I think what you write about Abha is correct. I am writing to Kanu.

What you write throws a new light. If rice is being hoarded, how can I stop that? You should have a talk with Satis Babu. Or do you want me to pass on your letter to him?

It would be good if you could utilize the whole amount collected from the Muslims also. I shall write to Satis Babu.

If you can get money from Bhagirath[1] you can take it.

I have been able to write this much with great difficulty.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 583

360. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

GANDHI CAMP, PATNA,
April 29, 1947

I am surrounded by exaggeration and untruth. In spite of my search, I do not know where truth lies. But I do feel that I have come nearer to God and Truth. It has cost me quite a few of my old friends but I do not regret it. To me it is a sign of my having come nearer to God. That is why I can write and speak frankly to everyone. I have successfully practised the eleven vows undertaken by me. This is the culmination of my striving for the last sixty years. You have become an instrument in this. In this *yajna* I got a glimpse of the ideal of truth and purity for which I had been aspiring. And you have fully contributed towards it. Still, being so young, you cannot at present realize the implications of this *yajna*. I daily go through your diary which reminds me of Mahadev. Seeing

[1] Bhagirath Kanodia, an industrialist

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what you write and study these days and the ability you have to understand the *yajna* I feel that had Mahadev been alive this girl would have developed differently. I can't give you enough time much as I would like to. Mahadev surpassed me in certain qualities. Since no one is accompanying me during the walk today. I had the time to tell you all this.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 274

361. DISCUSSION AT PEACE COMMITTEE MEETING[1]

PATNA,
April 29, 1947

Q. What should be the attitude of the Peace Committee towards the culprits who have not been arrested and those who are under suspicion? Should the workers of the Committee co-operate in getting such persons arrested and prosecuted and in carrying on the investigations?

GANDHIJI: The duty of the Peace Committee is to supply all the information to the authorities. If the officers are corrupt the Ministers should be informed. The matter should be brought to the notice of the Press. Let those who have seen with their own eyes murders or other criminal acts being committed give the culprits' names to the police. The members of the Peace Committee could even try to reform the offender and persuade him to go to the police and confess his crime. The Government should take public opinion into consideration. Suhrawardy Saheb says that the police who are the eyes and ears of the Government do not report any untoward incident, whatever Satis Babu might say. I say that the police are the deaf ears and blind eyes of the Government. It is our task to awaken the police. If in the face of arson, murder and abduction of women an officer maintains that for want of evidence culprits cannot be arrested he deserves to be dismissed. How can a helpless victim produce any evidence? And if anybody says that he himself set his house on fire, it is sheer nonsense. Would the poor man burn his own house? He is too terror-stricken to do so.

If the Government were not to trust public opinion it would mean heavy expenditure and inconvenience. It would then need C.I.D. men in large numbers. That is the way of the

[1] The meeting held at Gandhiji's camp in the evening was attended among others by Sarju Prasad, Secretary, Peace Committee.

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alien Government. Under a swadeshi government the people are the C.I.D. for the government. If there is popular rule there would be fewer rogues. Otherwise, the Government would be in the hands of rogues. A government full of rogues can also function, but where I cannot say. Even the Congress Government can turn out to be such a government.

You have mentioned lack of workers for the Peace Committee. It only means that we have no influence over the masses. And if we haven't, what is the reason behind it? It implies that something is lacking in us. And we ought to get over our limitations.

Q. Occasionally we receive news about trouble in various places. Even where there have been no riots people are in panic because of the vitiated atmosphere, and are running away. Some mischief-mongers have gone into hiding in other places and are misleading the people. How should the workers of the Peace Committee proceed under these circumstances?

A. Whatever news we receive is not all correct. But no doubt there is trouble in some places. The Peace Committee should help the Government in every way. Most of the people present here would, of course, be Congressmen. If so, it is their duty to help the Government. And if they do not do so it means that the Government does not have popular support. It would be shameful to say that our public opinion reflects a mob mentality. It is our duty, not the Government's, to mould public opinion. The Government's responsibility is to quell the riots and punish the offenders. But a government obliged constantly to mete out punishment for every little thing cannot be called a good government.

If some work could be done in the riot-affected areas, things would settle down even in places where the situation is tense and people are fleeing in panic. Vitiated atmosphere implies that we have not done our duty well.

It is a function of the Peace Committee to trace the offenders and inform the police. If some mischief-mongers have gone into hiding in some other places and are misleading the people the members of the Peace Committee should also go and work there. I had heard that the [Hindu] Mahasabha President had been giving protection to Mathura Singh. The former is the Secretary to the Maharaja of Darbhanga and is a big shot in his own right. When he had come to me I had asked him if my information was correct. He told me it was not. Being President of the Mahasabha how could he do such a thing, he protested.

Q. People come to us saying that a particular person under arrest is innocent and that we should have him released. What should we do in such matters?

A. If innocent persons happen to be arrested, you can arrange legal help for them.

Q. How far can the Government help the Peace Committee in its work?

A. The Government can give financial help to the Peace Committee. But such help would be given not for everything but for what the Government considers proper. The Government's resources are limited. If the Government is not discreet in disbursing help we have to bring it to their notice. But necessities have got to be provided by the Government and whatever they cannot provide, should be arranged for by the Peace Committee. This is a function of private charity. The Friends' mission[1] is functioning along these lines. They are working in the places where the Government cannot reach. The work of the Friends' mission can serve as a model for us. They have done a good deal of work in Midnapore and Noakhali. They had only a few workers but they did a lot of work. Some Hindus and Muslims too had joined them. The Muslims were very few but they were remarkable workers. It is enough if you are sincere, and so many of you are honest workers ready to help the helpless.

The Government will help as far as it can. It will certainly do so if you win its confidence. But it is not enough just to be Congressmen to deserve that confidence. Whatever the Government cannot provide will have to be met by collecting funds from private sources.

Q. What should we say to those who seek our help for procuring rifles?

A. I am absolutely opposed to any demand for rifles. Even in Noakhali I was opposed to it. Wanting a rifle implies the desire to fight. Actually the police and the Government should function efficiently. I would even suggest that all nice and decent people should surrender their licences. People say that the Muslims are bringing in arms clandestinely. Quite possible; but they will not be able to keep them. Anyway, the Government should not supply arms. I am absolutely firm about it. If the Government wants to do it, it should arm the whole nation and that cannot be done in a day. Our freedom would be meaningless if it cannot be preserved with non-violence.

[1] Friends' Service Unit

Maulana Minnat Allah Saheb asked whether or not Government should provide alternative accommodation to the people where there had been a heavy loss of life and property or where the Muslims were in a very small minority and still afraid to return to their homes on any account.

GANDHIJI: By all means, the Government should get houses built for them.

The Maulana then asked if the people should be given rations till they found employment and if the Government should help them in finding employment.

GANDHIJI: The Government should certainly help them. Those who have lost their means of livelihood like the loom, etc., should be provided these things so that they can stand on their own feet once again.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—III, pp. 53-6

362. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

April 29, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

This is my last evening here. Tomorrow I shall have to go to Delhi. I beseech you not to come to the station to see me off. I do not like people shouting and making noise. My ears cannot stand noise. If there is no noise around I can even sit down to work as there is always a lot of work pending with me. But if a lot of people gather round and raise a din I cannot work. Nor can I rest when I want to. Two or three persons who would be escorting me would be enough. I grant that people come out of love. But forming such big crowds is no sign of true love. What is that love which makes a nuisance of itself?

Major General Shah Nawaz came to me today. He is working in Masaurhi. The Muslims who are going to settle down there are being looked after by him. The Government is no doubt doing all this work but help from those who can give it is also welcome. Shah Nawaz Saheb is doing this work very well. He talked to me about his work. I asked him to put down his points in writing. I shall give you the gist of what he has written down for me:

A meeting was held at Atarpur at which a panchayat of the local Hindus and Muslims was formed. The head of the

Panchayat came to Patna and exhorted the Muslim refugees to go back to their homes. He told them that they should regard him as their friend as before and trust him. He assured them that he would protect them at the cost of his life. His words had some effect and some fifty Muslim families returned to their villages. They are now living there in peace and they no longer require police protection. The Government also provides them food through General Shah Nawaz. When he distributed the foodstuffs to the Muslims, the Hindus protested. They said the Muslims had suffered at their hands and so they would arrange for their food. And they have been doing it. The local Hindus are also helping the Muslims in harvesting their crops.

Shah Nawaz Saheb also went to Bir. A Muslim from that place went up to him and said that he wanted to return to his village. But he saw danger in going there. The General permitted him to go and, providing him a police escort, asked him to proceed without fear. But as he was going a few Hindus of the village Panchayat stopped him and asked why he had the police escort with him. The Muslim villager was scared. He said he was frightened to go alone. The Hindus said it was a shame on them that he should go under police protection. They urged him to trust them and said that they would look after his safety and he should not have the police to escort him. The Muslim villager was persuaded at last. He realized that the Hindus were after all his friends and he sent back the escort.

The third thing is that there are also some Sikhs working with Shah Nawaz Saheb who are discharging their responsibilities very well. One among them is Lt. Kartar Singh. He carried the beddings of the returning Muslims to their respective houses. The Muslims appreciated this gesture. They thought they need not be afraid of men who had been offering such services to them. When somebody died in one of the Muslim families, Kartar Singh dug the grave all by himself. This has been very largely removing the fear from the hearts of the Muslims. And the work is proceeding well. But that does not mean that things are going on equally well in all places. If, in all the places where the Hindus have committed grave crimes, work is done along the lines followed in these three places, the Muslims would certainly return to their homes. There is no doubt about it. The Government would of course rebuild the houses that have been destroyed or damaged. But you too should help in putting up the houses again.

All the houses should be ready by June. This is what Shah Nawaz Saheb also desires. Hence you must give your full help.

If all the Hindus here start treating the Muslims in a friendly manner, the fire that is raging today would be extinguished. This fire should be put out at once. If no attempts are made to extinguish the fire at its source it would reduce everything to ashes. Bihar is a big province. If all is well here Calcutta and the other places which are going through fire will return to normal.

I wish that when I return from Delhi your hearts would have changed so much that all the Hindus and Muslims of this place would be able to tell me that I need not stay here and that I could go back.

[From Urdu]

Gandhijike Dukhe Dilki Pukar—III, pp. 50-3

363. LETTER TO SYED JAFAR IMAM[1]

[After *April 29, 1947*][2]

Our conversation was so cordial that I referred to it in my post-prayer speech[3], of which a brief account was issued to English newspapers. I do not read what newspapers write on their own account. . . .[4] If there is any mistake kindly point it out.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 325

[1]&[2] The addressee in his letter dated April 29, 1947, had written that the report of his conversation with Gandhiji on April 15, vide pp. 286-7, had been "twisted and misinterpreted in some sections of the Press". Gandhiji asked his secretary, who had taken rough notes, to prepare an account of the interview and send it to the addressee with a copy of the rough notes, along with a report of his speech which contained the reference to the interview.

[3] *Vide* p. 289.

[4] Omission as in the source

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364. LETTER TO MAHESHDUTTA MISHRA

PATNA,
April 30, 1947

CHI. MAHESH,

I went through everything [you sent me]. I like you. You can come when I am here, not in my absence. Ask me after my return.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Do as Mridulabehn says. I do not need [anyone knowing] English. One should know well the Devanagari and Urdu scripts and Hindi as well as Urdu. It is essential that one should be [aware][1] of the potency of the charkha and the handloom and should also know Bengali and Sanskrit well. My handwriting has come out badly due to haste.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 6718

365. TELEGRAM TO P. S. SANE[2]

[*May 1, 1947*][3]

ON THE FACTS BEFORE ME YOUR FAST IS WHOLLY WRONG. PANDHARPUR MANDIR WILL BE OPENED SHORTLY TO HARIJANS. YOUR COURAGE AND GREATNESS SHOULD DISDAIN TAUNTS OF MEN HOWEVER GREAT OR MANY. PLEASE STOP THE FAST AND WIRE.[4]

The Hindu, 3-5-1947

[1] One word is illegible here.

[2] Popularly known as Sane Guruji, the addressee went on a fast unto death on May 1 to secure entry of Harijans into the Vithoba Temple at Pandharpur.

[3] The report of this and the following item appeared under this date-line.

[4] The addressee gave up the fast on May 10, after an assurance that the temple would be opened to Harijans; *vide* also the following item and letter to the addressee, p. 401.

The temple was opened to *Harijans* in November, 1947.

366. TELEGRAM TO BARVE[1]

[*May 1, 1947*][2]

YOUR WIRE. I HAVE MET BALASAHEB[3] AND SHANKERRAO[4]. I AM QUITE CLEAR THE FAST IS WHOLLY INDEFENSIBLE. PLEASE DISSUADE SANE GURUJI AND WIRE.[5]

The Hindu, 3-5-1947

367. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 1, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It is only twenty days since I had left Delhi. But even as I went I had a feeling that I might have to return soon. But my place was then in Bihar and Noakhali and I could not stay back even for a fortnight. That was why I went to Bihar. I had told you that I was Jawaharlal's prisoner and would return whenever he sent for me. I have come back as soon as I received the summons from him and Kripalani.

You will be happy to learn that when I went to Bihar people left me in peace. They did not bother me on my way. I slept in peace, I was not tired and could even do some work. But that was not the case on my return journey. People created noisy scenes at every place. It did not occur to them that an old, infirm man like me should be left in peace, and his sleep should not be disturbed. Today I felt exhausted as I was not able to sleep well. Even so, I did work during the day, because it is work that sustains me. I cannot live without work; but I could work very little. What I really cannot stand is shouting by the people and the slogans they raise. Through you I wish to convey to all people that they should not greet me with noise and should not raise slogans. It would be all right if the people gathered at

[1] President, Maharashtra Harijan Sevak Sangh, Pandharpur
[2] *Vide* the preceding item.
[3] B. G. Kher, Chief Minister of Bombay
[4] Shankerrao Deo
[5] *Vide* also "Telegram to G. V. Mavalankar", 7-5-1947.

the railway stations if they wished, for, if they came, some collection would be made for the Harijan Fund. But they should not make noise.

I wish to tell you what I did in Bihar. The work done there is considerable. Gen. Shah Nawaz has installed himself in a small place. He is now meeting with success in his work. The Muslims who had fled to Asansol under duress have come back. They had to undergo too many hardships at Asansol. They realized that people could be comfortable only in their own place. Their children had grown so emaciated that their bones were sticking out. They were not looked after in any way there. Now these children are provided with milk. It is impossible to get fresh milk because our cattle have gone dry. Hence, these children are being given powdered milk. Powdered milk does not have the vitamins fresh milk has. But the inherent nutritive property of milk is preserved in powdered milk. After their return from Asansol these children have regained health because of the powdered milk and they have started putting on weight.

Then there was the question of rations for the adults. How to provide food for so many people who had come back ? They were afraid to go out and buy the rations themselves in a place where they had been persecuted. The Government arranged to have the rations sent to them. But their Hindu neighbours protested saying that the Muslims were their guests and they would themselves bring the rations to their houses, and that it was not necessary for Government officials to trouble themselves on that account.

In another place, where Muslims had been killed in large numbers, those who had survived were hesitating to return. Some I.N.A. men escorted them so that they could get over their misgivings. On seeing the I.N.A. men going with them some Hindus told them that they need not take the trouble. They were going to serve these Muslims. They would protect them even if it meant death. The I.N.A. men said that they were obeying the command of their General, and they could not go back. Then the Hindus pleaded that they would not always be mad. Earlier they had really lost their heads. Was it any bravery that ten thousand people should come together to kill one thousand? They would never do it again. Thus the Hindus drove away the fear from the hearts of the Muslims, and encouraged them to return to their homes. As a result the Muslims themselves asked the I.N.A. men to go back. I am confident that if the situation in Bihar turns out well, the trouble continuing

in various parts of India would come to an end. All I wish to say is that all of us have to be courageous. But I hear that people are now indulging in dastardly acts in Delhi also. Every day crimes are being committed insidiously. Shameful things are happening in Dera Ismail Khan too.[1] They have not yet ceased.

People ask me what has happened to our signatures. Why is peace not being established? I did not affix my signature after meeting and consulting Mr. Jinnah. The Viceroy insisted that I should sign the appeal. I asked him what authority I had to sign the appeal. I am not even a four-anna member of the Congress. What good would my signature be? I am a small man. Of course the Quaid-e-Azam is a big man, his signature would carry much weight. But the Viceroy told me that Jinnah Saheb was keen on my signature. He was not ready to affix his own signature unless I affixed mine. He said that if I gave my signature, he would at least know what Jinnah Saheb really meant. Thus I put down my signature. I will not discuss what followed.

Signing a peace appeal is nothing new for me. All my life I have done that and I continue to do it. But Jinnah Saheb's signature is a great thing. If all Muslims are under Jinnah Saheb's influence, they must now abide by his words; for he has signed on behalf of the Muslims. But have I given my signature because I am a Hindu? I have influence over none. I belong to no party. I belong to all. If the Hindus of Bihar act in frenzy again I shall fast unto death. In the same way, if the Muslims in Noakhali lose their heads, I shall lay down my life there. I have earned that right. I belong to the Muslims no less than to the Hindus. I belong to the Sikhs, Parsis and Christians in the same measure. I may be crying in the wilderness, but whatever I say would be on behalf of all and addressed to all.

But Jinnah Saheb presides over a great organization. Once he has affixed his signature to the appeal, how can even one Hindu be killed at the hands of the Muslims? I would tell the Hindus to face death cheerfully if the Muslims are out to kill them. I would be a real sinner if after being stabbed I wished in my last moment that my son should seek revenge. I must die without rancour. But why in the first place would a Muslim kill at all when he has been asked not to do it?

But the thing is that they have still to realize that in politics force cannot avail. People ask why our signing the peace

[1] Murders, arson, loot, destruction of property and conversions on a large scale had been reported in Dera Ismail Khan and Hazara districts.

appeal is not having any effect. Why are the Muslims still not contained? Why are Dera Ismail Khan and the Frontier Province rocked with violence? Dr. Khan Saheb and Badshah Khan tried to stop it but the people there claimed that they belonged to the Muslim League.

If the people of the Frontier Province, even as supporters of the Muslim League, do not honour the words of Jinnah Saheb, I would venture to suggest that it is his paramount duty to leave everything and work to restore peace. Why is he not following that course? Is he going to achieve Pakistan by following his present course? If he wishes to have Pakistan, let him have it by adopting peaceful methods. When someone achieves something by force, it is snatched away from him by a greater force. Jinnah Saheb's idea of achieving Pakistan by force can never succeed.

But I want to ask even the Viceroy why he is not able to do anything after getting the signatures from both of us. Why does he not take me to task? Why does he not take Jinnah to task? If the Hindus and the Muslims continue to fight even after that, if the Sikhs continue to fight, the British should step aside.

But what would you do if the British continued to stay here? You say you would take up arms, but the British are not going to be frightened by your arms and give you anything. Even now, they are not talking of granting us freedom because of our arms. They think that India has shown a new way to the world. That is the reason why we are getting our independence. As it is, there are too many people in the world who meet force by force. They even talk of killing two for one, let alone one for one. But, I say there will never be any peace even if you kill not ten but a hundred for one. There is nothing brave about dying while killing. It is an illusion of bravery. The true martyr is one who lays down his life without killing.

You may turn round and ask whether all Hindus and all Sikhs should die. Yes, I would say. Such martyrdom will not be in vain.

You may compliment me or curse me for talking in this manner; but I shall only say what I feel in my heart. While you are listening to me patiently, I shall only express my heart's anguish and ask you to be courageous and not get frightened. If someone wants to scare us into surrendering anything we would part with not even a cowrie. If he comes to persuade us we may give him even crores. If you cannot show such courage and if the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs all become mad, whatever the British may do for us and whatever they may grant us, will

never remain in our hands. What we want to achieve we must achieve through persuasion. If we learn this art all will be well with us; otherwise there is absolutely no doubt that India is doomed to perish.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 54-8

368. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
May 1, 1947

The members of the Congress Working Committee are unnecessarily insisting on my presence. Specially Jawaharlal is earnestly pressing me for it. I, however, do not feel that my presence will be of much help, since my line of thinking at the moment is entirely different. I have come here because I could not resist Jawahar's invitation. Otherwise my heart is in Bihar. It seems I won't have to stay here for long. Maybe, I will have to go to Calcutta. Complete peace has not yet been restored there. Stray incidents are occurring daily.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 283

369. TALK WITH RAJENDRA PRASAD[1]

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
May 2, 1947

I do not wish to stay here for long. I hold that if I am able to do something in Bihar or Noakhali, it will have far-reaching consequences in the whole country. Even if we get swaraj, if there is no peace in people's hearts it will not be of much use. And I believe that I can do more work there than here. But here I am a prisoner of Jawahar and the Sardar. If they release me I would like to leave by the first available train.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 283-4

[1] Who accompanied Gandhiji during his morning walk

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370. LETTER TO HORACE G. ALEXANDER

NEW DELHI,
May 2, 1947

MY DEAR HORACE,

Naughty of you to be ill. I must make a desperate effort to see you in your bed and make you laugh.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 1445

371. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

NEW DELHI,
May 2, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I have all your letters. I am unable to write but the work I am doing is the same.

Amtul Salaam is unhappy. Please satisfy her if you can. I have written a letter[1] to her. Please read it and pass it on to her.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9080

372. A LETTER

May [*2*][2], *1947*

On the train to Delhi I read about Kshitish Babu's demise. I reached Delhi yesterday, and got from Thakkar Bapa your name and address.

All of us must feel sad about the passing away of an ardent worker like Kshitish Babu. But if we all do his work he should not be dead so far as we are concerned. Bapa tells me that

[1] The letter is not available.

[2] From the reference to Gandhiji's arrival at Delhi where he reached on May 1. The source, however, has "May 3".

your sister also is with you. I hope you two would render such great service that Kshitish Babu's name would be immortalized through your lives.

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 287

373. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 2, 1947

After a passage from the Koran was recited, a young man shouted, "Stop it. Victory to Hinduism." Hearing this Gandhiji stopped the prayer and said:

Very well, let his wish be granted today.

Gandhiji asked the man to calm down but he continued to shout.[1] Gandhiji said:

If my words can reach the policemen I would request them to release the man and allow him to come over here. I do not approve of the police coming here to maintain order during the prayer. If the police go on arresting people every day and I rely on them to hold the prayer, it would be no prayer at all. I can hold the prayer only when all the people gladly allow it to proceed peacefully. You saw that I stopped the prayer when the young man wanted it to be stopped. I would again stop the prayer if he wants me to do so tomorrow. But "Victory to Hinduism" cannot be won in this manner as he has said. He must realize that religion only declines by such acts. How can we protect our religion by preventing others from praying? But I do not blame him. Today the atmosphere is such. Today everything is seen upside down. No one understands the obvious thing. Hence, if someone asks me to stop the prayer, I shall submit to the demand.

But what pains me more is that he created a disturbance in the midst of the prayer. I would not have started the prayer at all if he had made his intention known in the beginning. Where was the need for the police to intervene? It is a matter of shame to me that so much police force should stay here to maintain order during the prayer. How can the police protect my religion? My religion would be protected only when I myself

[1] In the mean while the police arrived and took the man away.

protect it. Or rather, it is pretentious to say that I would protect my religion. It is God who would protect my religion. If there is prayer in my heart, God is bound to protect me. What does it matter if the external prayer is not conducted?

But what can you do? You are all sitting quietly. You have come here to meditate on God and imbibe some goodness. All of you have to suffer because of one person. But you are not going to realize God by getting together to suppress a single individual and carrying on the prayer by force. That would be only betraying yourselves.

I wish that the young man had calmed down and heard what I had to say. I would have brought him round. He would have been convinced if not today then tomorrow, if not tomorrow, then the day after. Whatever it may be, we have to remember that force cannot be employed in furtherance of religion. One would have to lay down one's life in the pursuit of religion. There has been no religion in the world which did not call for the sacrifice of life. Only after one has mastered the art of laying down one's life does one's religion attain strength. The tree of religion is watered only by those who are prepared to die. Religion progresses through one who recites the name of God, who works for God, who praises Him, who undertakes vows and fasts and pleads with God to show one the way since one cannot find it oneself. Then the people know him for a devotee and follow him. Religion takes shape only that way. No religion has grown by killing. It has grown only by dying. This is the basis of religion. Sikhism has progressed only in this way.

Prophet Mohammed also fled to Medina without fear in his heart and God saved him and Hazrat Ali from thousands of enemies because of their faith in Him. Prophet Mohammed, as it were, strengthened the roots of Islam by risking death.

Similar is the story of Christianity. And Buddhism too, if we regard it as separate from Hinduism, grew only when some people sacrificed their lives for it. I have not found a single religion which did not in the earlier stages call for sacrifices on the part of its followers. When a religion is well established people in large numbers come forward to follow it. This gives rise to bigotry. Now even the followers of Hinduism have stooped to killing and slaughtering although Hinduism never advocated violence.

Today people are scared at the mere mention of religion. I wonder why people are so scared. The Hindus, the Sikhs—why, the whole of the Punjab is in a tumult. And from the other end one hears the shrieks from Bengal. People say that the

Punjab and Bengal should be partitioned. But if they have to be divided, why do they go to the Viceroy? Why do they not come to me? Why do they not come to you? If Pakistan is being granted, is it for the purpose of annihilating the Hindus and Sikhs?

Jinnah Saheb has stated that the Hindu and the Sikh minorities would be absolutely safe in Pakistan and that they would not be persecuted. But why are such conditions not obtaining today? I can have a glimpse of Pakistan in only what is happening in the Punjab and Bengal, isn't it? If that is not what Pakistan is going to be, why does not Jinnah Saheb bring about what he says? Why is not every Hindu in the Muslim majority places protected? Why do the Hindus of Sind, who form only 25 per cent of the population, have to live under the shadow of fear? Does Pakistan mean that all the non-Muslims, the Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and those belonging to other religions have to live as slaves ? If that is so, it would not be a true Pakistan. Hindustan too can be considered true Hindustan only when no harm is done even to innocent Muslim children in the Hindu majority provinces.

Jinnah Saheb can question us about the deeds of the Hindus. The Hindus of Bihar have behaved no better. Indeed they are at fault. But today the Hindus of Bihar are repenting. Even the Chief Minister owns his guilt. If the same thing happens at all places I would know that something worthwhile has been achieved. But today everybody has given up his religion, and if others follow their religions people rush to attack them. This is not correct. The Muslims in their turn should tell their minority neighbours that they could all follow their own religions and that they would not come in their way.

After all, why should we let a thing slip from our hands when we are about to have it? But everyone is acting like that only. The Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, all should free themselves from this sin of internal quarrels and there is only one way of doing it, namely, to fear God. Then there would be no demand for arms. Then no one would clamour for military [protection] or for weapons. But today there is an all-round demand for *kirpans* such as the Sikhs have. Again the demand is for big *kirpans* as the traditional ones are small. But whom are they going to kill with these weapons ? If there are going to be such weapons in all the houses, you would not find me anywhere around.

I have only one solution whereby we can completely wipe out even the firmly entrenched British power. That method is

to say 'No', i.e., to non-co-operate. They would be completely uprooted by peaceful non-co-operation. It is a great thing. Once it is adopted we shall not have to go in for military training.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 59-62

374. TALK WITH ASHADEVI ARYANAYAKUM[1]

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
May 2, 1947

This girl won't have any trouble if only I can set right her digestion. She is sick because of some disorder in her intestines. Her health should improve to the extent she and I are able to enshrine Ramanama in our hearts. This girl is my partner in this *yajna*. I have not a shadow of doubt that whatever her thought, word and deed, they are bound to interact on my actions and the purity or impurity of my thought, word and deed will have a bearing on her actions. Therefore the more sincere I am in reciting Ramanama the greater will be her improvement.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 287

375. LETTER TO P. S. SANE

May 3, 1947

BHAI SANE GURUJI,

Your wire. I am sorry you don't understand my simple argument.[2] Initially you wanted to undertake the fast because of the criticism from some four or five people, and now you are demanding opening of the temple for the Harijans. I do not understand where dharma comes in. In any case I would appeal to you to give up your fast.

Shankerrao and Balasaheb are your friends, not enemies. You should also listen to the advice of friends such as these. May God grant you better counsel.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 288

[1] Ashadevi had drawn Gandhiji's attention to the continuing ill health of Manu Gandhi.

[2] *Vide* pp. 391 and 392.

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376. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
May 3, 1947

I had hoped you would come only after finding out the price of the mangoes. You should have served them only after ascertaining their price. You did not bring the information on your own and not even after I asked you. I learn that these days a mango costs ten annas. If it is true, I can live without them. Such things do not give me nourishment, rather they are harmful for me. At a time of such distress and when prices run high, you have given me a glassful of juice of four mangoes which cost two and a half rupees. How can I possibly drink it?[1]

This clearly shows that God is helping me. I was in a dilemma and was wondering where I stood. Otherwise how could this girl think of making juice of such expensive mangoes for me? But God sent me these children—and particularly those who are dearest to me. You can see how merciful God is to me!

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 289

377. TALK WITH KIRAN SHANKAR ROY

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
May 3, 1947

If the British want to give us swaraj after large-scale massacre and migration of population, we do not want it. Jinnah Saheb has stated that full protection will be given to the minorities in Pakistan but it is only a verbal assurance and has not been put into practice. It therefore becomes the duty of the British to remonstrate against the injustice being done to the minorities. The Viceroy should issue a statement to that effect. But I don't see any move in this direction. Maybe, I am growing old and becoming senile. I am, therefore, left all alone to plead for my line

[1] Gandhiji gave the juice to the two refugee children who had come with their mothers to see him.

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of thinking. Gurudev's *bhajan—Ekla chalore* is my only consolation. Now my only wish is to sacrifice myself in this effort. If nothing else, God will at least grant me this wish. Remember, if you divide India today, tomorrow provinces and states will be fragmented into smaller parts. And thus Rajputana, Gujarat, Bihar, Delhi, Maharashtra and the Punjab also will follow suit. We might escape its consequences because we are on the brink of death but generations to come will curse us at every step for the kind of swaraj we shall have bequeathed to them.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 290

378. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 3, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You must now be quiet as you are every day. You come here for the prayers, hence you must sit quietly as you arrive. We can always talk. You can talk when you disperse after the prayer. But till then you must remain silent because silence is the essence of prayer.[1]

It appears that the rest of the prayer is allowed, but there is objection only to the recitation from the Koran. Hence, from tomorrow I shall start the prayer with *Auz-o-Billahi*. So far the prayer used to begin with a Buddhist hymn which is in the Japanese language. A Japanese monk[2] used to stay with me at Sevagram. He used to sing this hymn in a strong, melodious voice as he circled round the Ashram for one hour every morning sounding his *dimdim*[3]. He expressed a desire to sing the hymn in the prayer, to which I agreed, and since then the prayer has always begun with the singing of this hymn. But from tomorrow I shall begin the prayer with *Auz-o-Billahi* and the prayer would be carried on if there is no obstruction from anyone. Otherwise, you will all sit in silence and pray in your hearts, and go back peacefully.

However, I would request you to carry in your hearts the prayers of all religions when you go back. Please understand

[1] Someone then objected to the recitation from the Koran and Gandhiji stopped the prayer.

[2] The Rev. G. Haishao

[3] A percussion instrument

that all religions are good. Have the faith that all religions are lofty. The fault does not lie with any religion. If the fault lies anywhere, it is with the people who follow these religions. Every religion has produced some evil men. It is not as if any particular religion has a monopoly of producing evil men. Hence it is our duty to see the good points in every religion rather than those evil men. Let us pick up the gem-like qualities from every religion and thus enrich our own.

Now let me tell you what I propose to say today. We find ourselves in a very delicate situation these days. India is such a big country that the whole world is watching us. You saw in the Inter-Asian Relations Conference convened by Jawaharlal that all eyes were fixed on India. Sjhariar[1] is not an ordinary man. He is quite a big man. But even he has his eyes on you, that is, on India. Even the people of the Arab countries look up to us with the hope that the Asian countries would be able to follow suit provided India takes the lead. Japan could do precious little. There is no doubt that Japan showed great courage. She also acted shrewdly. But where is she now? She has not been able to lead Asia. She has lagged behind. One feels sad looking at that country.

As for us, we have not even attained our independence as yet. But even now the world is keen to know how we act. This is because we struggled for our independence in a manner no other people did. Such struggles had been carried on in the name of religion. But among struggles for freedom this one is the first of its kind. On April 6, 1919, we took our first step in the direction of independence which now is but a matter of time. And it is universally hoped that with India becoming independent, the whole of Asia and then Africa too would become free. This would mean a new birth for the whole world.

The delegates to the Inter-Asian Relations Conference returned with this understanding. When they came here the atmosphere was vitiated. But they did not look at the dismal things here. Rather they looked forward to our freedom. Those who understand know that when a river is in flood the water goes turbid. Similarly in our country the approach of independence has vitiated the atmosphere. There is a surge of independence in our country and it is likely to cause some disturbances. But it is our duty to see that in course of time we make our freedom pure like the waters of the Ganga which become clear once the floods subside.

[1] Dr. Sultan Sjhariar, Premier of Indonesia

How can this be done? India cannot be protected by looking upon irreligion as religion. Nor can we have religious freedom that way. But what is happening today? What happened in Dera Ismail Khan? What happened in Hazara? Why is there such a holocaust in the Frontier Province? Why is there such a race for getting swords and spears and guns? Why are those things collected openly as well as secretly? Why are bombs manufactured secretly? Why do people go on proclaiming that they would resort to force and violence and would get things done under threat?

With all this we can protect neither ourselves nor others. In this way neither India nor Asia would be able to achieve freedom; the rest of the world too would fail to attain freedom.

Let us all then pray and clearly understand that all religions are one. It would be a great thing if we could be good even as individuals.

The next thing I want to talk about is the Press. One of the newspapers has published reports about the Viceroy's talks with our Ministers. They have also circulated reports about the discussions at the meeting of the Congress Working Committee. It is not a small newspaper. Nor is it run in the interests of our opponents. It is a paper supporting the Congress. It has drawn certain conclusions about the Viceroy's plans. It is highly improper that newspapers should indulge in such speculation. They should let the Viceroy himself make a public announcement about what he intends doing. And why should any surmises be made even about discussions at the Working Committee meeting? Only the official report issued by the Working Committee should have been published.

I know there are a great many journalists who scoop up bits from different places and manage to build up a story. But I would say that these people are grabbing at left-overs of a meal. It is not the function of a journalist to depend on left-overs.

The British have sent here a nice man from amongst them. He has come to save Britain's honour. He has been acting with the same good intention with which he has been sent. Then, what right do we have to give publicity to his actions without consulting him? What right does anyone have to wheedle information out of everybody by sweet words, draw inferences from here and there and then publish them in the paper?

I too have been a journalist for the past fifty years. I know how newspapers are run. I also know how newspapers are run in England and America. But why should we ape the

evil practices prevailing in England and America? We shall perish if we imitate the bad things in others.

I do not say that everything this journalist has reported is wrong. Some of the things he has written are correct, some are incorrect. He has just made a hotch-potch of the thing. I totally disapprove of this kind of journalism.

Through you I wish to address myself to all journalists that they should not try to make money in this manner. If we cannot earn our livelihood in a straightforward manner, let us perish. But why should this journalist talk in a manner that would harm the country? He has even invented a headline no one would have dreamt of.

It would be good to ignore whatever is unwholesome about England and America and adopt their good points.

Today Jawaharlal expressed his sorrow over this to me. To how many people can he go on expressing his feelings? And moreover what consolation can I offer him? We have led a crusade of dharma and it is with dharma that we are going to win our independence. I would request journalists also to help us in this.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 62-6

379. A TALK[1]

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
May 4, 1947

I admit that our struggle for freedom had not been purely non-violent. Had all Congressmen honestly followed true non-violence, we would not have been today in a state of utter confusion. It is becoming clear to me day by day that what we regarded as non-violent fight was not really so. Otherwise the dragon of communalism would not have raised its head amongst us; untouchability would have been a thing of the past, distinctions between employer and employee would have ceased to exist and both would have performed body-labour alike without any distinction. Nowhere have we heard it happen the way the honour of our daughters and sisters is being violated in broad daylight in our country. Had we followed the path of truth and non-violence we would not have seen human hearts

[1] With Rajendra Prasad, Amrit Kaur and Harekrushna Mahtab

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so devoid of humanity, and society would have been well-organized and without any trace of animosity. Today we do not see a single good sign. Everywhere Congressmen are being condemned and people seem to have lost faith in them. The Muslim League may not trust us, but even the States have become indifferent towards us. You and, maybe, I too, are to blame for this. Had we followed truth, non-violence and sacrifice one hundred per cent, not only the masses but even children, would have revered us. Instead the atmosphere is quite different. Even now we should realize our mistake and retrace our steps. Otherwise sixty years' glorious record of the Congress will be wiped out within a decade.

Unless we kindle the flame of unadulterated non-violence and truth within ourselves we shall not realize our goal of complete independence. With that light kindled within us, the tendency towards violence will automatically vanish and riots will be brought under control.

Nevertheless I do not presume that the police will have absolutely no place in a vast country like India inhabited by such a diversity of people. In a situation like this, if we are unable to manage things without the aid of the army, how can we say that we will do without the police? No doubt I cherish a fond vision that we may be able to do without the police, for I would call them not 'police' but 'social reformers'. They will be the servants of the people, not their masters.

Just as in training for violence one learns to kill, similarly in adopting non-violence one should learn the art of dying. There is no place at all for fear in non-violence. Not only that, one has to develop the spirit of sacrifice to such a high degree that one would not hesitate to sacrifice one's family, property and even one's life. A votary of non-violence should fear God alone. One resorts to violence to protect one's physical body. But we should realize that the body is perishable and it is the soul which really matters. And in order to protect the honour of one's soul there is no alternative to non-violence.

There is no school where such non-violence can be taught. Our non-violence is tested only when we act with courage. Today we are being put to this test and in my opinion we have failed in the test. Otherwise every four-anna member of the Congress should have been engaged in quelling the riots or should have died in the attempt. Instead they dare not save their neighbours from being butchered. I have even heard of instances where people ran away in panic to save their lives leaving

behind their wives, mothers, sisters and daughters in peril. I shudder when I hear such tales. What cowardice on our part! A truly non-violent person should brave the danger and prove his worth. The courage of a non-violent person is many times superior to the courage of a violent person. But who listens to me? I do, however, hope to meet death, if anyone should come to kill me, without a trace of anger, calmly, with a smile, and all the while remembering my chosen God. I believe that God will grant me this strength. If there is any shortcoming or ego in me its proof will be found in the hour of my death. I used to talk about living up to 125 years but I no longer have the desire because every day I see only falsehood and treachery all round me. I am, however, growing daily stronger in my conviction that God will bless me with a death befitting a non-violent person.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 292-4

380. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 4, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today the prayer will start with the recitation from the Koran, but before that I would ask if there is anyone who does not want this large gathering to have the prayer. If anyone objects to the prayer after it is started the prayer would be stopped; but that would be an uncivilized act. Hence if anyone has any objection he can stop the prayer before we begin it. Is there anyone among you who wants to do so?

A man cried out from the audience: "Yes, I object."

GANDHIJI: Why?

There can be no recitation from the Koran in a temple.

Do you wish to come in the way of such a large gathering?

Yes.

You must all listen. I shall talk to this man. Let us try to know his mind.

Then, turning to the man Gandhiji said:

You need not get excited. Kindly explain to me coolly why I should not pray in this temple today when I do it every day.

The temple belongs to the public. You should not hold your prayers in a public temple.

It is a public temple, no doubt, but the priest and the trustees of the temple are not preventing me. Then why do you want to stop so many people who have come to chant God's name? I really do not understand.

Because I too belong to the public.

Well, then you will not allow the prayer?

No, I will not.

Well, then I stop the prayer. But I want to explain to you all the place of harmony and non-violence in religion. If you continue to stop my prayer every day, you humiliate not me but yourselves. The right thing should be that if one person is unwilling to respect the wishes of so many, he should himself leave the place. How can a single man stand in the way of such a large gathering? This is possible only with me, i.e., in the world of non-violence. Of course the temple belongs to everybody, but this does not mean that one man may go about creating obstructions at his whim. If such a thing is allowed all the activities of the temple would come to a halt. Had I been alone and he had stopped me, it would have been a different matter. But if he went on shouting in the midst of so many people and I continued the prayer, you would all be provoked. You would hurl abuses at him and hand him over to the police. What credit would it bring us? If that happened, what would the world say about us?

Hence I stop the prayer. But they cannot stop the recitation of *Auz-o-Billahi*, etc. It is very much in my mind. We shall not recite it today. We shall observe silence for two minutes during which you will offer the same prayer. True, you do not know *Auz-o-Billahi*, etc., by heart, but while observing silence you should bring it to your mind that Rama and Rahim are but one. In other words, Hinduism and Islam are both great religions and there is no difference between them. I fail to understand why any two religions should be at loggerheads. Hence I wish that your *mantra* while observing the silence should be: 'Thou art God, million are thy names.' I had

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told you that in Hinduism the recitation of *Vishnusahasranama*[1] is very much in vogue. I even believe that God has as many names as there are human beings in the world. *Ishwara*, *Bhagawan*, Khuda, God, or Ormuzd—whatever name you prefer to say—these are all His names. And, He is over and above all these names. How can anyone ever talk of stopping people from reciting the name of God who is so great that none can know Him? Such an act is sheer impudence, it is barbarism, it is violence.

It would be still better if you could sit with your eyes closed as you observe silence. If, in the mean time, the gentleman sees reason and decides against obstructing the prayer we shall hold the prayer. If not, I shall tell you what I have in mind.[2]

I had to go to the Viceroy today as you already know.[3] We sat together for one and a half hours and had a nice and useful discussion. I cannot reveal everything to you here. However, I shall talk about one thing.

The Viceroy told me that I should tell my people on his behalf, or, if I had trust in him, on my own that he had come to transfer power and wind up the British Raj in this country. It was not possible to wind up such a vast empire in a day. Such a large army could not be moved out just by snapping one's fingers. But he assured me that the British had no intention of staying here beyond June 30, 1948. He said he had come here to do this task and was doing his utmost to accomplish it.

But he complains that he is upset by what appears in our newspapers. That obstructs his work. It is his complaint that on the one hand we fight among ourselves and on the other blame and discredit the British. Maybe, the British Government committed errors in the past. But now we must forget about the responsibility of the British for our quarrels. Nothing worth while would be gained by harping on the responsibility of the British for this and that. He has advised us not to talk in this vein and to forget the past in deciding the issues that belong to the future.

The Viceroy says that our newspapers do exactly this and their obduracy hampers his work. He says he had said nothing from which the Press could have any clue. Nor had any of his close associates said any such thing.

The Viceroy expects the people of India to behave with a reasonable degree of decency. The headlines carried by the

[1] A hymn containing the thousand names of Lord Vishnu

[2] The gathering then observed two minutes' silence.

[3] For a report of the interview as recorded by the Viceroy, *vide* Appendix XV.

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newspapers also largely twist the point. On what basis had the Press reported that Khan Saheb's Government in the Frontier Province would be overthrown? When the nationalist papers indulge in such writing, the Muslim papers try to outdo them.

This, the Viceroy said would only spread poison on both sides and he had not come here to spread poison. If the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians lived together in peace it would give a good name to the British that they left behind a united India.

The Viceroy also wished to say that if the people of India desired freedom they must remain reasonably peaceful. He said they did not want to leave us quarrelling among ourselves. That is why he is trying his best to solve all issues whatever the result. He carries on his work on the assumption that they are definitely leaving by June 30, 1948.

Appealing to my faith in him he assured me that he took every step in accordance with his conscience. Although he is a naval commander and believes in physical force he has utmost faith in God too as I have, and is guided by nothing but his own conscience. He acts according to his own lights such as God has granted him. Moreover, he could serve the British nation in no other way.

He would try his utmost to see that our people worked together in harmony. He did not wish to do anything which might jeopardize the interests of the minorities. Otherwise it would be said that they had granted everything to the Hindu majority by suppressing the Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs, etc. Who was going to intervene if we chose to fight after they had gone? Right now he was silently making efforts for a compromise. But once his patience came to an end, he would not keep quiet. He said now even the Defence Minister[1] was our own man. But if he too would appear to have failed in handling the situation the Viceroy would exercise his responsibility with the help of the Englishman[2], who was still the Commander [-in-Chief] of the British army, which was by no means small, and the personnel trained by them. But if the people accepted his advice straightaway, it could somewhat lighten his work.

No doubt, the Viceroy's task is difficult; but the British are not a people who would run away from a difficult task.

This was not meant to be conveyed to you. But I felt that since we have gathered here in such numbers I might as

[1] Sardar Baldev Singh

[2] Claude John Eyre Auchinleck

well tell you about it today, and through you, convey it to the Press.

I told you yesterday that unless Lord Mountbatten proves guilty of a breach of trust, we should not talk about him irresponsibly. If he does nothing even when we behave well, we can tell the British people that their Viceroys come in succession to grant us freedom but all they do is to suppress us.

We need not express it in an impolite way. Everything can be expressed in an agreeable language. If we behave in an uncivilized manner, we cut our own throats.

It would make their departure difficult if we continue to fight among ourselves. Defence, of course, is in their hands, but that is only to resist foreign aggressors. How can they stop our internal quarrels? They would merely say that the Hindus are condemning the Muslims and the Muslims are condemning the Hindus. What can they do about it? They have got to go. If we went on fighting till the end of June and they failed to do anything we would tell them that they had no more right to stay on and they should quit.

If they stay on, they can stop the Hindus and also the Muslims from fighting by using force against both as they have done before. Thousands of men have been done to death for the killing of a single Englishman. But they cannot do such a thing at the moment of their departure. Hence, it is our duty to make their departure easier by demonstrating our faith in them. Let us not add to their troubles.

But what is happening today? There is scarcity of food and clothing—you and I do get them, but there are millions in the country who do not get any food or clothing. A minister from Madras who came to me today told me that there were floods in the State and that but for the disturbances it would have been possible to reach food to the poor people. One does not think in terms of Hindus and Muslims in the matter of distributing food—it has to be provided to all the people of the country.

But today everyone has but one thought, i.e., of killing and slaughtering, and that too in a savage manner. The Muslims kill any Hindus they come across and the Hindus kill any Muslims they come across.

If we stoop to such beastly ways and say that we shall mend our ways once the British have gone, it is a wrong attitude.

Let me tell you one more thing. General Shah Nawaz came today. He has been working in Bihar even after I came

away from there. He draws no salary. Even so he has taken formal leave for fifteen days and is going home. He says that even those Muslims from Bihar who were hesitating to return and who were intimidated by the Hindus have now started coming back. That was because the Hindus realized their duty when they were persuaded and worked continuously for two days and cleared the way for the return of the Muslims and also helped in putting up the huts that were razed to the ground. Similar good work has been done in other villages as well.

If work proceeds along the same lines all the Muslims who have fled from Bihar will come back. The Government is helping them financially; but the Hindus should bring round those who are terrorizing them or are creating obstacles in their way. Then alone would things get done.

In short, there are some decent people even in the midst of the cry to kill and slaughter. Not every Muslim, every Sikh, every Hindu, is a bad man.

Just as peace is restored in Bihar, so will it be in Dera Ismail Khan and the Frontier Province.

If Jinnah Saheb means what he has written, he has got to stop the riots. The army cannot stop those riots. The riots can stop only when the people are persuaded to stop them. If they do not stop, it means that the people do not pay heed to Jinnah Saheb's words, or, Jinnah Saheb is not keen on stopping the riots.

But why should we harbour unkind thoughts about Jinnah Saheb? When things do not seem to be going well, one does start getting suspicious. If I affix my signature to something and my action is quite contrary to it, it is bound to arouse suspicion. Hence some doubts in his case too. But we shall have to watch Jinnah Saheb's actions till the last moment.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 66-72

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381. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

NEW DELHI,
May 5, 1947

Sheth Cachalia,[1] Honorary Secretary of the Transvaal Indian Congress, cabled for a message on the rally which was to take place in Johannesburg of all the non-European races in the Union of South Africa on the question of racial disabilities in the Union. The question is most intricate and almost baffling. It is intricate enough when confined only to the Indian disabilities but the inclusion of all the races while logically correct is fraught with grave danger, if the struggle is not kept at the highest level and is not firmly based on truth and non-violence. I wanted to warn the organizers of the rally against rhetorical display or raising idle hopes and to advise them to carry on their demonstration with dignity and restraint. Let no one doubt that the salvation of all the exploited peoples of the earth and, therefore, of the world, lies in the strictest reliance on the coin on whose one face is written 'truth' and on the other 'non-violence' in large letters. Sixty years of experience has taught me no other method.

The Hindu, 6-5-1947, and *Harijan*, 18-5-1947

382. LETTER TO DHARMANANDA KOSAMBI[2]

May 5, 1947

Your postcard. Death is our true and unfailing friend. He takes charge of one when one's time is over. So, if you must depart, first enshrine Rama in your heart and then go to meet Him cheerfully. Where is . . .[3]

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 297

[1] Ahmed Mahomed Cachalia

[2] (1876-1947); scholar of Buddhism; taught Pali in National College, Bombay and Fergusson College, Poona; participated in non-co-operation movement; was professor of Buddhist literature in Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad.

The addressee who was suffering from an acute skin ailment was on a restricted diet. *Vide* also "Letter to Balvantsinha", 12-5-1947.

[3] Omission as in the source

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383. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

DELHI,
May 5, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your letter. You have been entrusted with a very great responsibility[1]. I am sure you will shoulder it well. Of course, you have to learn to overcome your anger. But the forest is not the place for it. You can be sure that you have mastered your anger only when you succeed in restraining it even under provocation. The incident you mention[2] does not surprise me but the responsibility you have undertaken will save you. You did well in offering an apology to the parents of the boy.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1975

384. INTERVIEW TO REUTER[3]

May 5, 1947

DOON CAMPBELL: Is the communal division of India inevitable? Will such division solve the communal problem?

GANDHIJI: Personally, I have always said 'No', and I say 'No' even now to both these questions.

Do you subscribe to the opinion that Britain will be morally obliged to stay on in India if the outstanding Hindu-Muslim differences have not been resolved by June, 1948?

This is a question that had never been put to me before. It would be a good thing if the British were to go today—thirteen months means mischief to India. I do not question the nobility of the British declaration, I do not question the

[1] Namely, the management of the Ashram at Sevagram during the illness of Chimanlal N. Shah

[2] The addressee had slapped a little boy whom he had found tinkering with the garden fence.

[3] This appeared under the title "Quit Now".

sincerity of the Viceroy, but facts are facts. Neither the British Cabinet nor the Viceroy, however outstanding he may be, can alter facts. And the facts are that India had been trained to look to the British power for everything. Now it is not possible for India to take her mind off that state all of a sudden. I have never appreciated the argument that the British want so many months to get ready to leave. During that time all parties will look to the British Cabinet and the Viceroy. We have not defeated the British force of arms. It has been a victory for India by moral force. Assuming, of course, that every word of what has been said is meant to be carried out, then the British decision will go down in history as the noblest act of the British nation. That being so the thirteen months' stay of the British power and British arms is really a hindrance rather than a help, because everybody looks for help to the great military machine they have brought into being. That happened in Bengal, in Bihar, in the Punjab, and in the North-West Frontier Province. The Hindus and the Muslims said in turn: 'Let us have the British troops.' It is a humiliating spectacle. I have often said before but it does not suffer in value through repetition because every time I repeat it, it gains force: the British will have to take the risk of leaving India to chaos or anarchy. This is so because there has been no home rule; the [rule] has been imposed on the people. And, when you voluntarily remove that rule there might be no rule in the initial state. It might have come about if we had gained victory by the force of arms. The communal feuds you see here are, in my opinion, partly due to the presence of the British. If the British were not here, we would still go through the fire, no doubt, but that fire would purify us.

What sort of Indo-British relationship do you envisage after June, 1948?

I envisage the friendliest relationship between Britain and India assuming that a complete withdrawal takes place with complete honesty behind it—no mental reservations of any kind whatsoever.[1]

Does the clause incorporated in the Draft Constitution on the abolition of untouchability in itself represent a great reform?

No. That clause does not represent a great or any reform. It registers the fact that a great revolutionary reform has taken

[1] According to *The Hindu*, referring to Lord Mountbatten Gandhiji said, "The British have sent their great warrior and statesman as Viceroy to finish the great act."

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place in Hindu society. I confess that untouchability has not yet been pulled out root and branch from the soil. Like the evil effects of the British connection, those of untouchability, a much older institution, do not disappear in a flash. It may take some years, perhaps, before a stranger coming to India can say there is no untouchability in any shape or form.

Do you believe the United Nations Organization, as at present constituted, can maintain a lasting peace?

No. I fear the world is heading towards another showdown. It is a fear that permeates many minds. But if all goes well in India, then the world may have a long peace. It will largely depend on the manner in which India takes it. And that will depend largely on British statesmanship.

What is the solution to the Palestine problem?

It has become a problem which is almost insoluble. If I were a Jew, I would tell them: 'Don't be so silly as to resort to terrorism, because you simply damage your own case which otherwise would be a proper case.' If it is just political hankering then I think there is no value in it. Why should they hanker after Palestine? They are a great race and have great gifts. I have lived with the Jews many years in South Africa. If it is a religious longing then surely terrorism has no place. They should meet the Arabs, make friends with them, and not depend on British aid or American aid or any aid, save what descends from Jehovah.

Harijan, 18-5-1947, and *The Hindu*, 6-5-1947

385. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
May 5, 1947

In order to escape from the evil one, I seek refuge in God. O God! I begin every task with the remembrance of Thy name.

[1] Owing to inclement weather the written speech could not be read out on May 5. The following day as Gandhiji could not return in time from a meeting with M. A. Jinnah, the prayers began at 6.30 p.m. Again there was objection to the recitation from the Koran, two minutes' silent prayer was, therefore, offered and this was read out.

Thou art the compassionate and the merciful. Thou art the Creator of the universe. Thou art Lord and Master. I praise Thee alone and desire only Thy help. Thou will mete out justice on the Day of Judgment. Show me the right path, the path which Thy saints have trod, not the wrong path of those who have offended Thee.

God is one. He is eternal, all-powerful, uncreated. There is none other like Him. He has created all things. None has created Him.

This is a translation of the verses read daily from the Koran-e-Sharif. It passes my comprehension how anyone can object to their recitation. I affirm that the enshrinement of this prayer in our hearts can only uplift and make better men and women of us.

I shall not say more today.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, p. 73

386. TELEGRAM TO KSHITIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

NEW DELHI,
May 6, 1947

KSHITIS DAS GUPTA[1]
KHADI PRATISHTHAN
SODEPUR
(24 PARAGANAS, BENGAL)

REACHING CALCUTTA NINTH MORNING DELHI EXPRESS.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 8924

[1] Brother of Satis Chandra Das Gupta

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387. LETTER TO H. GREENFIELD[1]

VALMIKI MANDIR, READING ROAD,
NEW DELHI,
May 6, 1947

DEAR MR. GREENFIELD,

I received your letter of the 17th ultimo on the 25th when I was preparing to come to Delhi. I thank you for it.

Have you sent it to me for suggestions which you could incorporate in the treatise? If that is the case will you please give me the date before which I should send them? In any case the typescript I shall carry about with me to read when I feel I have a little leisure.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government—1944-47, pp.1 67-8

388. A TALK[2]

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
May 6, 1947

The only effective means for improving the lot of our people and preventing the eruption of violence around us is our *Sudarshan Chakra*[3]—the spinning wheel.

The history of cotton in our country is worth studying. Thanks to the British rule—even a sample of the cloth woven by our weavers 150 years ago is not available today. As the saying goes the snake has gone leaving only the track behind. If everyone in India spins daily, not an inch of cloth need be

[1] The addressee, Member, Central Board of Revenue, had sought Gandhiji's comments on his treatise "on the subject of salt in India, in order to provide a clear bird's-eye view of our present production, distribution and consumption of salt, and to assist the Cabinet in deciding what form our future salt administration should take".

[2] A British woman correspondent accompanied by Sarojini Naidu met Gandhiji while he was spinning.

[3] The Wheel of Vishnu

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imported. Our Government says that Bengal is poor and so is Orissa. But somehow I am not able to swallow this. Cotton is not grown anywhere on such a large scale as in our country. The truth is we are not poor, we are lazy. If we discard laziness and ply the charkha daily for at least half an hour knowing [all its implications], our creative energy will automatically grow. I can do without food but not without sacrificial spinning even for a single day. Swaraj and peace lie in the spinning-wheel. When I first took up the spinning-wheel I did not have much knowledge about it. But my nephew Maganlal Gandhi renounced everything for it and did a lot of research in this field. One who possesses the spinning-wheel enjoys complete freedom. Whereas those depending on mill-cloth become slaves of mill-owners. Every person should determine his own needs and should himself try to fulfil them and seek others' help only when it becomes unavoidable. Unless everyone develops this attitude and becomes completely self-reliant, we can never be really free.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 301

389. A TALK[1]

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
May 6, 1947

GANDHIJI: Because I was late in returning after meeting Jinnah Saheb, this mad girl[2] got panicky lest someone might have killed me. That is why I took a few minutes in reassuring her.

VISITOR: Europe is in the grip of industrialization. Do you think India will follow suit? Wherever I had been I found people talking about nothing but industrialization.

What you say is true. Western influence is on the increase. It would not be wrong to say that at present I am the only person having faith in village industries. No doubt I have some co-workers who are busy experimenting in the Sevagram Ashram. But if among crores there are only a hundred or a thousand having faith in village industries, it is like a drop in an ocean. Even so I dare say that India does not require mills or machines

[1] With a British woman to whom Gandhiji apologized for having kept her waiting

[2] Manu Gandhi

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to the extent Europe does. If India chooses, it can do without them. But it is not easy to resist the temptation.

I had asked only for two minutes and you have been kind enough to grant me your precious time. I shall never forget it. I shall be taking to my country the sweet memories of these moments.

I am equally delighted to meet you.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 305-6

390. DISCUSSION WITH ARUNA ASAF ALI AND ASHOK MEHTA[2]

[*May 6, 1947*][3]

SOCIALISTS: Is there any alternative to Pakistan?

GANDHIJI: The only alternative to Pakistan is undivided India. There is no *via media*. Once you accept the principle of partition in respect of any province, you get into a sea of difficulties. By holding fast to the ideal of undivided India, you steer clear of all difficulties.

Then why does not Congress give a clear lead?

Because it feels helpless. It is not in favour of division. But it says, and with perfect logic, that if Pakistan is to be conceded, justice should be done to non-Muslim majority areas of Bengal and the Punjab, and to the Sikhs, and these provinces should be partitioned on the same principle on which the Muslim League demands the partition of India. I do not agree with that view. In my opinion, the Congress should in no circumstance be party to partition. We should tell the British to quit unconditionally. If they do not listen and partition the country in spite of us, we shall know what to do. Why should we make ourselves accessory to what we hold to be evil?

In other words, you think that the British power need not stay on in India for another thirteen months?

[1] Gandhiji later remarked: "These people have this special quality. We must admit that they are outstanding as far as etiquette and discipline are concerned."

[2] & [3] The two Socialist leaders met Gandhiji a day after his interview to Reuter; *vide* pp. 415-7.

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Quite so. If their intention is perfectly honest, they should not bother as to what would happen to the country after them. The country is quite capable of taking care of itself. They can quit with a clear conscience.

The Congress leaders have said that the British cannot go away without bringing about a settlement between the Congress and the League.

Supposing no agreement can be arrived at between the Congress and the League even after thirteen months, would that be a 'reason' for them to stay on in India even after that date? I therefore say: Let them quit now, otherwise their going even after thirteen months will be problematical.

But if they go to whom are they to hand over power?

They can hand over power either to the Muslim League or to the Congress, I do not mind which. If they hand it over to the Congress, the Congress will come to a just settlement with the League. But even if they make it over to the League, the Congress has nothing to fear. Only, let the transfer of power be complete and unqualified. The way they do it will provide a test of their sincerity and honesty. So far the British have said that they had yielded to Congress non-violence; it was because of the non-violent struggle launched by the Congress that the Cabinet Mission was sent and the British Government made its famous declaration[1] to withdraw from India. If this is really so, they should have no difficulty in handing over power to the Congress. But so far as I, for one, am concerned, they are free to ignore the Congress and hand over power to the League. They will then have bowed before the power of violence. For that is what the League swears by. We shall then pit our non-violence even against the League's violence. Non-violence was meant not to give fight to the British only. It is ubiquitous in its application and scope. We shall settle with the League by offering our innocent blood to be spilt without spilling any and we will succeed.

Your position is perfectly logical and consistent. You said in 1942 that the British power should withdraw immediately and unconditionally.[2] You have not changed. We are wholly with you there. But a considerable section among Congressmen today has begun to think in terms of collaboration with the British power.

[1] Of February 20, 1947; *vide* Appendix I.
[2] *Vide* Vol. LXXVI.

You are right. I have not changed. I would change only if I saw my mistake. But I see none. On the contrary, with every fresh experience I am becoming firmer and firmer in my views.

What is your attitude on the States question?

Irrespective of the Congress policy, Gandhiji told them, he had hitherto been in favour of the preservation of the States. But his attitude in that regard had stiffened of late. The British had allowed the States to exist on their sufferance. In certain matters they kept them completely under their thumb while they gave them free rein in others to serve their selfish ends. They were in honour bound to settle the question of the States before leaving. It would be a gross betrayal to leave that question to be decided after independence. For instance, could the Nizam be free to follow a policy antagonistic to India, or to set up ordnance factories or factories for the manufacture of heavy armour within his dominion?

We do not wish the destruction of the Princes. Let them by all means live, but only as servants of their people. . . .[1] If the British are not insincere, they should withdraw from the whole of India including the States, leaving the map of India unchanged.

What is our duty?

If you agree with my analysis, you and those over whom you have influence should join me in preparing the atmosphere for non-violence in the country. I would love to have you with me in that.

The whole country is with you.

In a sense, yes. But I suppose, "the whole country" includes you also. Now tell me how many of you are with me? Is Aruna with me? Are Ashok and Achyut[2] with me? No, you are not. The Congress is not. So I am left to plough my lonely furrow and I am content to do so. If you decide to launch forth with me, I shall take it to mean that you have pledged yourselves to die without killing, abjured the doctrine that the end justifies the means. I have admiration for what Jayaprakash, Aruna, Achyut and others did in 1942. They thought nothing of playing with their lives. I have paid tribute to their fearlessness and courage.[3] But you will now have to cultivate the

[1] Omission as in the source
[2] Achyut Patwardhan
[3] *Vide* Vol. LXXVII, pp. 268 and 306.

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higher courage which dying without killing calls for. In that campaign sabotage can have no place. You may not agree but it is my conviction that if the Bihar masses had not had the lesson which they had at your hands in 1942, the excesses which Bihar witnessed last year would never have occurred. To me it is little consolation that those who sponsored the sabotage programme did not themselves directly participate in violence. They should have known that once the evil spirit of violence is unleashed, by its inherent nature it cannot be checked or even kept within any prescribed limits. All violence inevitably tends to run to excess. Therefore, I repeat, and I shall continue to repeat with my last breath, that it is for us to inculcate amongst the people the spirit of innocent suffering and self-sacrifice only without any evasion into or truck with its opposite.

I am proceeding to Calcutta. Some people are trying to dissuade me from going there. They say things there are worse even than in Noakhali, that there I shall be faced by ruffians who understand nothing. I tell them, that is the very reason why I want to go there. If in the course of it death comes, I shall welcome it. What better use can there be for this body that has already weathered seventy-eight winters? My death will immediately stop the fratricide.

If you cast in your lot with me, I shall call every one of you, top-rankers, to defy death with me. I own no party. But you will then be my party. Long before you were born I was a socialist. You are arm-chair Socialists. Your ideal is to provide a motor-car and a bungalow to everybody in India. Till that happens, you will continue to live as at present, without sacrificing any of your comforts. I, on the other hand, believe in putting myself on a level with the poorest and the least here and now. My socialism is not of today. I began to live socialism while I was still in South Africa. Even then many labourite socialists, so called, used to come to me with their bedraggled ties of dirty red to invite me to join their ranks. But they remained to join mine instead. For they saw that true socialism can be based only on non-violence.

If you tell me that non-violence is your ultimate goal, but in order to realize it you have to make use of violent means, because in this matter-of-fact world there is no other way, I shall say you are labouring under a great delusion. Cannot even Jinnah, that way, claim to be a votary of non-violence, for in Islam it is clearly laid down that anyone who oppresses the weak is no Muslim? But see where this has taken historical Islam.

Once you open the flood-gates of violence, you cannot control it. You will be borne away before its onrushing tide. I have, therefore, one and only one thing to say to you: Carry to its ultimate conclusion the fearlessness which characterized you in 1942. Now is the time and the hour. If you let it slip away, it may never return. By learning the art of dying without killing you can mould India's destiny. There is no other way.

Can we sum up your position by saying that the British should quit immediately and unconditionally, leaving India to God?

You may put it that way. And if in the result there is chaos, that should not frighten us. We shall emerge from the ordeal all the stronger.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 161-5

391. TALK WITH PRATAP DAYALDAS[1]

NEW DELHI,
[On or before *May 7, 1947*][2]

Asked to clarify his advice that Sind Hindus should migrate in the event of partition, Gandhiji told Pratap Dayaldas:

I said that you should suffer bravely, but non-violently unto death. But if you cannot do that and must make a disgraceful surrender of all including honour, your womenfolk and religion, in that case, the only safe and proper course for you to take is migration, not singly, but of all the Hindus and other non-Muslims.

To a further query as to what would be the plight of the minorities in Sind in the case of a partition of India, Gandhiji replied:

That question is to be fought out in the Constituent Assembly, but I am certain that all protection that is humanly possible will be stipulated for. You must not be weaklings.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

[1] This appeared in *Harijan* under the title "Gandhiji's Advice to Sindh Hindus."

[2] Gandhiji was in New Delhi from May 1 to May 7, 1947.

392. TELEGRAM TO G. V. MAVALANKAR[1]

May 7, 1947

DADA MAVALANKAR
SERVINDIA
POONA

WIRED BARVE ABOUT GURUJI.[2] SIDDAMAPPA BASSAPPA FASTING. KNOW NOTHING ABOUT IT. INQUIRE.

BAPU

Samsmarano, p. 217

393. A TALK[3]

NEW DELHI,
May 7, 1947

Asked . . . whether Pakistan would die a natural death if conceded, Gandhiji's reply was:

Can you describe Pakistan to me? What reply can be given to an unknown premise? I have tried to understand what it is and have failed. And if the Punjab and Bengal today are hall-marks of Pakistan, then it can never exist.

I cannot understand the meaning of Pakistan. Should Pakistan be attained after so much blood-shed? I am the lone follower of my ideas. Maybe, my intellect is deadened by old age! Still, how can I help mentioning the facts? Since I regard myself as a servant of the nation I would be betraying the faith of the people if I did not express what is in my heart. Personally I will say that the matter concerning the

[1] This was in reply to the addressee's wire which read: "Sane Guruji may perhaps be induced to give up fast if majority of temple trustees . . . sign declaration of willingness to open temple. . . . Trustees . . . seem to interpret your advice to them and Sane Guruji as meaning that they need take no steps now to open temple in view of new legislation. . . ."

[2] *Vide* p. 392.

[3] This was addressed to some local Muslims and representatives of two social organizations of Delhi as also to two Europeans.

Amrit Kaur's report of the talk in *Harijan*, "How Gandhiji Feels and Acts", has been collated with the Gujarati in *Biharni Komi Agman*.

partition of the provinces should be decided by us peacefully after the British have withdrawn and with mutual consultation. Why should we have the British between us? Keeping them between us is an indication of our cowardice and mutual lack of trust. Is it a matter of any credit if two brothers take their quarrel to a third man and seek judgment from him? Moreover I am surprised that no one stops to think that the British would exploit to their advantage this weakness of ours. Looking up to the British for every little thing dissipates our strength and cripples us. I would say even with regard to the Princely States that they are in such a helpless state that I pity them. The British were their protectors. Now, if they want to be happy they will have to be part of India and become servants of the nation handing over their powers to the people.

Since the last two days Socialists have been coming to me.[1] I have been telling them the same things. I say that if they are keen on bringing about socialism in the country, they should forget their internal differences, do physical labour and develop character by thoroughly examining their private and public lives. Socialism will not come by occupying positions of power and by delivering speeches from the platform. They must carefully examine every moment of their lives from the time they get up in the morning to the time they retire to bed at night. They must have before them a clear and perfect goal. And if truth and non-violence are not observed scrupulously the socialism which they are trying to bring about would be just shattered and no trace would be left of their existence. The same thing applies to the Congress. If the Congressmen and the Socialists, beautiful both in name and implication, do not follow their principles in action, there will be a revolt in the country and communism will make inroads. I shall not live to see it. But expand your activities in such a way that the future generations do not curse you.

The day we all give up our dharma will be the day of our downfall. Today the Hindus and the Muslims have forgotten their religions. But it is my hope and faith that like turbid flood waters which bring with them all the dirt on the way but turn clear once the flood subsides the present tide in the country will also subside and the atmosphere will clear up and present a hopeful picture to the world because we would have attained our freedom through dharma and *tapashcharya.*

[1] *Vide* pp. 421-5.

There was a time when Great Britain was considered the Empress of the Oceans. There was none to contest her claim. Hence, if Britain maintains true and honest friendship with India, she will attain the highest moral stature and the world will bow before her. Not only that, she will attain a position even higher than that of an Empress and all countries will have to look to her to shape the future of the world. This is because I know from experience that the British do possess these qualities and powers. I have lived among the British for many years and a large number of Englishmen and women are my friends.

I have passed some of the best years of my life among them and I have always voted against the name of "Perfidious Albion" for them and have preferred to subscribe to Cowper's well-known verse "Hypocrisy is an ode to virtue". But Britain has yet to rise to those heights.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 308-10, and *Harijan*, 18-5-1947

394. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 7, 1947

As soon as Gandhiji arrived at the prayer meeting he inquired whether Smt. Uma Devi had come. . . . She was persuaded to sit on the platform at Gandhiji's insistence. Gandhiji also invited Smt. Vibhavaribai Deshpande and said that these two women had protested against the recitation from the Koran. Gandhiji referred to a letter signed by some twenty persons suggesting that the prayer should not be stopped because a few persons protested.

Do you think there are only two or twenty persons who think like this? I think that all of you who do not protest and sit here silently day after day have the same thought in your minds which is expressed in the letter.

But I would like to request you to be patient. Religion can be pursued only with patience. Hinduism has given great importance to tolerance. Shankaracharya has stressed the importance of patience so much that he has said that we need greater patience to attain *moksha*[1] than to transfer the waters of the ocean to another pit drop by drop with the help of

[1] Salvation

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a blade of grass. Now suppose a man starts emptying the waters of the ocean with the help of a jug, if not with a blade of grass, and even finds a hollow place big enough where he can transfer those waters, and if moreover the man lives for hundreds and thousands of years, he may be able to empty the limitless expanse of the ocean. But what would happen to the fresh water pouring into the ocean? How much patience would then be needed to dry up the ocean? Naturally Shankaracharya is speaking of the infinite patience expected of a person desirous of attaining *moksha*. He says that with one foot on the stirrup of a neighing horse and the other ready to mount, we cannot ask our guru to tell us what Brahman is. That is not the way one can know Brahman. All of us who have gathered here have come with a desire to learn. We all desire to attain *moksha*. But do we have the capacity to cultivate the necessary patience? If not, let us at least cultivate enough patience to pray. What good will it do us if we go on praying while a child may be howling away? A prayer to God has to come from the heart. God is not so gullible as to accept words from the lips as prayer. Prayer does not mean mere chanting of words! And why should we insist on such utterance when we are facing opposition of any kind? What we in our superior strength do after having threatened the young man into silence—would you call it pursuit of dharma? Dharma lies in putting up with the young man. I am glad that you who have gathered here in such large numbers followed your religion peacefully and tolerated an ignorant person.

But today we are not faced with a young man but with a lady. I find that she is younger even than my adopted daughter. She is the wife of a secretary[1]. She has sent me a letter. I shall discuss it first.

The contents of the letter show not knowledge but sheer ignorance of Hinduism. This manner of protecting religion is, in fact, one that would degrade it. I wish to tell all Hindus and Sikhs that they should not adopt such misguided methods. I shall reply to the questions of this lady one by one.

1. It is not correct to say that a temple is defiled by reading the Koran there. How can praise of God in a temple be contrary to dharma? No one protested when the meaning of *Auz-o-Billahi*, etc., was explained[2] here in Hindi yesterday.

[1] Of the Akhil Bharatiya Deshi Rajya Hindu Mahasabha, who ran *Rajasthan Samachar*, a daily

[2] *Vide* pp. 417-8.

Would it be an irreligious act if someone recited the *Gita* in its Arabic translation? If there is anyone who says so, he is an ignoramus. There was a rule in the Frontier Province that the Koran might not be subjected to translation. But Dr. Khan Saheb, who is now the Premier, is a sensible man. He said that if the Koran were translated, it would spread wider. More people would read it and understand it. If Khan Saheb offered his *namaaz* in this temple, would the temple be defiled? The *namaaz* consists of recitations from the Koran. Would such recitation be a sin?

2. You might say that the Muslims have sinned against the Hindus. But have the Hindus lagged behind? You should know what the Hindus have done in Bihar. They killed women and children, set houses on fire and chased the Muslims out of their homes. Now if a Muslim came forward and said that the readers of the *Bhagavadgita* had committed great sins, what a travesty of truth it would be. To a certain extent I am willing to admit that the Muslims have committed atrocities, that they have sinned. But what is beyond my comprehension is the contention that because a reader of the Koran happens to be a sinner the Koran itself is sinful. That way, the *Gita*, the Upanishads, the Vedas, in fact, all religious books, can be proved to be sinful. People draw different meanings even from the *Gita*. Some people interpret the *Gita* in quite a different way from how I do. I find in the *Gita* the message of non-violence, while others say that the *Gita* ordains the killing of the *atatayi*[1]. Can I go and stop them from saying so? I listen to them and do what I feel is correct.

3. Saying that I have not read the *Gita* in a mosque only means that I am a coward, does it not? Granted that I am a coward and am afraid of saying my prayer before the Muslims in a mosque. But if I am a coward in one place, need I be a coward everywhere? Do you want me to be a coward here also?

You ought to know that in many places I stay with the Muslims, where I regularly offer my prayers without hesitation. And, while I was touring in Noakhali I often held my prayers very near the mosques although not actually inside one. Once I held the prayer within the enclosure of a mosque, in a building on its premises. And I used to have all the paraphernalia of the prayer with me. There used to be the beating of the drum and *Ramdhun* with the clapping of hands. We did

[1] One who is guilty of heinous crimes, viz., the incendiary, the poisoner, the assassin, the robber, the usurper of land and the ravisher (I. 36)

not have the drum with us but we did have *Ramdhun* with clapping of hands in the premises of the mosque. I told the local Muslims that just as they took the name of Rahim, I would take the name of Rama. I said that it was not worthy of those who took the name of Rahim to stop people from taking the name of Rama. And they did not stop me from taking the name of Rama.

You talk of atrocities. There have been many atrocities in Noakhali. But let me tell you that the atrocities committed by the Muslims in Noakhali are not equal to those committed by the Hindus in Bihar. I am a witness to this fact. I have been to Noakhali and I have also toured Bihar.

Anyone who says that I cannot go and offer my prayer before the Muslims does not know Gandhi. What does this poor Uma Devi know of the stuff Gandhi is made of? I am not ashamed of myself but of what she has been saying. I am ashamed of this gentleman of a secretary who, in spite of holding office in the Hindu Dharma Sabha, is so terribly ignorant. When the ocean catches fire, who can extinguish it?

But the fact is she is not opposed to the particular prayer but to the Arabic language. Yesterday, when a translated version of the Koranic portion was read out it did not hurt anyone.

Gandhiji then repeated the translated version.

Now see, I have read out the whole prayer again. It has not hurt even this lady. She finds nothing wrong with it. Had she found anything sinful, would she have allowed me to read it? Would she not have stopped me and said: 'Keep quiet. I do not wish to hear it.'

But how could she stop me? In what other way can I pray to God? Does she want that I should not refer to God as *Aja*[1]? Or that I should not consider Him Immortal? Or that I should not call Him Almighty? Or that I should not refer to Him as the Lord? What else then can I say in my prayer? What ignorance, then, to say that whatever we wish to say in our prayer becomes sinful when we put it in the Arabic language? We must save ourselves from this gross ignorance.

Let us then pray to God to protect us from darkness. In our Hindu prayers even the words chosen say: "Lead us from darkness to light."[2] I feel very bad that instead of appreciating

[1] The Unborn

[2] तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय। *Brihadaranyakopanishad*, III. 28. *Vide* Vol. XLIV, p. 399.

such an unparalleled religion we should discard it like a stone. And it hurts me all the more when the wife of a man who wishes to serve religion is bent upon bringing down religion by such acts. In our society the husband is entrusted with high duties. It is his duty to prevent his wife's thoughts from going astray. But this gentleman has imparted to his wife a training in utter intolerance. How can religion survive under such conditions?

If we continue to be like this, Hinduism is certainly not going to survive. Nor will India be able to survive. We shall not be able to save India even if the British quit. In independent India we have to live like brothers. Those who are enemies today would become friends tomorrow. Would you then tell your Muslim neighbour that he should not read the Koran? Would it in any way raise the status of Hinduism?

Hence I am asking you to pray in silence. For, if so many people sit silently and pray and do not betray their anger against a couple of individuals, we shall be purified, we shall become pious.

You all know that I had gone to meet Jinnah Saheb yesterday. I cannot tell you everything that took place between us. We have come to an agreement that what we talk would remain between us, and not be allowed to leak out. None the less, I have conveyed to Badshah Khan, Pandit Jawaharlal and our other leaders the gist of my talks with Jinnah Saheb. Here too I shall briefly mention it. We both have signed a document[1] which involves two points. The first thing is that we shall not coerce anyone to fulfil our political objectives. Each side will try to convince the other about its own point of view and would never resort to threat or bullying.

The other point is about restraining the people from indulging in acts of violence and other atrocities. You must have realized from Jinnah Saheb's Press statement[2] yesterday that we have clear political differences. Jinnah Saheb wants Pakistan. Congressmen have also decided in favour of acceding to the demand for Pakistan. But they insist that the Hindu and Sikh [majority] areas of the Punjab and Bengal cannot be included in Pakistan. Only the Muslim [majority] areas can be separated from India. But I for one cannot agree to Pakistan on any account. I cannot tolerate any proposal for vivisecting the country. There are many things happening which I cannot

[1] *Vide* p. 261.

[2] Which was issued with Gandhiji's concurrence; *vide* Appendix XVI.

bear. But they still do not stop. They go on happening. But in this case, when I say that I cannot bear it, I mean that I do not wish to be a party to it. In other words, I am not going to be influenced by them in this matter. If they want to have Pakistan, let them settle it with their fellowmen. I cannot talk as a representative of any one party. I represent everyone. It is my attempt to be a trustee of all the Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs and Parsis, Jains and Christians living in this country. I wish to be their trustee even if I have not the capacity or fitness for it. Hence, I cannot be a party to the formation of Pakistan. When I know that what Jinnah Saheb wishes to do is a dangerous thing, how can I put my signature to the proposal of acceptance of Pakistan? I conveyed this point to him very patiently. We did not quarrel. We talked to each other cordially.

I told Jinnah Saheb in polite words that he could not have Pakistan by resorting to force. He could not compel me to acquiesce in the formation of Pakistan. None but God can compel me. If he wishes to have it by persuasion, why, he can have not only Pakistan but the whole of India.

I have joined him in issuing the peace appeal and in order to make that appeal effective I have requested Jinnah Saheb to take from me whatever work he might wish to take. I told him that I would go with him even a thousand times if that was necessary.

Let me also tell you that everyone had tried to stop me from going to Jinnah Saheb. They asked me what I would gain by going to him. But did I go to him to gain anything? I went to him to know his mind. If I have not gained anything by going to him, I have not lost anything either. I claim to have his friendship. After all he also belongs to India. Whatever happens, I have to spend my life with him. How can I refuse to go to him?

We shall have to live in amity. We should not compel anyone even to live in harmony. I would say that if they want Pakistan they should bring us round to their point of view. Let them also convince others that [the formation of] Pakistan is in the interest of everyone in which case I would definitely agree to their proposal. But if they expect to force me into granting it—well, I am not going to give my consent.

You might ask me why India cannot be divided. You might wonder what harm it would do. Let me tell you my head is not empty. I have in my head many ideas concerning this matter. But please read and hear [from others] about these ideas. Today I have given you a fairly good amount of my time.

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Now I am going to Calcutta. I do not know what I would be able to do there. Nor do I know how long I would stay there and when I would return. I have given my word that I would come whenever Jawaharlal, Kripalani or the Viceroy sent for me. And I do hope I shall be seeing you again.

In the mean while, please understand that nothing will be gained by preventing me from holding the prayer. I get the advantage of remaining silent. Nor would you people who have suppressed your anger and remained silent benefit less. But those who cause the obstruction have everything to lose. You people should help them see reason. You would remember that when there was trouble during the prayer the other day, the Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha had pacified them by persuasion. You should also persuade them in the same way. You should win them over not by threats and force but with peaceful argument that in Gandhi's prayer there is only religion, not irreligion. If they fail to be convinced I have the patience to offer silent prayer. Even in this temple I would offer the same prayer all by myself. The same prayer was offered the day before yesterday when it rained. It was the same temple and the same Hindus were present. But again today there was a protest. This is the sad state to which we are reduced.

Hence I request you to convince these people by your non-violent behaviour so that they may tell me that I am free to have my prayers here, whether it is in Arabic or Persian or Sanskrit.

Now please sit quiet for two minutes and offer silent prayer. Better still if you will keep your eyes closed.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 74-81

395. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

ON THE TRAIN TO PATNA,
May 8, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

It strikes me that I should summarize what I said and wanted to say and left unfinished for want of time, at our last Sunday's[1] meeting.

[1] May 4; *vide* Appendix XV.

I

Whatever may be said to the contrary, it would be a blunder of the first magnitude for the British to be a party in any way whatsoever to the division of India. If it has to come, let it come after the British withdrawal, as a result of understanding between the parties or of an armed conflict which according to Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah is taboo. Protection of minorities can be guaranteed by establishing a court of arbitration in the event of difference of opinion among contending parties.

2. Meantime the Interim Government should be composed either of Congressmen or those whose names the Congress chooses or of Muslim League men or those whom the League chooses. The dual control of today, lacking team work and team spirit, is harmful for the country. The parties exhaust themselves in the effort to retain their seat and to placate you. Want of team spirit demoralizes the Government and imperils the integrity of the services so essential for good and efficient government.

3. Referendum at this stage in the Frontier (or any Province for that matter) is a dangerous thing in itself. You have to deal with the material that faces you. In any case nothing should or can be done over Dr. Khan Saheb's head as Premier. Note that this paragraph is relevant only if division is at all to be countenanced.

4. I feel sure that partition of the Punjab and Bengal is wrong in every case and a needless irritant for the League. This as well as all innovation can come after the British withdrawal, not before, except always for mutual agreement. Whilst the British power is functioning in India, it must be held principally responsible for the preservation of peace in the country. That machine seems to be cracking under the existing strain which is caused by the raising of various hopes that cannot or must not be fulfilled. These have no place during the remaining thirteen months. This period can be most profitably shortened if the minds of all were focussed on the sole task of withdrawal. You and you alone can do it to the exclusion of all other activity so far as the British occupation is concerned.

5. Your task as undisputed master of naval warfare, great as it was, was nothing compared to what you are called to do now. The single-mindedness and clarity that gave you success are much more required in this work.

6. If you are not to leave a legacy of chaos behind, you have to make your choice and leave the Government of the whole of India including the States to one party. The Constituent Assembly has to provide for the governance even of that part of India which is not represented by the Muslim League or some States.

7. Non-partition of the Punjab and Bengal does not mean that the minorities in these Provinces are to be neglected. In both the Provinces they are large and powerful enough to arrest and demand attention. If the popular Governments cannot placate them, the Governors should during the interregnum actively interfere.

8. The intransmissibility of paramountcy is a vicious doctrine, if it means that they[1] can become sovereign and a menace for independent India. All the power wherever exercised by the British in India must automatically descend to the successor. Thus the people of the States become as much part of independent India as the people of British India. The present Princes are puppets created or tolerated for the upkeep and prestige of the British Power. The unchecked powers exercised by them over their people is probably the worst blot on the British Crown. The Princes under the new regime can exercise only such powers as trustees can and as can be given to them by the Constituent Assembly. It follows that they cannot maintain private armies or arms factories. Such ability and statecraft as they possess must be at the disposal of the Republic and must be used for the good of their people and the people as a whole. I have merely stated what should be done with the States. It is not for me to show in this letter how this can be done.

9. Similarly difficult but not so baffling is the question of the Civil Service. Its members should be taught from now to accommodate themselves to the new regime. They may not be partisans taking sides. The slightest trace of communalism among them should be severely dealt with. The English element in it should know that they owe loyalty to the new regime rather than to the old and therefore to Great Britain. The habit of regarding themselves as rulers and therefore superiors must give place to the spirit of true service of the people.

[1] The States

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II

10. I had a very pleasant two hours and three quarters with Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah on Tuesday last. We talked about the joint statement on non-violence. He was agreeably emphatic over his belief in non-violence. He has reiterated it in the Press statement[1] which was drafted by him.

11. We did talk about Pakistan *cum* partition. I told him that my opposition to Pakistan persisted as before and suggested that in view of his declaration of faith in non-violence he should try to convert his opponents by reasoning with them and not by show of force. He was, however, quite firm that the question of Pakistan was not open to discussion. Logically, for a believer in non-violence, nothing, not even the existence of God could be outside its scope.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur saw the first eight paragraphs, the purport of which she was to give to Pandit Nehru with whom I was to send you this letter. But, I could not finish it in New Delhi. I finished it on the train.

I hope you and Her Excellency are enjoying your hard-earned rest.[2]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY
SIMLA

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 247-50

396. ADVICE TO STATION MASTER

PATNA,
May 8, 1947

I do not find fault with you for coming to ask me.[3] You have been trained that way. Will you go to every compartment and ask the occupants as you ask me? If you would not go there you should not have come here either. I am not a Government official. These Ministers are but they have not come to meet me in their official capacity. They have come as family members. If

[1] *Vide* Appendix XVI.

[2] Acknowledging this on May 11, the Viceroy thanked Gandhiji "for the advice you were kind enough to send me which I appreciated receiving."

[3] As Gandhiji was busy talking to the Bihar Ministers the Station Master came to enquire whether he could start the train.

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they had not come I would not have been able to do anything to them. But at heart we are old colleagues. They have come to me like many others who would have come to meet their relatives passing through the station. It is your duty to blow the whistle and start the train at the correct time, even if the highest official may be in the train. It is another thing if your superiors have given you any instructions in writing. Except in such a case you must carry on your routine work. It would be good training for you and also for these Ministers as well as the people. You should not be scared at the sight of the Ministers. They are servants of the people. Hence you should in fact be fearless in their presence. The Ministers too should regard persons in their departments not as servants but as their younger brothers. Then alone would we be happy and be able to enjoy the fruits of democracy. So the rule which applies to other passengers in this train also applies to me. Of course I must admit that the rule is not observed fully. For instance, even though we travel third, this compartment is reserved for the two or three of us. But I can do nothing about it. If this is not done, everybody would want to get into this compartment. So, this practice of obliging me by reserving my compartment has been continued since the days of the British. I am not saying this to scold you. Please do not feel hurt. But this is an occasion from which all of us can learn something, and how would you know if I do not mention it to you? And I am a teacher after all, and it is my nature that I cannot help correcting what my conscience regards as an error. Well, I have given you these few minutes and now do not hesitate to start the train at your convenience. I know you have come to me to show me courtesy, but I have ventured to mention these things as they occurred to me.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 317-8

[1] The Station Master was very pleased and said that in his 45 years of life that was the first instance of strict discipline and fearlessness and wished that every department had a disciplinarian like Gandhiji.

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397. *ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS*[1]

ON THE TRAIN,
May 9, 1947

QUESTION: The Government are at present unable to supply the requisite material for building purposes. Should a non-official organization now take up this task?

ANSWER: In my opinion the task of rehabilitation is entirely Government's work. If a private agency takes up any financial responsibility it would be a dangerous thing. For it would carry with it the implication that those who have been rehabilitated by private financial help would also be defended privately. I hold this to be impossible and unwise, if not impossible. It should be our endeavour to induce local Muslims to help the evacuees in rehabilitation when Government aid is inadequate. But if neither the former nor the Government prove helpful, no non-official organization should or can undertake the task for reasons given above.

Many cases are being withdrawn by the police after enquiry as evidence is reported to be lacking; we have heard of more than 600 of such cases. Should these be reopened and a legal committee set up for the purpose? The Noakhali District Relief, Rehabilitation, Rescue Committee has a legal branch. But it is not active. Should Satis Babu try to take up this work with the help of the N.D.R.R.R.C. ?

I think this we must not do on any account. The legal committee must work efficiently and effectively. It does not fall within our province. Our province is to teach the people to help themselves even up to the point of defence against Government or other oppression; that is the meaning of 'Do or Die'.

Rice now sells at Rs. 25 a maund. The Government have stopped selling rice to riot-affected people at controlled rate. If we store rice and sell at controlled rate it will require a capital of 20 lacs of rupees. Should we undertake this work?

[1] Some workers met Gandhiji at Burdwan Station on his way to Calcutta. A number of questions had been kept ready to which Gandhiji dictated answers on the train.

I think, in dangerous areas such as Noakhali, we must not supply rice through private agency. I would far rather that after a clear statement the people trek to safer parts and in doing so they get all the help necessary, financial or other.

It is strange but true that every difficulty that faces us in Noakhali is present in Bihar almost to the same extent as in Noakhali. Realization of this fact should make us think furiously and enable us to deal with the Noakhali problem clearly and bravely. We should on no account countenance any lethargy, falsehood, cowardliness or selfishness on the part of the refugees.[1]

The Hindus being influenced by your preaching of ahimsa may in the near future get beaten by the Muslim League followers. This is the general feeling in view of the belief that the Muslims are being secretly armed on a wide scale.

The assumption is serious. If it is sound, it casts a grave reflection upon the Provincial Governments. In any event, how I wish the Hindus were influenced by my teaching of ahimsa which is a force mightier than the force of arms however powerful. No teacher can be held responsible for a caricature of his teachings. Do we not know how geometrical propositions are caricatured by indifferent pupils? Are the teachers to be blamed? The utmost that can be said against me is that I am an incompetent teacher of ahimsa. If such be the case, let us pray that my successor will be much more competent and successful.

After the British withdrawal from India, there is a likelihood of chaos and anarchy prevailing in the country. There is a fear that the nationalists, unless they immediately started learning self-defence with fire-arms, may suffer and ultimately find themselves under the heels of the Muslim League whose followers believe only in fighting. Pakistan or no Pakistan, the trouble is coming because there is the secret hand of imperialism working behind the scenes. Would you not modify your theory of ahimsa in the larger context of such a political situation overtaking the country for the sake of individual defence?

The nationalists are not worth the proud name they bear, if they fear the Muslim League as you imagine. Can the nationalists exclude the followers of the League from the sphere of their action? I am not thinking of vote-catching devices. I am thinking of the Muslims as Indians, the same as others, needing their care and attention. If the leaders have ceased to believe in

[1] What follows appeared in *Harijan* under the title "Ahimsa, A Fact of Life".

ahimsa, they should boldly and frankly say so and set about putting their house in order. For me there is no scope for any change. Ahimsa is no mere theory with me, it is a fact of life based on extensive experience. How can a man who had tasted apples and repeatedly found them sweet be induced to describe them as bitter? Those who say they are bitter have tasted not apples but something looking very much like them. Ahimsa should not fear the secret or open hand of imperialists assuming for the sake of argument that it is working as suggested in the question.

My Days with Gandhi, pp. 223-4, *Harijan*, 25-5-1947, and *Biharni Komi Agman*

398. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

SODEPUR,
May 9, 1947

Gandhiji said that he had not expected to come to Calcutta but when he had reports from friends about the events in Calcutta he thought that he should come to Calcutta and put in his work in pursuit of the same object that had taken him to Noakhali and then to Bihar. They saw before them Gurudev's portrait with floral decorations. The 25th of *Baishakh* was Gurudev's birthday. That was why they had two hymns from the pen of Gurudev sung to them. Great men never died and it was up to the people to keep them immortal by continuing the work they had commenced. The second hymn that was sung to them, namely, *Hinshaya unmatta prithvi* (the world was mad with violence) was most apposite at the moment when Hindus and Muslims were fighting. The purport of the hymn was that God should take them from darkness unto light, from untruth unto truth and from misery unto bliss indefinable. That was the *mantra* with which he had armed Deenabandhu Andrews and Pearson[2] when he permitted them to proceed to South Africa. These two were amongst the best of Gurudev's numerous devotees throughout the world.

It was a good thing, proceeded Gandhiji, that Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah's words uttered to the Pathan deputation that had waited on him were to the same tune. They should read those words for themselves. If they all followed the advice India would truly become a unique land of real peace.

You know that I am joint signatory to the document[3] on non-violence. That at once imposes on me the duty of fasting unto death if either Hindus or Muslims descended to the level

[1] The report in *Amrita Bazar Patrika* has been collated with the version in *The Hindu*.

[2] William Winstanley Pearson

[3] *Vide* p. 261.

of savages or beasts. Let the Hindus of Bihar and the Muslims of Noakhali remember the fact.

Continuing, Gandhiji said that he had earned the right of fast by the service he had rendered and was still rendering to the Muslims of India. The poet Iqbal had taught them already that true religion did not teach men to hate one another. Let them all take that lesson to heart and render India a land of peace and brotherhood amongst men.

The British are surely going to quit India and if we have any differences between ourselves, let us make it completely our own affair and not approach the British for a settlement. As for the latter, they have no duty except to quit at the earliest possible moment. If they fulfil that part of their task, all else can be settled between ourselves as between brother and brother.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 10-5-1947, and *The Hindu*, 10-5-1947

399. INTERVIEW TO ABUL HASHEM[1]

SODEPUR,
Saturday, May 10, 1947

Hashem Saheb opened his case[2] by stating that Bengalis were after all Bengalis, whether Hindu or Muslim. They had a common language, a common culture and did not wish to be ruled by Pakistanis who lived a thousand miles away. Gandhiji said:

But haven't we been so long ruled by people who live seven thousand miles away?

Yes, but then that would mean that Pakistanis of the West would rule over us in Bengal.

But supposing they do not rule over you, and you wish to form a voluntary alliance with Pakistan because you have a common religion which both of you wish to propagate throughout the world, then where is the objection?

But then you are talking of Pan-Islamism.

Yes I am. Perhaps you do not know how deep the Muslim feeling about it is. I had evidence of that even while I was a

[1] Secretary, Bengal Provincial Muslim League, who was accompanied by two students and Sarat Chandra Bose, President of the All-Bengal Anti-Pakistan Committee. The report in *My Days with Gandhi* has been collated with the Gujarati version in *Biharni Komi Agman*.

[2] For a tripartite division of India into India, Pakistan and United Sovereign Bengal

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student in England many years ago. What is then your objection to a voluntary federation of different countries professing the same religion ?

Hashem Saheb did not reply.

Then Gandhiji asked me[1] to bring a Bengali primer which he had been reading lately. When this was brought, Gandhiji proceeded to tell Hashem Saheb that, to all intents and purposes, he was trying to become a Bengali. He found hardly any difference between the language of a Bengali Hindu and a Bengali Muslim. Bengal was the only province in India where common Muslims did not understand Urdu. His intention in learning the Bengali language was to be able to read Gurudev's poems in the original, for, from them he received the message of the Upanishads, which lay at the root of the culture of the whole of India.

Hashem Saheb said that every Bengali looked upon Rabindranath with the highest veneration, and in this, Muslims were one with Hindus. That was the chief reason why Bengali Muslims did not want Bengal to be broken up into two.

It is the spirit of the Upanishads which binds Rabindranath to the whole of Indian culture. Does not Bengal derive her deepest culture from what is the priceless heirloom of all India? If that is so, and Bengal wishes to enter into voluntary association with the rest of India, what would you say about that?

Hashem Saheb had no reply for this question either.

You have not really made up your mind about Pakistan. Please think about it once more, and then we shall discuss the new proposal.

You are following the same path of non-violence as was followed by Lord Buddha and the Prophet. People consider you a reincarnation of these. You must extinguish the fire of violence in Calcutta. You must also do something so that our brethren in Bihar can live in peace.

First and foremost, it is a mistake to consider me a reincarnation of Buddha or of the Prophet. I have never made any such claim. I am an ordinary man. Of course I do try to follow the principles of life as preached by our scriptures and our great men. I have even succeeded to a certain extent. Yet, I do not claim that I am a person with divine qualities or higher than you. I am a servant of all human beings, be they Hindu or Muslim. I do wish I had the power to end the bloody strife raging among men and women of the same country.

[1] N. K. Bose

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I should then be happy. Great men like Lord Krishna and Lord Buddha were so many incarnations of God. Our scriptures say that these great men had the divine power to establish peace and happiness. But you will realize that I am no divine person since I am not able to establish peace. And, if I presume to be such a person, I would not be able to survive in the world even for a minute. I have certainly been tested in my vows of truth and non-violence. That is why I have come here after touring Noakhali, Bihar, Delhi. I wish either to do something in this field or die. If you feel what Gandhi is doing is correct and Gandhi is needed in Calcutta I would first of all wish to make an humble request if you would allow me.

Yes, of course. You can command us to do anything.

The first thing is that if you are loyal to the party to which you belong and for which you work, you must ask Jinnah Saheb why, after signing the peace appeal with Gandhi, he is sitting in Delhi when thousands of Hindus are dying in the Punjab, the Frontier Province and Noakhali and thousands of women are being raped. Why should every worker belonging to your party not stand by the Hindus and protect them? If you are keen on saving the Muslims you will have to give protection to all these Hindus. And as far as you are concerned, you must go and post yourselves in Noakhali whether or not you get the orders from Jinnah Saheb. You must prove to the Hindus that they are your brothers and sisters and if any Muslims come to kill them in the name of religion, you would offer to die first and protect them, that their mothers, sisters and daughters are your mothers, sisters and daughters. Let me tell all three of you that if you prove it not by words but by your actions, you would uphold your religion, and bring glory to your organization and this would have its effect in the whole country and your leaders would shine out by such remarkable acts. Today your leaders and your organization stand discredited in the world. If you want to strengthen your organization, if you want to allow the Muslims of India to live in peace and happiness and unity, this is the only way and there is no other. I know very well that you are not going to be convinced by what I say. But I would be untrue to you if I did not tell you what appears truth to me. This is so because I consider you all as my brothers and my friends, and my duty as your friend and brother obliges me to speak to you the truth.

My Days with Gandhi, pp. 227-8, and *Biharni Komi Agman*, pp. 327-8

400. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

SODEPUR,
May 10, 1947

Today I spoke to them[1] frankly so that they may act properly instead of saying things just to please me. Now I know that they will not do anything, but at least they will not think that they have done their duty merely by coming here and praising me as if I were the Buddha or the Prophet. I must speak out what I feel. I am longing for work, not praise. One should not put much trust in a person who praises one to one's face. Instead I consider my critics as my well-wishers because they caution me by pointing out my mistakes, which is beneficial to both the parties. Either the critic realizes his mistake or the person criticized corrects himself if he is in the wrong.

One who desires to follow the non-violence of the brave in one's daily life must shed despair and cowardice, should be careful even in the most trivial things and should not give in under threat or intimidation. There is no dearth of such brave persons in India. Still the world may say that since Indians had no weapons they could not learn to use them. Dying demands much greater courage than killing. The foreigners have branded us as cowards, and we must disabuse them of this notion. Instead what is happening is just the opposite. Man's mind is such that it is often influenced by things which are repeatedly hammered into it and he changes accordingly and becomes what he in fact was not. The British have ruled over us for the past 150 years and called us a weak people and in spite of our inherent strength we have become weak. They have robbed us of our self-confidence.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 329-30

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

401. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,
May 10, 1947

Speaking at the prayer gathering Mahatma Gandhi addressed himself to two questions that were asked of him. In view of the sourness between Hindus and Muslims that seemed to be daily growing, was it possible for the two to become friends? He answered emphatically that the enmity could not last for ever. They were brothers and must remain so in spite of temporary insanity. But perpetual feud was not an impossibility between communities as it was not between two individuals. He hoped that that would not happen, for he prophesied that in that case they would bury the two religions in India and would sell their freedom for a mess of pottage.

The second question was, could partition of Bengal be avoided in view of the rising Hindu opinion in its favour. Gandhiji recognized the force of that opinion. He was not in a position to pronounce an opinion. But he could say without fear of contradiction that if there was partition, the Muslim majority would be responsible for it, and what was more, the Muslim Government that was in power. If he were the Chief Minister of Bengal, he would plead with his Hindu brethren to forget the past. He would say to them that he was as much a Bengali as they were. Differences in religion could not part the two. He and they spoke the same language, had inherited the same culture. All that was Bengal's was common to both, of which both could be equally proud. Bengal was Bengal. It was neither the Punjab nor Bombay nor anything else.

If the Chief Minister could possibly take up that attitude, he (the speaker) would undertake to go with him from place to place and reason with Hindu audiences and he made bold to say that there would not be a Hindu opponent left of the unity of Bengal, the unity for which Hindus and Mussalmans had fought together so valiantly and undone "the settled fact"[1] of so powerful a Viceroy as Lord Curzon. If he were Suhrawardy he would invite the Hindus to partition his body before they thought of partitioning Bengal. If he had that sturdy love for Bengal and Bengalis, whether Hindus or Mussalmans, that love would melt the stoniest Hindu heart. As it was, fear and suspicion had seized the Hindu mind.

He could not forget Noakhali or even Calcutta, if all he heard was true, as it was equally true of the Muslim mind in Bihar and he had not

[1] The partition of Bengal which took place in 1905 was described later by Lord Morley, the Liberal Secretary of State for India, as "a settled fact" but was annulled in 1911.

hesitated to tell the Hindus of Bihar that they should remove all suspicion and fear from the Muslim mind. He believed in the sovereign rule of the law of love which made no distinction of race, colour, caste or creed. He was glad that he had in Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah a powerful partner in the belief, which was no secret from the world.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 11-5-1947

402. TELEGRAM TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

CALCUTTA,
May 11, 1947

PANDIT NEHRU
CARE HIS EXCELLENCY VICEROY
SIMLA

YOUR WIRE[1]. HOPE REACH DELHI SIXTEENTH MORNING. HAVE YOU SEEN MY SPECIAL LETTER[2]. RAJKUMARI KNOWS.

BAPU

From the original: Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (M. O. Mathai). Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

403. LETTER TO A MINISTER[3]

May 11, 1947

Your letter regarding.... Why do you write to me in English? What happens to be your mother tongue is our national language. Then why should we bother to write in English? Yes, you can say that the means for writing in English are readily available in Ministers' offices. You can employ clerks who can write in Hindustani instead of in English. It would mean less expense and greater convenience for the common man. After all only a handful of people in India know

[1] Requesting Gandhiji's presence at the forthcoming meeting of the Congress Working Committee on May 16. On May 10, the Viceroy had announced that a conference of the Congress, Muslim League and Sikh leaders would be held on May 17 to announce the plan of the British Government for transferring power to Indian hands. The leaders invited were: Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, M. A. Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan and Sardar Baldev Singh. On May 11, however, it was announced that the proposed conference was postponed to June 2, 1947.

[2] *Vide* pp. 434-7.

[3] Omissions in this and the following two letters are as in the source.

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English. Swadeshi administration cannot be run for their sake. Whatever you do today will be pursued even after the British rule is completely eliminated from the country. You must also remember that you have to serve those people who are exploited the most, and represent them with credit.

Now I come to the points of our correspondence. I have not read the Panchayat [Raj] Bill of the United Provinces. I do not subscribe to the view that there should be a Harijan in all the elected bodies. Nor should you hold such a view. It would not be proper to insist that Harijans should be taken on such bodies even if none is found qualified. The important thing in tackling such problems is to make the Harijans better informed. But here I have suggested something fundamental. . . .

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 332-3

404. A LETTER

May 11, 1947

. . . Shri . . . has passed on to me the letter you wrote to him. Why did you write in English? Your mother tongue and . . .'s is the same. I can see from your letter that your knowledge of the English language is poor. . . .

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 333

405. LETTER TO GOVIND BALLABH PANT[1]

May 11, 1947

. . . has written to Shri . . . regarding the Panchayat Raj Bill. . . . He has sent both the letters to me. The remarkable thing is that all the letters are in English. And . . .'s English is a wonderful specimen. His letter to the Congress Party is also in English. Our laws are also in English. We are possibly going to be free from British imperialism; but we might never gain freedom from the domination of the English language. If we do not, what will the masses do? Or, are all our efforts meant for the handful of English-knowing people in the vast ocean that is India? But this is a digression.

[1] Chief Minister of U. P.

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Before I can give my opinion on the point under consideration I must know the nature of your Bill and what . . . has to say in reply.

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 333

406. A TALK

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,
May 11, 1947

When such ugly incidents occur we call their perpetrators goondas. But after all who are these goondas? They are our brothers. We condemn their deeds as goondaism but we too are to be blamed for them. Whatever good or evil is being done in the country, all, men and women, are equally responsible for it. Man is no different from other animals, as far as eating, sleeping and other functions are concerned. The only distinction is that being endowed with reason man can try to lead a moral life and distinguish himself from animals. "The path of God is trodden by the brave, not by the coward." Non-violence requires such courage. But today it is being regarded as cowardice. The path of God is the path of truth and non-violence. But while following that path we might have erred somewhere. I myself believe in acknowledging and correcting the mistakes I might have committed. Confession of one's guilt leads to self-purification. True non-violence does not consist merely in taking the blows. It means we should speak out what we consider to be the truth and act accordingly when the occasion arises. That is why for the last two days I have been telling the truth to the Government here. To remain silent at this hour would be a sign of unmanliness which would put non-violence to shame. A votary of non-violence must cultivate this courage, and for this it is necessary to give up all attachment.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 333-4

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407. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,
May 11, 1947

Again I have to go to Delhi.[1] We are mere sojourners. God created us for the journey in this world—so we must move on. No stability is possible in my life at least for the time being. It is possible only if I die or Indians understand [my message]. You know I used to consider attainment of independence an easy task but its preservation is going to be difficult. The signs at present are not good. This is the hour of our trial. Our capacity for sacrifice will also be put to test. Without the wherewithal one naturally leads a simple life but it is very difficult to do so when one has [wealth], and to consider it as belonging to God, not to oneself. The first *shloka*[2] in our prayer reads:

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥

One who recites the above *shloka* should first surrender to God all his possessions and then take for use only what is required for oneself. To take more than one's needs is sin. Just as we are considered thieves if we take what belongs to others, similarly, since everything here belongs to God we will stand guilty before God if we take more than our share. Thus true sacrifice will be proved at this hour. Try as we may, no sacrifice will endure without renunciation.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 334-5

[1] *Vide* p. 447.

[2] *Ishopanishad*, 1: "All this that we see in this universe is pervaded by God. Renounce it and enjoy it. Do not covet anybody's wealth." For Gandhiji's explanation of this *shloka*, *vide* Vol. LXIV, pp. 259-60 and 294.

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408. ADVICE TO MILL-WORKERS[1]

May 11, 1947

We do not judge properly when and against whom we may offer strikes. Nowadays in India, going on strike is regarded as an act of bravery. There are strikes in mills over trivial matters. For insignificant issues students in schools and colleges go on strike. Have you ever considered who are the worst sufferers in such situations ? It is the workers and the students who suffer the most. The rich people and the Government schools and colleges have nothing to lose. If the mills are closed for a day or a month, the mill-owners would not have to worry about their daily bread. But what would happen to you who live from day to day? Similar is the case with Government clerks and postmen going on strike. Of course I believe in equal wages at all levels. Why should a sweeper get only four annas a day while a lawyer may get one hundred rupees? But the world has not yet reached that ideal state, because people pay huge fees to lawyers and barristers in their own interests. It will take many years before incomes would be equalized in our society. If injustice is being done to you, go to your employer with an open mind, try to convince him about your point. But do not go on strike being swept away by others in the current of their parties and 'isms' that are daily coming up like mushrooms. You are an illiterate lot, you are workers. Hence see that others do not take undue advantage of you. I believe that the mill-owners too will now have to see reason. If they continue to suck the blood of the workers their mills will be reduced to ashes. Their huge mansions, their cars and all other things are the result of your labour. However, it is my impression that the majority of the mill-owners are sensible. I do hope that they will understand the prevailing situation in the country and treat the workers accordingly. If not now, in the coming year or two mill-owners and workers will have to develop relations like fathers and sons. Therein lies the good of both. If this does not happen both will come to grief. I have no doubt about it. Hence I humbly suggest that you

[1] Workers of the Birla Mills were on strike and had turned violent. Some of them called on Gandhiji.

must all go back to work. Choose and appoint a committee of five persons from amongst you. Let the five go to the mill-owners and present the entire case to them. You must understand their difficulty and they must understand yours. Finding a proper way by mutual compromise is in the interest of both sides.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 336-7

409. INTERVIEW TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY[1]

SODEPUR,
Sunday, May 11, 1947

H. S. Suhrawardy, the chief sponsor of the united sovereign Bengal scheme, drew a rosy picture of the proposal. Gandhiji said that a new Bengal could not be born in utter disregard of the past. When the past was so full of wrongs, how could people believe in the sincerity of the new proposal unless past wrongs were set right? Suhrawardy said, his Government had been wholly impartial and equal justice had been meted out to all; otherwise how could it have the support of a large number of Hindus? Gandhiji expressed the opinion that this was no different from the argument of British imperialists.

A friend of mine[2] had written a letter in which he described the utter incompetence of the Government and the veiled connivance of police officers in encouraging Muslim rioters. Gandhiji had read his letter and asked me now to hand it over to the Chief Minister. The latter went through it and said, "Yes, it is a bad case. But I am sure, you realize that this is an exception."

Then with Gandhiji's permission, I placed before Suhrawardy another case of murder[3] in which the police had not taken up any enquiry even when seven days had passed. Suhrawardy tried to bypass the charge against his Government by saying, "Do you know, there are more than half a dozen versions of that event? One even accuses me of complicity in the murder." Gandhiji had been silently listening to our conversation. He now broke in by saying:

Yes, you are responsible not only for that murder but for every life lost in Bengal, whether Hindu or Muslim.

[1] Who was accompanied by Mohammad Ali and Abul Hashem
The version in *My Days with Gandhi* has been collated with the one in *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase.*

[2] N. K. Bose, author of *My Days with Gandhi*

[3] Of Jadunath Sarkar's son

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Suhrawardy immediately retorted, "No, it is you who are responsible for it, for you have denied justice to the Mussalmans."

I have rarely seen Gandhiji lose his temper in public. For one moment he flared up and said:

Don't talk rot!

But immediately he became restrained and calmed down. He told Shaheed [Suhrawardy] that if he was really serious about his new Bengal, he should go amongst the hooligans, wherever there was disturbance, and stop the mischief by risking his own life if necessary.

If you do it even for a day, it will transform the atmosphere—not only in Calcutta but in the whole of India.[1]

My Days with Gandhi, pp. 230-1, and *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 182

410. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[2]

SODEPUR,
May 11, 1947

Mahatma Gandhi said that he had the privilege of receiving Shaheed Sahib at Sodepur. He had wished to go to the latter's house but he would not let him go to his place. He had no information to give on the interview save that he had to repeat what he had said yesterday.

Gandhiji then addressed himself to the two questions put to him at the prayer meeting. The first was: "You have advised us to work for an undivided Bengal. But can there be an undivided Bengal with a divided India? What can we do to preserve a united Bengal in a united India?"

The answer was that if what he had said was well understood it followed that nothing could happen without the joint wish of both Hindus and Muslims. If a third party was not to decide their fate it would only be decided by their joint will. Then there was no question as yet of a divided India. If the distant event unfortunately did come to pass, the joint and free will of Hindu and Muslim Bengalis would decide which of these divisions to join.

[1] Later Gandhiji remarked: "What a curious man! It matters nothing to him what he says. He wants people to trust him because, he says, the new Bengal which he wants to build will assure to all communities equal treatment. But the future is the child of the present. If what is happening in Calcutta today is an earnest of things to come, it does not bode well for his plan."

[2] There was a mammoth gathering, representing all communities. Many had to turn away for want of space.

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The second question was: "The British have not quit. Should not that be our first demand? Can we not wait to settle matters between ourselves *after* power is really transferred to the Indian people?"

This question really did not arise for, when the whole of Bengal had one united mind, it was irrelevant whether it was expressed today or after the British power had actually withdrawn.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 12-5-1947

411. NOTE TO MANU GANDHI

May 12, 1947

The more you rest, the sooner you will recover. Try to enshrine Ramanama in your heart. In this way you will not be omitting any of the jobs you do for me. Understand that when you rest yourself that too is a part of my work. Since you have dedicated yourself wholly to me you must lie down as long as I ask you to. Instead you go on working and I have to explain to you the meaning of the *Gita*. At the prayers you daily recite the verse from the *Ishavasya Upanishad* but you do not act upon it. How can your body stand it if you go on preparing *khakhras*[1] and do the other odd jobs for me? The body does not belong to you; it belongs to God. Even if we live in rented quarters we have to keep them clean in our own interest. The same thing applies to the body. Hence ruining one's health by overworking amounts to an offence against God.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 338-9

[1] Slow-baked crisp *chapatis*

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412. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

SODEPUR,
May 12, 1947

CHI. LILI,

I got your letter today. I am returning the papers, duly signed, by air-mail.

The news about Chakrayya[1] is shocking. I am glad you are there. Do what you can now. A letter on that subject also is enclosed.[2]

Sushila has been causing you a lot of worry. What God has ordained will happen.

Come when you wish. Do not get nervous at all. It is enough if we do our duty.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

You will see from the newspapers where I shall be on the day you write to me.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9610. Also C. W. 6582. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

413. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

SODEPUR,
May 12, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your three letters before me. I would like Chimanlal to stay on at Sevagram whether his health improves or gets worse. Sending for Dubeji will do him no good. Milk, fruit and vegetables—raw or cooked—should prove quite a good diet

[1] A Harijan from Andhra who had joined the Sevagram Ashram in 1935 and became an expert craftsman. He was sent on account of a protracted illness for treatment to Bombay where it was diagnosed as brain tumour.

[2] The letter is not available.

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for him. Groundnuts, if taken, should first be soaked in water for 36 hours. But it is not indispensable. A cold-water bath in a tub may prove good; it can be tried. Do all this and ask him to repeat Ramanama and then let matters take their own course. I can't consider Uruli for him.

Kosambi may live on water, if he cannot digest any food whatever. If he cannot take even water, then, of course, there is no help and the body will slowly die. Inner peace being established, there remains nothing more to be achieved. However, do as Vinoba says. Show this to him.

Chakrayya has reached Bombay, writes Lilavati. I have written to him as also to Dr. Purandhar, the ophthalmologist.

If Hoshiari has no more internal complaint she ought not to fall ill again. You are being tested severely.[1]

Do not wait [for my advice]; but keep me informed of any changes in Kosambi's condition. I prefer cremation but I shall not insist on it.[2]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1976, and *Bapuki Chhayamen*, p. 389

414. LETTER TO PRABHAKAR

SODEPUR,
May 12, 1947

CHI. PRABHAKAR,

I finished my post. After that I read some more letters from another file in which I found your letter. You have done the right thing about Chakrayya. I came to know about him from Lilavati.

I am happy to learn the good news about the hospital there. You are right when you say that where there is consciousness of dharma even thorns seem like flowers. There is some complaint from Sankaran; I am enclosing the letter. What is it about? I have written to him to talk to you and I say the same to you. We are but a few. If there were to be

[1] What follows is translated from *Bapuki Chhayamen*.

[2] Kosambi had expressed a desire to be buried after death, it being the least expensive disposal of the body.

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reservations amongst us where would we find straightforwardness? Look into it.

I hope you are in good health.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9036. Also C. W. 9160. Courtesy: Prabhakar

415. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

SODEPUR,
May 12, 1947

The thought that is uppermost in my mind today is how to combat the goonda rule that seems to be fast enveloping us. This I say of all India, perhaps it is true more or less of the whole world.

Let the Hindus not deceive themselves with the belief that it is well with the Hindus. As a devout Hindu that I claim to be, I wish to affirm that we Hindus will be living in a fool's paradise if we harboured any such thought. Goondaism is no preparation for taking the place of foreign rule. The thoughtless interference at prayer meetings is not a small symptom of the disease I am describing.

Intolerance is a form of goondaism. It is no less disgraceful than the savagery which we see announced in the daily Press. Let all political workers, be they Hindus, Muslims or any other, ponder well over what is happening before their eyes. Let it not be said by the future generation that we were trying to learn how to lose the liberty before it was even gained. I would ask all the schoolmasters of India, now that they are no longer under the observation of the foreign masters, to recognize their true function even at the risk of their lives and give the right bent to the minds of those whom it is their proud privilege to mould.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 13-5-1947

[1] It being Gandhiji's silence day his written speech was read out.

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416. INTERVIEW TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY[1]

May 12, 1947

These people say only one thing, namely, they consider the Hindus and the Muslims as equals. They say their Government makes no distinctions of any kind. But I told them in plain words: "Jinnah Saheb does not do what he says. Being the President of a big organization like the Muslim League he could eliminate rowdyism if he wished. I represent no one. I possess no power. Of course, there is one thing and it is that the Hindus regard me as their servant and they trust me. That was how the Hindus in Bihar were pacified. And how much are those people expiating even now! In the same way, Jinnah Saheb and all of you can do what you wish. And I should make it plain that I do charge you with having adopted now the policy of encouraging rowdyism. Through you I wish to send a message to Jinnah Saheb conveying the agony of my heart, because I am his faithful friend. The triumph of Islam lies in doing what you preach. In that lies the good of all. But right now it seems that I shall see such days only when God wills so. I am sure that if the Ministers follow my words, Jinnah Saheb too would have to adhere to his words. But that is not the case today. In view of the false propaganda by Jinnah Saheb, I am wondering where the ship of our country would drift. In the course of our non-co-operation movement against the British rule we courted imprisonment, faced lathi blows and innumerable young men even faced bullets. But it seems to me that compared to the present ordeal that was easy. I started working for Hindu-Muslim unity from my childhood days. In order to earn my livelihood I went to South Africa as an adviser to a Muslim[2]. He looked after my children and my family. I went to the unknown land of South Africa only with an orthodox Muslim family. How could I then be an enemy of the Muslims? Jinnah Saheb thinks I am his worst enemy. But how can my conscience accept the charge? Let him at least give some evidence of my enmity. We can live in peace only if we

[1] The first paragraph, translated here from the Gujarati in *Biharni Komi Agman*, is a gist of the interview as reported by Gandhiji to Manu Gandhi. Finance Minister Mahomed Ali, Abul Hashem and Abdul Hakim were also present.

[2] Abdullah Sheth of Dada Abdulla & Co.

assimilate in our life the principle that we are all God's creatures. I have bitter words to say to you and you may be displeased and angry with me on that account and you may even abuse me. But that is not going to affect me in any way, because I believe that, when my task is over, God will recall me. This world moves by the will of God. I have experienced this several times in my life. Hence I am not worried about it. That is why I am able to say this. If the Muslims believe that they can take things by force they will have nothing at all. But, by peaceful means, they may have the entire country for themselves. There was an unprecedented awakening during the Khilafat days. But today the Muslim League leaders have aroused such hatred among the Muslims that they think it sinful to talk with the Hindus. But I am telling not only the Hindus and the Muslims but also the British and all human beings that we are all born equal. God has granted in equal measure to everyone the right to live. Hence we should not be enemies. And let me also warn you to be on the alert even if the British are instigating you. If they think that they can firmly establish their rule by driving a wedge between us, it is an absolute impossibility. And it would be sheer stupidity if anyone thinks that such a thing could be done. I also asked these people, while Jinnah Saheb said that everything would settle down once Pakistan was granted, what was the situation wherever the Muslim League was in power? See what is happening in this city right before our eyes. Nobody knows what real Pakistan means. I am a student of the Koran. I have come in contact with many learned Muslims. None of them has said that Islam ordains punishing the innocent, raping of women, slaughtering and ruining and rendering homeless happy families, breaking into their houses at night, plundering their property and shedding blood."

Gandhiji reiterated to them that the only way in which they could prevent the partition of Bengal was by getting Jinnah to implement the joint peace appeal to which he was a signatory. For this the Bengal Ministry and Shaheed Suhrawardy, its head, would have to act in the manner he had suggested[1] on the previous day.[2]

Suhrawardy Saheb confessed that the chief obstacle was that no Hindu would listen to him today; he found it hard to prove the utter sincerity of his proposal.

[1] *Vide* pp. 452-3.

[2] This paragraph is from *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*. What follows is from *My Days with Gandhi*.

Gandhiji said, he would act as Suhrawardy's secretary, live under the same roof with him and see to it that the Hindus at least gave him a patient hearing. Was he prepared to accept the offer?

Suhrawardy Saheb said nothing and bade him good by.[1]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 341-3, *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, pp. 182-3, and *My Days with Gandhi*, p. 232

417. LETTER TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY

[*May 12/13, 1947*][2]

I recognize the seriousness of the position in Bengal in the matter of the partition. If you are absolutely sincere in your professions and would disabuse me of all the suspicion against you and if you would retain Bengal for the Bengalis—Hindus or Mussalmans—intact by non-violent means I am quite willing to act as your honorary private secretary and live under your roof till Hindus and Muslims begin to live as [the] brothers that they are.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 10562. Also *My Days with Gandhi*, pp. 232-3

[1] As N. K. Bose took Suhrawardy to his car, the latter muttered almost to himself, "What a mad offer! I have to think ten times before I can fathom its implications." When Bose reported the matter to Gandhiji, he immediately took up his pen and on two slips of paper wrote down a letter to H. S. Suhrawardy. *Vide* the following item.

[2] As the addressee could not be contacted on the phone till late at night, Gandhiji signed the letter the next morning, that is May 13, and had it personally delivered to the addressee.

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418. LETTER TO KANTI GANDHI

SODEPUR,
May 13, 1947

CHI. KANTI,

I have your letter. I hope you received my reply to your previous letter. Quite a few days have passed since I sent it.

I like the views you have expressed about the Charkha Sangh in your present letter. I am sending it to Krishnadas[1] for information. He may accept from it whatever appeals to him.

I have no time to go into details and correct the errors of fact in your statements. Nor is that necessary. You will learn from experience.

You probably know that khadi work is being decentralized.

I have written about your studies in my previous letter.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 7384. Courtesy: Kanti Gandhi

419. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

SODEPUR,
May 13, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

Charu[2] is leaving earlier as you are not well. As it is, his presence was not necessary [here]. He makes himself useful in many ways. But this is my home. My convenience is looked after well enough. The real centre is there[3]. No one should go away from there. That is why Ajit did not come.[4] Now have complete rest and get well. I have no time to write anything else.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9081

[1] Son of Chhaganlal Gandhi
[2] Charu Chandra Chaudhari
[3] Namely, at Noakhali
[4] Ajit De, who had been looking after Gandhiji's personal requirements during his tour in Noakhali, was not permitted to accompany him when he left for Bihar in February.

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420. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

May 13, 1947

Look, I am now fresh after ten minutes of rest. So long as God grants me this capacity to take a short nap, everything is well. The day this capacity is reduced I must realize that my non-attachment has weakened and I am on my way down. I am telling you this, because you have promised to be with me till the last moment. Didn't Ba also, while on her way to the jail, instruct you that she should be draped in a sari made from the yarn spun by me? Similarly, whenever I tell you such things, you must remember to note them down because I wish to reach the stage of a perfect *sthitaprajna* and attain perfect non-attachment. The success of my attempt depends solely on how I meet death. One can say nothing till the moment of death comes, because though the body ages physically, the mind does not. Hence, if I were to declare right now that I have reached such a state, there would be no greater fool than I. On the contrary, I would be fit to be called a presumptuous fellow. But, if it occurs to me to utter the name of Rama with my last breath, it should be taken as a proof of the success of my attempt. And as you are a witness to this *yajna* of mine, I do wish that you should be my witness in this and not go before me. Even though there have been differences between me and my old and intimate friends, I find myself more firm in my ideas and this gives me great satisfaction and contentment.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 346

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421. ADVICE TO CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS

May 13, 1947

Independence is now as good as come. But it is only political independence. Let not anyone think that once the British quit India there will be more comfort and convenience and the constructive programme would become superfluous. But from the prevailing atmosphere it seems that for at least a decade after independence our condition would continue to deteriorate. This political freedom no doubt will remove the restraints over us and we shall be able to accomplish our cherished aims. Real hard work will have to be done only after independence. Unless poverty and unemployment are wiped out from India, I would not agree that we have attained freedom. Real wealth does not consist in jewellery and money, but in providing for proper food, clothes, education, and creating healthy conditions of living for every one of us. A country can be called prosperous and free only when its citizens can easily earn enough to meet their needs. But today the situation is so tragic that on the one hand there are people who roll in pomp and luxury and on the other there are people who do not have enough clothes to cover their bodies and who live on the brink of starvation. Today men are sitting idle having no work to do. A man should have full opportunity to develop himself. That will happen only when there is an awakening among the constructive workers. The country does need politicians. But now when it is necessary to work hard for the prosperity of the country we need devoted constructive workers. I am convinced that people who are wedded to machinery are going to be disillusioned. Everyone, if only after being disillusioned, will have to ply the charkha. One has to be self-reliant in everything. If people do not start working of their own free will, time and circumstances will make them do so. But right now I find it suffocating to see the manner in which we are marching towards freedom. I find no light anywhere. Now that the British are contemplating transfer of power every community is keen on grabbing it. But, if we do not do our duty, we will be giving a chance for the people to say that slavery was better than this freedom. To the extent the constructive workers are bold and fearless, these

qualities would be reflected in their actions and through their work spread in the atmosphere. If the nation breathes such a healthy air, it would definitely grow healthy. So, the time has come for every constructive worker to gird up his loins and plunge into action. Let him put this moment to good use and justify the life God has granted him.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 346-7

422. INTERVIEW TO SHYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE

SODEPUR,
Tuesday, May 13, 1947

Shyamaprasad[1] had heard that the scheme for united sovereign Bengal had received Gandhiji's blessings. So he had come to ascertain the truth of the report. Gandhiji replied that he had not yet made up his mind about it but was trying to find out what the proposal really meant. Then he asked Shyamaprasad for his own opinion on the scheme.

Shyamaprasad began by saying that although Mr. Suhrawardy was apparently its author, it was really being sponsored by the British commercial interests in Bengal. If Bengal were partitioned, it would create serious difficulties for the jute industry, for the mills would be in West Bengal and the raw materials in another State. Moreover, he said that the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, had personally asked him to give the proposal careful consideration. Gandhiji said:

So your objection is on account of its parentage! No, I want you to criticize the scheme on its merits.

Then Shyamaprasad proceeded to say that although Mr. Suhrawardy was now sponsoring the cause of a united Bengal, yet, once division had taken place, what was there to prevent this Bengal from seeking voluntary alliance with Pakistan? He could surely manipulate a decision of this kind by means of the majority of Muslim votes. Gandhiji said:

But has he not spoken of "mutual consent" between Hindus and Muslims in the formation of a separate Bengal?

Shyamaprasad asked what difference that made so long as the majority of the Legislative Assembly were Muslims. Gandhiji replied:

But a decision by a simple numerical majority is not by "mutual consent". I would interpret that term differently. It

[1] President of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha

ought to mean that if a majority of Hindu members and a majority of Muslim members agree to form a separate sovereign State, then it comes into being by "mutual consent", not otherwise. That majority may be 51 is to 49 or may be fixed at any other figure by mutual discussion before the agreement is entered into. And if Suhrawardy has to win the majority of the Hindu members of the Assembly over to his side, don't you see that the present communal situation in Bengal will immediately change for the better?

But supposing Suhrawardy does succeed in winning over many Hindu members and a separate state is formed, then, one day, that state may federate itself with Pakistan if the decision is by majority of votes.

No. Such a decision should also be by "mutual consent" as interpreted before separation from India.

Shyamaprasad then asked what would happen if the majority of Hindu members wanted to federate with India and the majority of Muslim members with Pakistan.

Then there would be a partition of Bengal. But that partition will be brought about by mutual agreement of the people of Bengal and not by the British. It is a partition by the British which has to be prevented at any cost.

But can you contemplate Bengal lying separated from the rest of India?

You ask me that question!

Finally, Gandhiji said to Shyamaprasad that we should take Mr. Suhrawardy's new proposal at its face value, even if we may have no faith in him personally. Preservation of united Bengal in a united India should not be made the condition precedent in the present negotiation, that would defeat one's purpose. Having placed faith in the *bona fides* of Mr. Suhrawardy's proposal for a united Bengal, we should work out its logical implications. An admission that Bengali Hindus and Bengali Mussalmans were one would really be a severe blow against the two-nation theory of the League. If therefore Mr. Suhrawardy was prepared to accept the real meaning of the term "mutual consent", it would mean either the end of the League or of Mr. Suhrawardy.

My Days with Gandhi, pp. 233-5

423. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,
May 13, 1947

At today's prayer meeting Gandhiji dealt with the questions that were put before him.

The first was: What could we do to save ourselves and our culture—whether Hindu or Muslim?

Gandhiji said that he thought that nobody else could protect their culture for them. They had to protect it themselves and could destroy it by their folly. Thus, if Bengal had one culture, as he believed it had, it was for the people of Bengal to protect it.

The second question was: When everything at the top goes wrong, can the goodness of the people at the bottom assert itself against its mischievous influence?

In answer, Gandhiji said that if the people at the top went wrong, it was certainly open to, and it was the duty of those at the bottom, to remove the wrong top even as he would remove an umbrella which appeared to be at the top but which was sustained by him.

Thus Pandit Nehru was at the top. But in reality he was sustained by them. If he went wrong, those at the bottom could remove him without trouble. Coming nearer home if they found Suhrawardy Saheb to be unworthy, they at the bottom could certainly remove him, not by physical force but by the way he [Gandhiji] had had the honour of putting before them. The argument that he was elected by the Muslim voters was beside the point.

It all boiled down to the fact that if the people at the bottom were ignorant, they would be exploited. Such was the case with the English. When the people realized their strength and the fact that the bottom sustained the top, it would be well with them. Therefore, he would say that if the top was wrong there was something radically wrong with the bottom. Let them, therefore, dispel their ignorant helplessness.

Before he dealt with the questions, Gandhiji told some demonstrators that they need not be afraid of his doing anything that they did not like. He represented nobody but himself. He could only give advice which they were free to accept or reject. Therefore, if Bengal was divided or united, it would be their act.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

424. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR N. MORARJEE

SODEPUR,
May 14, 1947

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

I got your birthday wire. May you live long and render much service.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 4809. Courtesy: Shantikumar N. Morarjee

425. TALK WITH DR. B. C. ROY

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,
May 14, 1947

GANDHIJI: When there is a fire raging all around, I have no desire to prolong my life by taking rest.[1]

DR. ROY: It is not for yourself that you have to take rest. Is it not your duty to take rest so that you may render more service to people?

Yes, I shall certainly do so if people listen to me and if I could be of some help to them or to the authorities. But now I do not feel that I can be of any use to any one. Perhaps my mind is growing weak! Still, instead of taking rest at such a critical juncture I would rather "do or die". I wish to die in harness, with the name of Rama on my lips. My faith in this *yajna* is growing so strong that I feel God will grant me this wish. I am the lone adherent of my views today. But Gurudev's *bhajan Ekla chalore* sustains me. That is why I do not feel lonely and God gives me the courage to put up a determined fight with many of my friends. This to me is a manifestation of God—His Divine help. God does not manifest Himself in human form, nor is He seen with adornments as depicted in pictures. If we can remain in a state of constant awareness and thus

[1] In view of Gandhiji's extreme fatigue and exhaustion Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy had advised him to stop all interviews and take rest.

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tread the path of righteousness, this itself is Divine Grace and a means to have a glimpse of Him.

She[1] will not have frequent bouts of fever if she had Ramanama firmly enshrined in her heart. Maybe, I too have not attained the ideal; otherwise this girl, who stays with me all the twenty-four hours and serves me with devotion, should not fall ill. After all I have made her my partner in this *yajna*. If Ramanama is firmly rooted in my heart, this girl should be free from her ailments.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 352-3

426. TALK WITH COLLEGE STUDENTS

May 14, 1947

Students are the true heirs of the country. The nation can be saved only if they turn out to be good citizens. But the education you have received so far is absolutely irrelevant now. The British had a selfish motive in introducing this system of education because they wanted to rule over you. They provided you a system of education that produced clerks. It was an administrative trick of the British to give us such education as would automatically bind us to their service, as clerks to bosses in an office. If I could have my way or if my words could reach the ears and hearts of all, I would say that the system of education should be fundamentally changed as soon as independence is achieved and we should impart training as envisaged in Nayee Talim, so that every student becomes self-reliant and does not have to face the problem of employment after leaving school. Under the present system of education students have to spend a lot on textbooks. But more than that, think of the expenses of college life. The moment the students start learning English they must have the latest types of jackets, trousers, shoes, socks, fountain-pens, watches, perfumed oils, etc.! This has become a natural thing. But now that India is going to achieve freedom the State will be free to shape the people the way it chooses without any restrictions of any kind. I would suggest that the students learn the letters, language, arithmetic, history, geography and all other subjects through agriculture and body-labour. If

[1] Manu Gandhi

we put in their hands hoe and spade, their expenditure on western dress would be automatically eliminated, for it would not be convenient to the students themselves to do the digging in such a dress. They would find it easier to do the job in plain shorts and shirts. Thus there would be an automatic transformation in the lives of the students. Similarly they would acquire the knowledge about what seeds are sown in what manner, where a particular crop can be raised in abundance, in which century and under whose rule as also why there used to be good crops of cotton, foodgrains, oilseeds, and in what quantity, etc. Through such subjects a student comes to acquire knowledge of every other discipline. I say this just by way of an illustration. But if education is planned according to the principles of Nayee Talim, I am confident that a twelve-year old boy or girl would acquire the capacity to be self-sufficient in matters of food and clothing. Today even twenty-five-year old students who have obtained their M.A. degrees after wasting thousands of rupees of their parents are despondent not knowing what to do after completing their studies. Even in terms of health such a student, though alive, seems starved. Whereas, a boy brought up in Nature's lap under the educational system of my conception would be healthy and since he would be surrounded by a spiritual atmosphere he would also maintain his mental health.

Moreover, students have been very much exploited by various political parties too. It seems to me to be a great blunder. This mistake ought to be corrected now. We must think afresh about the type of education that should be made available to the children of a free nation. The students too must start thinking independently. But that does not mean that they should resort to strikes and throw stones at their teachers to have their demands accepted. Rather, they must deal with the management in a persuasive manner.

As I said a little while ago, once we stop imparting the western type of education the fashions that have come with it would disappear of themselves. When the students, instead of considering their studies an irksome task, start looking upon it as their national duty and derive true pleasure out of it, I shall accept it as true education. Our ancestors have rightly described student-life as the life of an ascetic. But before expecting any such thing from the students I must say that it will be the primary duty of the government of independent India to create the necessary atmosphere. Just as it is the duty of the mother to

provide milk to the child that is born, so that it develops and grows well, it is the duty of the government to look after the education of the students.

Gandhiji asked many questions of the two girls in the group. He asked them where and what they were studying.

You had come for two minutes but I have given you ten minutes. It is a matter of pleasure for me to mix with students and talk with them whenever I meet them. Of course, I am not able to fully satisfy my desire in this matter as I am busy with many other activities. But tell me—will you give me just five rupees each for this autograph? Moreover, I have signed in Bengali. Should I not get a higher fee for it?[1]

I have made it a profession to serve *Daridranarayana*. Hence whatever other occupations I may take up my own profession will always be the focal point. But if you cannot pay me more, help me in my work of communal unity. Let there be no distinctions of caste or community among the students. And, if you cannot help the suffering poor at least sympathize with them by being good to them. If you do this honestly, I shall take it that you have paid me a good price.[2]

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 353-6

427. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,
May 14, 1947

Gandhiji said that he was leaving for Patna and then proceeding to Delhi, and hoped to return to Calcutta after his work in Delhi was finished.

He had spent two hours in visiting the scenes of the recent disturbances in the company of the Chief Minister and could see that the destruction was small compared to the August disturbances[3]. He hoped this was the last of disturbances in Calcutta.

Gandhiji then replied to the two questions put to him. The first question was: Calcutta has virtually become divided into Hindu and Muslim zones. What can be done by the citizens so that normal life can once again be restored? Gandhiji replied:

[1] There was a roar of laughter. The students said : "Bapuji ! You have adopted a Bania's technique!"

[2] One of the girls then donated her gold ring on behalf of the group.

[3] Of 1946

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The only way is for at least one party to be wholly truthful and non-violent. Then they will fear no one but God. Such men are the men of courage. All parties will make friends with them and even goondas will shed their goondaism before them. I know of no other better way. I have appealed to the Muslims who are in a majority to take the lead.

The second question was: Why do you ask the Hindus to study the Koran also? Is it not enough if they study their own religion? Replying, Gandhiji said:

It is the duty of everyone to study the scriptures of other religions besides his own. This enables people to keep their religion pure and rid it of blemishes. Moreover we have Christians, Muslims, Parsis and followers of other religions amongst us. It behoves the Hindus to study their religious books if they regard them as their brothers.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

428. TELEGRAM TO MRIDULA SARABHAI

[Before *May 15, 1947*][1]

MRIDULABEHN
CARE DR. SYED MAHMUD
BANKIPORE
(PATNA)

PANCHGANI BUNGALOW AVAILABLE ON TERMS. REACHING THURSDAY PUNJAB MAIL.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 10578. Courtesy: D. C. Jha

[1] According to the donor this telegram was communicated on telephone during May-August, 1947. Gandhiji reached Patna on May 15, 1947 which was a Thursday.

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429. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

PATNA,
May 15, 1947

CHI. MIRA,

Your two letters. I do not reach there before 25th so far as I can see. I do not know what you should do now. No more time.

Love.

BAPU

SHRI MIRABAI
P. O. RISHIKESH
DIST. DEHRADUN

From the original: C. W. 6526. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9921

430. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

PATNA,
May 15, 1947

CHI. SUSHILA,

Your letter is lying in front of me. I will not misunderstand you for not going [to Manilal].[1] If Vijayalakshmi desires your presence there, you should stay.

I met Krishnakumar. He stayed with me for three days. He did not like the condition of refraining from correspondence. I told him I would be able to decide only after seeing Sita again. He seems to be a nice person. I could not talk much with him. Sushila Pai was with me at that time. I asked her to have a frank talk [with him], which she did. If both of them willingly agree to wait for seven years, I would have no objection to their marriage. More when you come. I shall be here till the 24th, then Delhi. Arun has done well.

Tell Arun and Ila to write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5004

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Manilal Gandhi", p. 382.

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431. A LETTER

May 15, 1947

CHI. . . .,[1]

Your letter. I could not find the second edition of *Bhajanavali*.

Consult either Vinoba or Kaka regarding the best sayings of the Prophet. I am not in a position to concentrate on this task.

I am a little surprised and also sorry to hear about your marriage. There must be something wrong somewhere as what should be a natural thing seems to be extremely difficult. I am writing this to caution you, not to dissuade you. Do as Vinoba says.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 369-70

432. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

PATNA,
May 15, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I read your letter today in Patna. I had it yesterday at Sodepur.

Kashinath's statement is in bad taste. It could hardly be worth anything since he never had the courage to make a truthful statement. I do not know what we can do now. Maybe, something can be done if he has the courage to stick to a truthful statement and has enough evidence to prove that such is the case.

It is also painful that Kashinath's brother paid the money. If people continue to part with their money at the bidding of goondas or live in perpetual dread it will only encourage the

[1] The name is omitted in the source.

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goondas to indulge in their evil doings. Such people should go and live somewhere else.

I shall be here till the 24th. I have to reach Delhi on the 25th.

I hope you are all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9082

433. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

PATNA,
May 15, 1947

Gandhiji addressed the prayer gathering today in Bankipore Maidan at Patna after a fortnight. In the interval, he said, he had been to Delhi and Calcutta. He had not foreseen his visit to Calcutta. For, his vow of do or die was taken only for Noakhali and Bihar. But what he heard about Calcutta made him feel that he might be of some use there. And he could say that he had not been entirely unsuccessful. In Calcutta also he was serving Bihar. For the cause was the same. By going to Calcutta or elsewhere, where he might be called upon to go in future, though the possibility was very remote, he did not leave out Bihar or Noakhali. It only extended the field of the operation of his do or die mission. He felt that success at one place would be followed by success at other places. The future was, however, in God's hands.

During his absence Gandhiji had kept himself informed about the work going on in Bihar. During the day he had received more information. Affairs in Bihar moved slowly. The Biharis were, however, not slow when they committed acts of madness. There was no reason why they should be slow in making amends. The rains were coming. They were working against time. The Ministry had concentrated the control of rehabilitation work in Ansari Saheb's hands for the sake of efficiency. General Shah Nawaz, who had gone on a short leave, would be presently in their midst. If sufficient capable women workers imbued with the spirit of loving service came forward to work among the Muslim women, he felt sure the work would go forward.

Gandhiji was sure that if Bihar succeeded in instilling confidence in the Muslims, her influence would be felt throughout India. Some Hindus wrote to Gandhiji to ask if he expected them to flatter and fawn on the Mussalmans. He, as a life-long fighter, with truth and ahimsa as his weapons, could not countenance that. What he counselled was the control of their baser instincts of anger and hatred. And if avoiding harshness and adopting perfect gentlemanliness was flattery, he would not hesitate to use that word.

Gandhiji then informed the congregation that he could not bear the strain of touring every place in the heat. He had to content himself with holding his prayer meeting at different places every day.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

434. FROM THE DIARY[1]

May 15, 1947

Bengali after prayers. Had juice. Talked to Madalasa[2] about Manudi. I told her that Manudi was going to be with me as long as I lived. I have allowed her to join me on this condition. She can leave me but I will not leave her. I wish to develop the fine qualities that she possesses. I spoke about such other things.

* * *

Alighted at Gulzar Bagh. Had a walk after I came. Massage, bath. Talked with Mridula during the meal, with Dev before taking a nap. . . .[3] Manu has a severe stomach-ache, she also had vomiting and is running temperature. I therefore called in the doctors who examined her. Manu's complaint was diagnosed as appendicitis. I had her removed to the hospital immediately. She will be operated upon at night. I called back Madalasa and Santok[4]. They came. Watched Manu's operation at the hospital. Mridula and Madu were keeping her company. But they were not allowed inside the operation theatre. I had put on a surgical mask and watched the whole operation. She was taken to the room upstairs at 10.30. I entrusted her to the doctor's care and returned at 11.10. I went to bed after 11.30. Dr. Col. Bhargava[5] performed the operation.

In place of Manudi, Madu is attending upon me. I continued to think of Manudi during the night.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 360 and 366

[1] As Manu Gandhi was hospitalized she could not maintain her diary for five days. She later copied out extracts from Gandhiji's diary at his instance.

[2] Daughter of Jamnalal Bajaj, married to Shriman Narayan

[3] Omission as in the source

[4] Widow of Maganlal Gandhi

[5] Col. Dwarka Prasad Bhargava

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435. LETTER TO GLADYS OWEN

PATNA,
May 16, 1947

DEAR GLADYS,

I am glad that you went to Lahore and did what was possible. I am sending you a copy of my reply. I think it is wrong for friends to come to India to learn non-violence, whether from me or anybody else. Don't you?

I am plodding. The work is difficult but faith to be faith has to overcome mountains. We have to try to cultivate such faith.

Love.

BAPU

MISS GLADYS OWEN
NUR MANZIL
LAL BAGH
LUCKNOW

From a photostat: G. N. 6200

436. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

PATNA,
May 16, 1947

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

My pride has been humbled. Last evening Manu was operated upon for appendicitis in a hospital. I was by her side. It is a little before six in the morning just now. A man came to inform me that Manu says she is all right.

I had suspected even in Delhi that it was appendicitis. I had hoped that treatment with mud-pack would help her to get well. But it did not help her sufficiently. I, therefore, called in the doctors yesterday. They advised an operation, and I therefore got her operated upon. Thus it is that God humbles man's pride. I do not know what new lessons He is still going to teach me. Whom can I advise now, 'Die but do not give up nature cure.' I will be satisfied if I can put that into practice in my own life.

You must not worry. Madalasa and Santok visited Manu at twelve. She is fine. I will go and see her in the evening.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

437. LETTER TO DINSHAW K. MEHTA[1]

May 16, 1947

. . . There was a telegram yesterday saying that Jehangir[2] would be going to Japan for some time. I did not worry knowing that he was by your side. I never stop thinking about you. I was attracted by you and followed you and got myself involved in nature cure. But having got into it I see and am increasingly realizing that probably there is a great difference between our approaches. I do not think I can change my outlook now. Probably you cannot change yours either. And so, we must both decide about our course of action. There is no need for you to rush to me. I am passing through a process of change, am trying to perfect myself. I have to be constantly on the move. I am striving to perfect my non-violence. I cannot divert my attention from it and take up other things. For me nature cure too comes under non-violence. As for you, your dharma, your *sadhana* consists for the present of two things. You must serve Maji, remain by her side and give thought to your own needs. This cannot be done by being with me, because Maji is not with me and I am not with her. About money too you have to think for yourself.

Now, the second thing is a matter of shame for me. Chi. Manu always follows my instructions, and so, I was wondering how far I could take her with me. Even while I was in Delhi I had suspected that she had appendicitis. But my knowledge being absolutely superficial, how could I trust myself ? Even so I treated her with earth and water. I also laid down her diet. I used to ask her to have enemas. After constipation she started having motions. Then it was that her appendicitis was detected. Two naturopaths came my way. But the poor fellows had very little knowledge. I have still not come across a perfect naturopath.

[1] Omissions in this and the following two letters are as in the source.

[2] Jehangir Patel, who, along with Gandhiji and the addressee, was a trustee of the All India Nature Cure Trust at Uruli Kanchan.

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I was eager to put you in that category. But in trying to do so I realized that I myself was by nature a true naturopath, though an imperfect one. Then I came here and since I had to be here for ten days I found some spare time. Instead of one, four doctors arrived. They recommended an operation. Accepting defeat I allowed the operation. Today is the second day. I am dictating this in the morning. I have received information from the hospital that Manu is well. I did not at all like the idea of the operation. If I had expert knowledge I would never have allowed it. What would you have done in a similar situation? I am asking this question so that I can have some help in future. You can reply at your own convenience when you have the time. There is no hurry. According to my present information I have to be in Delhi on the 25th. God alone knows where I shall be tomorrow. I hope your mind is at peace. Maji must be all right. . . . and both the children must be fine.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 373-4

438. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 16, 1947

CHI. . . . ,

Received your letter. It is good that Rameshwardas has sent his reply. I will be satisfied if your itching stops completely and you are able to take proper food. It is a matter for concern that Sankaran and you are not getting on well together. But what can be done about it? Win him over if you can; but this too not at the cost of your health.

I had to swallow my pride and get Manu operated upon for appendicitis yesterday. I knew it had to be done, but I had it put off from Delhi to Calcutta. I got her examined by doctors as we had ten days here. My fear was right. They suggested an immediate operation. I agreed. Today there is a message from the hospital that she is doing well.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 370

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439. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 16, 1947

CHI. . . . ,

Your telegram. I am sending . . . I do not know where he is today. . . . had mentioned your telegram. I agree with your view. Their love is pure but their temperaments differ a lot. If he writes to that effect the problem would be solved the sooner. I can issue a public statement only when both of them agree. I do hope that the matter would soon be settled.

Both of you must be doing well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 370

440. LETTER TO DHARMANANDA KOSAMBI

May 16, 1947

BHAI KOSAMBI,

I get regular reports about you. Balvantsinha has conveyed to me your message as well. I am very happy that you are staying in the Ashram.

I have no doubt that you will depart in peace.[1]

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 372

[1] The addressee passed away on June 4.

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441. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

PATNA,
May 16, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

Your letter, written in the early hours before prayers. It is a pleasure to read all that you write about Kosambi.[1] I am enclosing a letter for him.[2] You may hand it over or read it out to him if he is still alive when this reaches you.

I have no doubt whatsoever that his stay in the Ashram has sanctified it.

Sankaran's letter is enclosed. It would be good if something could be done.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1977

442. A LETTER[3]

May 16, 1947

CHI. . . . ,

. . . writes to say that you and . . . do not get along well. In your capacity as a physician you have to win the heart of the patient; the patient has not to win the physician's. When the patient wins the heart of the physician, the physician becomes the patient and *vice versa*. That is how it should be with you. If the patient needs the services of the physician, but is not able to accept the treatment in full, the physician should try to adjust himself to the patient and serve him to the best of his capacity. He must handle him with great patience. If you have caught the meaning of my words, act accordingly.

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 371

[1] The addressee had written at length about the mental and spiritual tranquillity of Kosambi.

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

[3] Omissions in the letter are as in the source.

443. LETTER TO A PHYSICIAN

May 16, 1947

I had read your letter as soon I received it. But I saw the accompanying article only today. I was happy to read it. It is not enough to say that you have cured all your patients through yoga exercises. You ought to have indicated the particular exercises and mentioned whether diet, etc., played an important part.

In all books whether worthwhile or no, details are mentioned. You should do the same.

I thought of you when out of sheer despair I had to seek the help of doctors for my own little girl. I told myself how nice it would have been if I could have cured this girl with the help of yoga exercises, etc. She had appendicitis and inflammation. She could not be cured with the earth-water-and-diet [treatment]. I consulted two naturopaths. They also could not help. A *hakim* even suggested treating her with *myrobalan* and wood-apple. This also did not help. Now she is lying in the hospital. I who believed in nature cure and yoga exercises had to confess defeat. I did not like it. But I could do nothing about it. If the girl took fruit she used to get seven or eight motions. She was kept on just a little buttermilk. I could stop neither her motions nor the inflammation of her appendix. Now, tell me, what should I have done in such a case?

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 372

444. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

GULZARBAGH,
May 16, 1947

Gandhiji referred to his visit to the refugee camp[1] nearby prior to the prayer meeting. He had not been able to see it as thoroughly as he would have liked to do. But what he saw and heard from the Superintendent made him really glad.

[1] Industrial Home for refugees

The camp was being run on the principle of self-help. Men worked and were paid their due. The children also worked, though they were paid more than what they would be otherwise entitled to. Such self-help bred self-respect.

They were innocent men and women, who had suffered at the hands of the Hindus who had gone temporarily insane. It was their duty, therefore, to make all the amends they could. They should go and visit the refugees in the camp, interest themselves in every detail of their lives, and seek to help them in every way they could. If they did that, Gandhiji said, it would be in part payment of the debt that they owed to the wronged refugees.

Similarly, they need not beg the refugees who had left the province through fear or due to false propaganda, to come back. They should win them back by the magnetic power of their love. If they could create such an atmosphere of affection and brotherliness most of the Muslims who had left the province would return. His work and that of the Government would be considerably lightened. And Bihar would truly become '*vihar*' (a garden), as its name signified.

The Indian Nation, 18-5-1947

445. FROM THE DIARY

May 16, 1947

After prayers went through the Bengali literature that had arrived from Santiniketan. Quite early a message came that Manudi was all right. Once during the night while coming out of the anaesthesia she had called for me. But she soon woke up and sent word that she was well. Wrote letters to Khurshedbehn, Pyarelal. Went for a walk. Madu had come but I asked her to go and visit Manudi; so she left early. In Manudi's absence everything is going topsy-turvy. It shows how much of my work was taken up by the poor girl. She is crazy about serving me.

For these few days Madan Babu will attend to the massage and Dev will bathe me. Sailen read out the newspapers. 9.45 Sat down to my meal. 10.30 The Khaksars called. Then I slept for a little while. I woke up at 11. Took coconut water. While sleeping, in the absence of Manudi Madu massaged with ghee. After getting up wrote letters to Jaisukhlal, Satis, Rameshwari Nehru, Sushila Nayyar. Had mud-pack at 12 and went to sleep after dictating a letter to Chimanlal. Shriman, Santok went to

see Nalanda. Got up at 1 o'clock. While spinning dictated letters to Bisen for Balvantsinha, Kosambi, Sankaran; after the spinning, for Kalyanam, Savitri (Austria), Perry, Martin and Mira. Went to sleep when the eyes were heavy with sleep. Got up at 3.15. Dictated a letter to Vrijlal Nehru. Dictated a letter to Gladys Owen. Talked with Ansari and Mridula. Prabha arrived. Took jaggery. Omitted taking milk. 5.15 Jayaprakash arrived as I was setting out.

Jayaprakash too accompanied me. Sat by Manudi's side for twenty minutes. She is well. She has not yet passed urine. She has grown very weak. Prayers were held at Gulzarbagh. Manudi's absence was felt very much. Returned from there at 7.45. Talk with Anugraha Babu and Ansari. From tomorrow Prabha will come for the massage. Dictated something for *Harijan*. Went through the discourse written by Dev. At 8.30 p. m. a message arrived that Manudi had passed urine after an injection. She is being given penicillin every three hours. Ramanand Mishra's man had come. He talked about fasting. Advised to refrain from undertaking a fast. Afterwards took a walk. Mridula kept me company. Gave myself a sponge bath. Slept at 9.30.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 366-7

446. LETTER TO GOPALDAS A. DESAI[1]

PATNA,
May 17, 1947

BHAI . . . ,

I have received your telegram. You had never ceased to be a Prince. I was quite sure that you were going to regain the title which had been snatched away from you. This has appeared in the newspapers. I was not at all surprised. Your telegram was received today. When it came to Calcutta I had already left. Now that you have got back your title I hope and expect you would be humbler, purer and more devoted to service. With the restoration of the title, your field of service has not narrowed; rather it has widened. Your responsibility

[1] Ruler of Dhasa principality in Saurashtra, who had been deprived of his title and estate in July 1922. These were restored to him on May 13, 1947.

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has increased. You should add glory to the title. We are all passing through critical times. It is not possible to predict today who amongst us would pass the test.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 375-6

447. A LETTER[1]

May 17, 1947

There is a letter from Chi. . . . to Sushila. But actually it is meant for me. Read that letter if you have not already done so. Think over it and solve her difficulty. Or, write to me if necessary.

[From Gujarati]
Biharni Komi Agman, p. 376

448. A LETTER

May 17, 1947

CHI. . . . ,

Your letter to Sushila has arrived today after having gone to all sorts of wrong places. You should not be impatient. What I have told you is the eternal truth. God always removes the troubles of true servants. That is why He is called the Remover of troubles. . . . I have written to . . . I suppose he will meet you. I shall be in Delhi on the 25th. But you will have more correct information from the newspapers.

[From Gujarati]
Biharni Komi Agman, p. 376

[1] Omissions in this and the following two letters are as in the source.

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449. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 17, 1947

CHI. . . . ,

Received your letter. I think it is difficult to make any provision for destitutes from the Kasturba Fund. Even if something could be done, it is in the hands of Labanyalata[1]. But if you feel particularly for any such person, write to me. I shall find some way out. Apart from the Fund we have, there is no programme for relief to destitutes.

As for Satis Babu I have decided that in view of his bad health he ought not to be exposed to risk. Didimony[2] must be doing well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 375

450. LETTER TO RAMANAND MISHRA

PATNA,
May 17, 1947

CHI. RAMANAND[3],

I have had a talk with Bachchu Singh[4]. I shall do whatever I can. There is no need to hurry with the hunger-strike. Bachchu Singh will tell you the rest.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 8024

[1] Labanyalata Chanda, Agent in Bengal for the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust

[2] Taralika

[3] The source has "Ramnandan".

[4] *Vide* p. 483.

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451. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU[1]

PATNA,
May 17, 1947

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,[2]

Your note[3]. I must deny myself the pleasure of going to Mussoorie. I am quite fixed up here and can easily delay coming to Delhi till 31st May[4] or even a day later.

Give my love to all at Mussoorie and take full rest whilst you can.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the original: Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (M. O. Mathai). Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

452. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

PATNA,
May 17, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI PATEL,

I got your letter and Jawaharlal's. I don't feel like going to Mussoorie at all. You may stay in Mussoorie as long as you can. Whatever days I can get here will be spent usefully; if therefore, you agree, I shall reach Delhi on the 31st; or any time you wish. I should like you to take complete rest in Mussoorie. We shall discuss the problems in Delhi.

[1] This and the following letter were sent to the addressees through a messenger who had brought their letters in the evening. *Vide* p. 488.

[2] The superscription and the subscription are in Hindi.

[3] Dated May 16, which read: "You must be following the rapid developments taking place here. Mountbatten is going to London on Sunday next for two weeks. I understand you intend arriving here on the 25th. Vallabhbhai and I feel that it would be a very good thing if you would come to Mussoorie for a few days before coming to Delhi. This would suit us and it would also give you a few days of rest. . . . I was in any event thinking of going to Mussoorie for a few days. . . . Vallabhbhai is also going to Mussoorie."

[4] The Congress Working Committee meeting scheduled for May 16 was postponed to May 31.

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I read about Darbar in the newspapers. I was sure that it would happen. There was a telegram from him today and I have replied to him.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 354

453. FROM THE DIARY[2]

PATNA,
May 17, 1947

After prayers talked with Madu[3]. Dictated letter to . . . . Received a message on telephone that Manu is all right. Letter to Secretary, Bihar Catholic Association. Went for a walk; Shriman and Madu accompanied. Prabha gave the massage. Intimated that I was not going to have *khakhras* today. A telegram from Sushila[4] came from Delhi offering to come to help Manudi. I sent wire that it was not necessary. No letter from Sushila for many days. Talked with Santok and Bala during the bath and the meal. Dr. Mahmud called. Afterwards had a nap. On getting up took coconut water and listened to the mail read by Dev. Sailen came. I told him that since the news about Manu had appeared in the papers they [the Press correspondents] were now free [to write]. I said this because on reading the news in the papers telegrams started coming in one after another. Especially since her sisters would be needlessly alarmed. Sailen read out the newspapers. 12.15 Went to the privy. Had a talk with Mridula. At 1 p. m., lay down with mud-packs. At 1.40 took off the mud-packs. Dev brought the mail. It look a lot of time. Went through Dinshaw's letter. Wrote to . . . because he had said categorically that Manu did not have appendicitis.

Dictated to Bisen letters for Hemprabha Devi, Darbar Saheb, Jugatram and Annapurna. . . . . Bachchu Singh, Ramnandan Mishra's representative, called. At 4 Mrityunjaya Prasad and

[1] *Vide* pp. 483-4.
[2] Omissions in the item are as in the source.
[3] The source has 'Manu', obviously a misprint.
[4] Dr. Sushila Nayyar

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Naleshwar Prasad had come. 4.15 Jayaprakash, Prabhavati and three others talked about the police strike.[1]

The dentist came to see me. 5.30 Went to the hospital to see Manudi. Stayed there for 30 minutes. Manudi was overcome with emotion on seeing me. Went to Dinapur for prayers. Returned at 6.40[2]. Talked with Anugraha Babu.

Messenger came with special letters from Jawaharlal and Sardar. . . . Wrote replies and handed them over. 8.45 Went for a walk. Mridula was with me. Retired to bed at 10.15.

Today neither the prayer nor the discourse was satisfactory. The crowd was very large. In the absence of any arrangement there was no peace[3]. Therefore we returned after finishing only the prayers. Prayers were at Dinapur.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 374-5

454. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 18, 1947

CHI. . . . ,[4]

I got your two letters together. You have now taken to aeroplanes. I am not saying it by way of reproach.

How very odd that my letters should hurt you and my sweet words should seem like poison to you? Why does not such a situation seem pitiable to you? Don't you know that the word *mara*[5] became Rama in the mouth of a devotee? Isn't there a similar story in Valmiki's work? I have forgotten the original Sanskrit. The proverb "a father's rebuke is nourishing like ghee" has come from that. If this does not apply to you, should I not consider myself at fault? What should I write now? Let things take their own course. I am not going to write anything to

[1] *Vide* p. 165.

[2] The source has "5.40", evidently a slip.

[3] A huge crowd of nearly a hundred thousand people had assembled but because of persistent noise Gandhiji told the gathering that he was leaving the prayer-ground without addressing them. He remarked: "It is clear you do not wish to hear me; you want me to hear you. As I have already done so I would beg your leave."

[4] The name is omitted in the source.

[5] Meaning 'dying'

the newspapers. You relish whatever you find pleasant and start wilting when you are confronted with something unpleasant. Indeed, what a merit in a doctor!

A niece[1] of Dr. Bhargava is working in the hospital here. She used to study in your college. She was junior to you by four years. She told Manu: "If . . . takes me on the Kasturba [Memorial] work I would work honorary." God alone knows how much truth there is in this.

May it not be that the apparent contradiction in my words is based on my experiences on the different occasions? Is it not possible that the same patient who may seem healthy to you today may appear unhealthy the next day?

I shall reach Delhi on the 25th. It would be nice if you could go to Simla in the meantime. Come down on the 25th.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 380-1

455. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI[2]

PATNA,
May 18, 1947

CHI. . . . ,

I saw this letter among the papers I have taken up after prayers. You have asked me to send a telegram about the photographer. Your letter is dated April 25. Manu did tell me something about it. After coming here I have just taken up the pending papers. I am able to attend to your letter only today, and so, I am not sending you a telegram. I am not so enthusiastic about the photographer. But I do not wish to disappoint you, hence, I leave it to you.

People have built roads with their own labour and, if the Government does not pay them wages, I don't think there is anything wrong if as an exception we pay. For, they would have certainly expected payment in this case. But we cannot create a precedent like that.

[1] Dr. Lajja Bhargava

[2] Omissions in the letter are as in the source. It is evident from the contents, however, that this was addressed to Kanu Gandhi; *vide* the following item.

It will do if you show this letter to . . . . However, I will write a separate letter or dictate one.

Most probably I have written to you about. . . . I have been a little worried about . . . after . . .'s letter. And I cannot say that I approved of. . .'s suggestion that . . . should stay only with you. But I have accepted the suggestion. I did not like it because it was contrary to what I had decided. Both of you had accepted it, too. But I consider . . . a mere child, and hence, if she cannot bear the life there, she should not be forced to live there. But you alone can decide about it. I can only say that you have my permission. And . . . ought to improve her health. How is she going to serve, if she does not improve her health?

I shall probably leave here on the 24th for Delhi. Manu has been operated upon for appendicitis. You must have known it already. She is still in the hospital. She is all right. It is terribly hot here. During these months it is bound to be hot everywhere in India except on the hills. I have so far not found the heat unbearable.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 378-9

456. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

PATNA,
May 18, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I think I have already replied to what Chi. Kanu writes but today I am writing[1] to him again. The letter is enclosed with this. It being in Gujarati you will not understand it. All that I have meant to convey is that those who have laboured for clearing the road, etc., should get their wages from one or the other source, either from the Government or from us. We have given our word and so somehow they must be paid. Think over it and do what is proper.

I got two copies of *Dinlipi*, one should be enough. It says that your health suffered because of your carelessness.

I hope you have my letters and given up your carelessness.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9282

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

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457. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 18, 1947

BHAI SAHEB,

I am enclosing herewith the article from the *Janata* dealing with the complaints about the zamindars. After the abolition of the indigo planters' reign in Bihar,[1] any zamindar should be ashamed to have behaved in the way described in the *Janata*. I have talked to the writer. He tells me that there is no exaggeration in his article. Look into the matter and do what you consider proper.

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 378

458. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

PATNA,
May 18, 1947

CHI. BRAJKRISHNA,

I have your letter full of anger. Why can't you see that Hindus and Muslims have lost their humanity? Never forget Bihar. There are other examples like this, but I do not want to go into any controversy. God will give us all good sense.

What you write about fasting is full of misunderstanding. Ask me, when we meet, if I have the time. Now I may not come on the 25th, but I must on the 31st. I shall, however, be prepared to leave on the 24th. If I get more time, so much the better. After all my presence does help one way or the other.

I hope you are all right.

You must have learnt about Manu's operation. She is all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 2500

[1] The Champaran Agrarian Bill was passed on March 4, 1918, by the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council. *Vide* Vol. XIV.

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459. MESSAGE TO SOUTH AFRICA[1]

May 18, 1947[2]

Field Marshal Smuts[3] is a trustee for Western civilization. I still cling to the hope that he will not sustain it on the suppression of Asiatics and Africans. South Africa should present a blend of the three.

To the people of South Africa, to whom I am no stranger, I would say that they should not make the position of their representatives impossible by their unwarranted prejudice against colour. The future is surely not with the so-called white races if they keep themselves in purdah. The attitude of unreason will mean a third war which sane people should avoid. Political co-operation among all the exploited races in South Africa can only result in mutual goodwill, if it is wisely directed and based on truth and non-violence.

I have no doubt that those South African Indians who seek to create a division will do harm to themselves and to the great cause of liberty for which the movement of satyagraha has stood and must stand.

To the satyagrahis I would advise strict adherence to the fundamentals of satyagraha which literally means force of truth and this is for ever invincible. It is a good sign that they have a progressive European group solidly behind them. The satyagrahis of South Africa should know that they have India at their back in their struggle for preserving the self-respect of the Indians in South Africa.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

[1] & [2] This was sent through Dr. Y. M. Dadoo and Dr. G. M. Naicker, who met Gandhiji on May 18 and 19; *vide* also p. 495.

[3] Jan Christiaan Smuts (1870-1950); Prime Minister of South Africa, 1919 to 1924 and 1938 to 1948

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460. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

PATNA,
May 18, 1947

It pained me that yesterday though men and women had assembled in large numbers my voice could not reach them all owing to the clumsiness, or inefficiency, of the volunteers, or because of some defect in the loud-speakers.[2] As a result people failed to maintain silence. It is a matter of shame for us. We ought to learn how to maintain perfect silence even when we gather in hundreds of thousands. If we fail to learn this, we shall not be able to protect our independence. Democracy requires everyone, man or woman, to realize his or her responsibility. This is what is meant by panchayat raj. A single limb of the body ceasing to function properly throws the whole body mechanism out of gear. Similarly, the whole of India is one body and we are its limbs. If we become lax, the whole country would be affected likewise. That is why I lay so much stress on the need for discipline at meetings, on trains or on railway platforms. It is on such occasions that we are tested. I go so far as to say that if we had learnt to keep order at gatherings of hundreds of thousands, riots like those in Bihar would not have occurred. Today, the smallest disturbance is given a communal colour, with the result that it provides an opportunity for a communal flare-up. Volunteers, therefore, should understand this and educate the people to keep order at meetings, etc. This will not be accomplished by merely attempting it when meetings are actually being held. Training in this respect must find its way into the very homes of the people. I would suggest that they tell the people that yesterday's meeting failed in its purpose because of the noise, and that in order to have me again in their midst they must learn to keep silence. I become apprehensive about our future when I see slackness around me in everything. Lethargic people can never accomplish anything, nor can they develop courage. We have

[1] As Gandhiji was observing silence, his written speech was read out.
[2] *Vide* p. 488.

to be vigilant if we desire to raise independent India to the highest position in the world.[1]

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 1-6-1947

461. A LETTER[2]

PATNA,
May 18, 1947

CHI. . . . ,

Got your letter today. I am writing the reply at night. You are unnecessarily perturbed. I have not neglected you. True, I have not pampered you. Do you know with how many people I had to argue on your account? And why should you know it too? Why do you feel upset because of. . . ? Was he not the one to discover. . . ? And he was the one who encouraged him. Instead of being grateful to him, why do you find fault with him? If you are clinging to the money . . . has left behind, why do you hope for something else? Give up your attachment to that money and everything will turn out well for you. You are miserable because you are not social. You are restless. You have gone far ahead. And now, you are your own obstruction. If I do not point out these things to you, who will?

It is good that you have started going your way. But you would go very far and shine forth if you gave up being too obstinate. Just now I am going around in the nearby areas. I shall go to Sevagram if God grants me another life. If not, I shall do or die somewhere here.

Manu had been suffering from appendicitis. She had to be operated upon.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 380

[1] According to the source, this and the following five prayer speeches are reproduced from *Bihar Samachar*.

[2] Omissions in the letter are as in the source.

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462. FROM THE DIARY[1]

PATNA,
May 18, 1947

After prayers looked through the letters dictated yesterday and signed them. Bengali [lesson]. Dictated a letter to . . . about the zamindars.[2] Went for a walk. Madu kept me company. Madan Babu gave the massage, Dev, the bath. After bath completed the letter to . . . because it was not yet time for the meal. Listened to the letter from Brijkishan. Could not be completed. At 9 Drs. Dadoo and Naicker came. Talked to them while taking my meal. Reduced the quantity of food. Slept. Got up at 10.45 and drank coconut water. Wrote message for South Africa. 11.45 Sat down to spin. 1.10 Had mud-packs. Went through the whole of Ansari's scheme[3]. Dictated letter to Satis Babu. Read Brijkishan's papers. Dictated a reply. Had a talk with Mridula. 3.20 Dadoo and Naicker called again. Wrote the discourse. Prabha came. 4.15 Talked with Ansari and Mridula. 5 Went to the clinic for the dentures. From there went to Manudi. Prayer at Bankipur Maidan. Letter to . . . . Went for a walk. Santok and Mridu were with me.

[From Gujarati]
Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 376-7

463. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

PATNA,
May 19, 1947

CHI. AMRIT,

I have your long descriptive letter. It was received yesterday. It is interesting. We shall presently know what is to happen.

[1] Omissions in the item are as in the source.
[2] *Vide* p. 491.
[3] On rehabilitation; *vide* "Note on Rehabilitation", pp. 524-5.

I am glad you are having a little change and perhaps some rest.

The weather here has been oppressive. It is cool just now as it has been raining. The [venue of] prayer meetings change[s] daily. Today we have to go a fair distance.

It was discovered that Manu had appendicitis. Much to my shame as a believer in nature cure, I had to yield to the advice of the doctors. This is the fourth day. She is doing well. No worry.

I reach D.V. Delhi on 25th inst.

Thanks to Mridula she is keeping the living-room as cool as she possibly can by using blocks of ice and *khas tattis*.

I have not yet been able to cope with *Harijan* writing. My time is occupied in overtaking arrears.

If Sushila is there, tell her I wrote to her two letters at New Delhi and give her the date of my reaching N. D.

Love to all in the house.

Blessings from
BAPU[1]

From the original: C. W. 4193. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7829

464. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

PATNA,
May 19, 1947

CHI. . . . ,

I got your letter yesterday. Today is silence day and I am, therefore, able to reply immediately.

Why need you thank me for having sent you the shawl[2]? Does it mean that, when you send me something, I also should thank you?

That is no true love which expects formal courtesy from the person loved.

I did not understand your point regarding Karnataka.[3] Write to me again about it. Did a large number of girls come under bad influence?

[1] The subscription is in Hindi.

[2] For which the addressee had asked as a token of Gandhiji's love

[3] At a meeting of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, the Karnataka Agent had mentioned certain lapses on the part of some women workers.

You seem to be doing good work in Maharashtra.[1]

If I do have to fast, I should certainly like you to be with me at the time. But should I fast merely for that reason? If a fast does come about, we shall think then what your and my dharma should be. We need not even think about the matter just now. It was with some hesitation that I gave even the hint you refer to. It would not have seemed right if I had not given it.

The news which Gadgil gave you is not correct. I cannot conceive of any circumstances in which I might have to fast against women. Banish from your mind all thoughts about a fast and go on with your work.

As a doctor, Dr. Gilder will only say that my point of view is clear. A man who becomes a *sthitaprajna* in the sense described in the verses which we recite every evening, from the second chapter of the *Gita* cannot but live for 125 years. The word *shatam* used in the *Ishopanishad*[2] does not mean 99+1. It means 120, 125 or 130. I mentioned 125 on August [8][3], 1942, in Bombay,[4] and have been mentioning the same figure since then. If, however, I cannot overcome my passion and anger, I cannot live to be 125. In that case I ought to give up such an aspiration. My desire, thus, is conditional.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: G. N. 10461. Also C. W. 6899. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

465. LETTER TO DINSHAW K. MEHTA

PATNA,
May 19, 1947

CHI. DINSHAW,

Yesterday I got your letter of the 13th and I could read it only today.

I read again the note[5] I had drawn up earlier. I remembered the contents. I feel, however, that it would be better,

[1] As Agent of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust

[2] Verse 2 which reads: "Doing verily works in this world one should wish to live a hundred years."

[3] The source has " 7 ".

[4] Gandhiji, however, had mentioned "120". *Vide* Vol. LXXVI, p. 398.

[5] *Vide* pp. 267-9.

considering the manner in which the arrangement is working, to let it remain independent. (Whatever may be the fate of the original Trust, I should like the Uruli work to go on.) Having regard also to the fact that the progress of the work depends entirely on Manibhai, it seems better to let it remain independent. We, who are the original Trustees, will remain on the new Trust also and ensure that our point of view prevails.

Jehangir had told me that there was some difference of opinion between him and you. That is bound to happen.

I won't mind if you make an independent trust for Purandar also. It may, in course of time, develop into a university. I don't cherish any such hope. Where do we have the men? There is no school for naturopathy, nor any college. Without them, how can we have a university? If you devote yourself to the work at Purandar, I don't think that will harm the Trust in any way. For, if you can take up work at one place, no matter which, pay all your attention to it and succeed in the task, I will think that you have served the Trust.

You may send me any papers or details you wish to regarding that project. I think any success you achieve in popularizing nature cure is bound to benefit the Trust.

How can you make any progress if you cannot write fast in Gujarati? How will you, in that case, be able to work in a village? I feel tempted to write in English out of pity for you, but that would not be true friendship.

I understand about Maji. I am reaching Delhi on the 25th.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 2728. Courtesy: Manibhai Desai

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466. A LETTER[1]

PATNA,
May 19, 1947

CHI. . . . ,

I was under the impression that we had some money in the Bank at Calcutta. But I find that the amount was withdrawn and deposited there. So, make out a cheque for Rs. 36,000 in favour of Badshah Khan for the building[2] and send it to him.

You must be regaining your strength. Your itch must have gone. I shall leave here on the 24th for Delhi. I shall be there for at least seven days. I may have to stay even longer.

The above was dictated in the morning. I received the mail from there about two o'clock in the afternoon. There I found your letter. I am very happy that even in your sick-bed you are gaining useful knowledge. "A wise person should seek both wealth and knowledge as if he was never going to get old or to die."[3] Even if I have quoted this maxim earlier, it deserves to be borne in mind. You would know its meaning. If not, ask . . . . He knows.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 385-6

[1] Omissions in this and the following three letters are as in the source.
[2] For a school in Abdul Ghaffar Khan's village
[3] अजरामरवत् प्राज्ञो विद्यामर्थं च चिन्तयेत् ।

467. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 19, 1947

. . . Received your letter. I am sorry that you have taken so much pains in writing it.

I do not intend presenting my views in the manner you suggest. I am in no hurry. Nor do I have the time. I would not like them to remain as they are. But I do not think that the world or I will have lost anything thereby. I believe in rebirth. Whatever remains to be improved in this life will be improved in the next. I accept my dharma to do my best in this life. I consider it wrong to be slack in one's efforts under the excuse that there are going to be several births.

Your statement that you would[1] be able to put up with my conduct of which you do not approve, ought to be withdrawn. Would you not be shocked if I told a lie, or, if I committed a murder? Don't you see any error in your thinking?

The people you wish to suggest for giving a verdict on my views are not likely to undertake the task. I would never thrust that burden on them. How can one be sure that any code of conduct they lay down would not be wrong? It cannot be applied to you. And as for me, only my own code is applicable to me. So, we both remain where we were. Moreover, can we put before the world anything that is superficial? Fortunately, nothing like that is going to happen. They do present their views in their own way. True, they have not done it in this particular case; but so what?

I do not wish to close this discussion between us on my own. I see some point in . . .'s statement. But I shall gladly continue to write to you so long as you do. It would please me if I could give you some satisfaction by doing so. I do need you all—my co-workers.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 383-4

[1] The source has "would not" here.

468. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 19, 1947

. . . Your letter. What can I say about Greenfield[1]? Each man has his own reasons for writing. Some people abuse me while others shower praise. What can I say about it?

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 384

469. LETTER TO A MINISTER

PATNA,
May 19, 1947

. . . Got your letter today. The meeting must have been held yesterday. I hope it was a success. I know that we have taken an important step by changing the name.[2] How wonderful if, by our work, we became worthy of our name!

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 385

[1] The source has "Greenwich", evidently a misprint. *Vide* p. 419.
[2] The name Congress Committee had been changed to Peace Committee.

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470. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

BARH,
May 19, 1947

The day before yesterday I had gone to Dinapur. A big crowd had gathered there, as it has here, but in the absence of any proper arrangement there was too much noise and din. I don't know what went wrong but our purpose was defeated. In all that noise what could I speak and to whom could I address my words? When I speak I do so not to hear my own voice but in order that people can listen and I can explain to them their dharma. What is the point in addressing people if my voice fails to reach them? By God's grace we have today peace and order. I congratulate the volunteers as well as the organizers on their achievement. Now the role of our volunteers has changed. Formerly they were expected to teach people how to fill the jails, not to create disturbances or use abusive language. While fighting with the Empire we had to have cool courage. With cool courage we were able to achieve a lot. Of course, we cannot claim that everyone had acquired that courage. Even then we used to get a kind of training. But now the Government is our own and we have to impart training of a different nature. Noise creates disorder which leads to disturbances. Even then there used to be riots, etc., but it was never like this. Today we are fighting with one another. If it continues, I have no doubt that we will lose the independence we are about to attain.

But this is not the subject I am going to talk about today. A full report of the recent riots here should have reached me by this time. But it could not be. However, the people working here have confessed to me today that they had committed a grave error. India is undergoing incalculable sufferings as a result of the sins committed in Bihar and she might have to undergo more in future. If we want to get out of it we shall have to atone for it.

Atonement does not mean merely expressing it in words, it implies a change of heart. We should resolve not to err again. The bad people who have indulged in nasty acts and still continue to intimidate the Muslims, threatening them with physical violence, should confess their guilt and stop behaving like that.

The work of rehabilitation has been entrusted to Ansari Saheb. No doubt it is a difficult task. If the Muslims do not return, whose fault is it? When we do not deal with them in a friendly manner, do not plead with them to return, how can they come back?

They would surely return if we sincerely wished it and pleaded with them in a gentle and friendly way. If you want to atone for your sins you should confess them and bear the punishment awarded for them. This is the way of true atonement. Even if you wish to escape punishment you should confess your guilt. The court also awards a lighter punishment to a culprit if he confesses his crime and frankly admits it in the court. There is no other way but this to escape the consequences of your acts. At present people are running from place to place but how long can they evade punishment? Some day or other they are bound to be arrested. If the Government is afraid of them and does not arrest them it means it is inefficient and corrupt. It ought not to act like that. If people justify their sins with the argument that by killing and punishing the Muslims of Bihar they had avenged the crimes committed in Noakhali, which were a sequence of the happenings in Calcutta, well, it is the law of the jungle; it is beastly behaviour. Have beasts ever attained freedom? If you have heard of it, please tell me—at least I haven't. People ask me what they should do when the Muslims indulge in such excesses; should they retaliate with two slaps in answer to one? Some persons even do it. But this is the way of the beasts. I tell you that this method of retaliation and violence would not help the world, certainly not India. You have witnessed what the world has come to by following it. Germany, Italy and Japan are all ruined. Those who commit violence and instigate riots are bound to perish. This is the way of cowards. I never preach such cowardice—on the contrary I have always been teaching the lesson of true bravery. In [South] Africa the Indians were only a handful among the Negroes. The English could have suppressed them, and then how could we have lived there? In spite of that we courageously fought them. You have yourselves witnessed how here in Champaran too we put up a brave fight. Not a trace of the indigo-planters' reign of terror, which had lasted for hundreds of years, is to be found today. It is a different matter if some of our people have turned out to be like the indigo-planters. In Champaran we did not kill or persecute anyone; we abolished an evil system through satyagraha.

The peasants told the indigo-planters that they would not work for them and they stuck to their decision. They proved no cowards. Today we have to develop the same bravery, but to a much greater extent.

[From Hindi]
Harijan Sevak, 1-6-1947

471. FROM THE DIARY[1]

May 19, 1947

I have decided to start my entire routine half an hour earlier from today. Accordingly got up at 3.30. 3.50 Prayer. Bengali lesson. Silence day. Set right the bowels. Wrote a letter to . . . . Immediately posted it. 5.15 Went for a walk. Santok was with me. After washing my feet talked with Dadoo and Naicker who are leaving. At 6 o'clock went for the massage. At 8 finished my bath. 8.45 Listened to letter from Kishorelal while taking my meal. 9.20 Lay down. Wrote a letter to . . . . There is a letter from Jawaharlal in the mail. Spun. While spinning listened to Sailen reading the newspapers. 11.10 Finished spinning. Went to the privy. 12.30 took off mud-packs. Drank coconut [water] and wrote letters. . . . 2.15 Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya. Attended to the correspondence. Letter to . . . . 3.30 Wrote letters to Rajkumari, Satya Narayan Sinha, Maharaja of Cooch Behar. 4.50 Left for the station. Viceroy's letter[2] acknowledging receipt of mine came through the Government of Bihar. Prayer at Barh, a village. The train came at 9.30 instead of at 8.30. From there to Manudi at 10. She was asleep. But soon woke up when I passed my hand over her head. She was very glad to see me. 10.35 Returned from the hospital. 10.50 Prepared to go to bed. Wire from Jawaharlal. Again a wire from Gopaldas. It was very late; so went to bed without eating anything.

[From Gujarati]
Biharni Komi Agman, p. 381

[1] Omissions in this and the following four items are as in the source.
[2] Dated May 11; *vide* footnote 2, p. 437.

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472. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 20, 1947

. . . Your letter. How can one have lasting peace? Is not this lesson meant for all of us?

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 386

473. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 20, 1947

CHI. . . . ,

Your letter. As for Kosambi, see the letter I have written to . . . . I understand what you say about the hospital. Even so, it is your duty to discuss the matter with . . . . You should not leave the Ashram while Kosambi is still there. You say that nature cure has its own limits. That is, amputating the fractured leg of a person and fixing an artificial one is beyond nature cure. Does the same thing apply to appendicitis? It is another matter if a person with a fractured leg manages without a leg and bears the pain. Should the person ailing from appendicitis go to the extent of facing death?

If there is chaos amongst the naturopaths it means that there are no two naturopaths in India who are agreed in their opinion. Each clings to his pride. They never even think of expanding their knowledge. Such a situation is chaos. You may interpret chaos as disorder. Am I clear now?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 387-8

474. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 20, 1947

CHI. . . . ,

Your letter. I like it. . . . If they can spare you from the Ashram responsibilities you may go to see your mother. And go also to Kaka Saheb. . . .

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 387

475. LETTER TO A VILLAGE WORKER[1]

PATNA,
May 20, 1947

CHI. . . . ,

I have your letter after a long time. I was delighted to read it. I consider it a blessed moment that you would be completing twelve years in the same place. And so now you have done well in not turning away the fortune that came your way. Why should it add to your worry if the money came unsought? That money has not come to . . . (the worker himself) but to his work. If it was God's work, the money has come to God. You should utilize it as His servant. It should be used only for those boys and girls from Boriavi who are untouchables or considered near-untouchables. It does not matter if that money is spent slowly or is used up quickly but properly. I am devoted to Nayee Talim and I can therefore only think that all training should be along the lines of Nayee Talim.

. . . and Bhai . . . are with you. It is your duty to act as they direct. Then alone will you be able to preserve your detachment.

I appreciate your desire to meet me; but that desire would be fulfilled by controlling it. We shall certainly meet when we happen to. I can go to Sevagram again only in my next

[1] Of Kaira district

birth. By next birth I mean when I shall be free from this field of work after the problems here, at Noakhali and Calcutta are solved or I die in the process. This is my meaning of renunciation of my field of activity. It does not hurt me. I rather like it because I regard it as my dharma.

Since I have put my signature along with Jinnah Saheb, my field of work might expand. I cannot then say 'No'. I think this sums up everything.

Your good health is a matter of great credit for you. I am going to Delhi on the 24th. I shall be there for a week at least.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 388-9

476. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

HILSA,
May 20, 1947

On my way I have heard all about Hilsa. Here the Hindu brethren have played havoc. It is a matter of regret and shame for us, not of joy. The greatest sinner becomes the greatest saint provided he makes genuine atonement for his sins. Hinduism, Islam and Christianity are full of such instances where great sinners turned great saints through sincere atonement and pious deeds. What is the remedy for the happenings in Bihar? I am wondering how best to act or speak to you so that it might change your hearts. Committing a wrong is as bad as being in hell. But then no one remains at peace in hell. One would like to run away from there as soon as possible. In fact, committing an evil act is even worse than being in hell. If this is the reaction on the body, what about the spirit? It would prove beneficial for the Hindus, for India and the world if we atoned for the evil deeds committed here. How can we atone for it? It has been suggested to me that I should stay and work among those who had resorted to violence and should go from house to house; it might perhaps change their hearts. But owing to the hot weather I am not able to follow this advice. No doubt the heat of agony and shame is more unbearable than that which affects the body, however severe it might be. But man cannot

get over his love of life. He is afraid to work in this heat lest he should fall ill. It might be called lack of faith. But if my own faith is not firm enough, what can I say to others? I quietly bear with whatever is said about me. With whatever strength and gift of speech that God has granted me, I try to speak to you to the best of my ability.

I observe that the Muslim brethren who return to their villages go back again because their houses which had been destroyed or burnt down are yet to be rebuilt. The rains are approaching. When shall we rebuild those houses and persuade the Muslims to return? No doubt that is the responsibility of the Government. But I suggest that all of you who belong to the village should take up this responsibility and rebuild the houses. Till the houses are rebuilt you should vacate your own houses for the Muslims or accommodate them in your own houses. Thus you should persuade the Muslims to return and atone for your sins. I hear there are amongst you men who are not touched by remorse. It is a matter of great shame. You have all assembled here in large numbers to listen to me and we are having a huge meeting here. I would urge those who are able to hear me to follow my advice. In following it you will not be put to any inconvenience. We do welcome relatives coming from the Fiji Islands or from South Africa and accommodate them in our homes, don't we? In the present case we are the offenders. Let us now welcome the Muslims as our friends whom we had turned into enemies. The people of Bihar are great workers. Those who have the strength should live with the Muslims as if they were their blood-relations. Let one be an uncle, another a brother and a third one a sister, and so on. Then enmity will become a thing of the past. If you act on my advice and cleanse your minds and hearts, welcome back those who have migrated and accommodate them in your midst, it will be a wonderful achievement.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 1-6-1947

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477. FROM THE DIARY

May 20, 1947

Bengali after prayers. Talked to Bisen about . . .[1] Dictated answer to a question received for *Harijan*. Went for a walk. Was accompanied by Madu. Massage, bath. While taking bath dictated something for *Harijan*. Lay down. Mahesh has come. Woke up at 10.20 and took coconut water. Sat up to write. Talked with Mridula. Went to the privy. Spun. While spinning Sailen read out the newspapers. 10.50 Went to sleep with mud-packs. Woke up at 11.30. Examined the matter for *Harijan*. Attended to correspondence. There are letters from Surendra, Anand Hingorani. Went through the mail and dictated replies. 3.10 A deputation of zamindars called. Received the Khaksars. 4.10 Went to the hospital to see Manudi. From there went direct to the station. Prayer at Hilsa. Was accompanied by Shah Nawaz. To bed after 10.30.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 386

478. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

PATNA,
May 20/21, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your letter of the 17th. I do not remember anyone having written to me about the disposal of Kosambi's body.[2]

But today I have received Sankaran's letter which deals with this subject in detail. If Kosambi leaves the final decision in this regard to us, I would advise cremation as the best form of disposal. It is now being recognized as such throughout the world. Nor is it so very expensive; at any rate it should not be. Burial, if it is performed in accordance with scriptural injunctions, would involve a great deal of expenditure. As regards the other things, which he would like to be done after

[1] The name is omitted in the source.

[2] However, for Gandhiji's opinion on the subject, *vide* pp. 455-6.

his death, let him rest assured that his wishes pertaining to Pali, etc., will be duly carried out.[1] I have now to request him to forget about such matters and fix his mind on withdrawing himself into a state of inner concentration whether the body subsists a little longer or withers away soon. Tell him also that though Lanka might be the most suitable place for studying Pali, as far as the study of Buddhism is concerned I do not think that Lanka is the place for it. One does not get at the secret of Buddhism by getting to know its externals.

Govinda Reddi's[2] letter has arrived. Study it and take whatever decision you want.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Signed on the morning of the 21st.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1978

479. LETTER TO P. K. ELAYADAM

PATNA,
May 21, 1947

DEAR ELAYADAM,

Your letter. I have not received the money mentioned by you. If you give me more particulars I shall make further inquiry. You cannot live with me during my present very uncertain life. You must shed all misgivings.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 10563

[1] Dharmananda Kosambi had expressed a wish that after his death a couple of students should be sent to Shri Lanka every year to study Pali and on their return they should propagate Buddhism in India.

[2] An inmate of the Sevagram Ashram

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480. LETTER TO ANAND AND GANGI HINGORANI

PATNA,
May 21, 1947

CHI. ANAND AND GANGI,

I was glad to see your handwriting. But why have Gangi and Mahadev[1] not written? I can understand in the case of Gangi. How can she write when she is being borne down by physical pain? I had my fear that her operation would be very painful because she had allowed her disease to grow. She will forget the pain if she gets well, and the bitter experience of pain will make her happier. Isn't this what we call life? So it is with mental agony. Evil is mental agony and nobility is mental happiness. There is a saying in English to the effect that a great sinner undergoes penance and becomes a holy saint.

I like your asking Mother to come over to Poona and keeping Mahadev with you. But then decide for yourself what your dharma dictates.

I got your letter yesterday. I am dictating this reply today after the early morning prayer. So far my body is equal to the work. The heat is severe but it does not affect me much. Sometimes there are showers which make the day cool.

Manu had to be operated upon for appendicitis. She is in the hospital. She is well. My pride in nature cure has been shaken. Let us see where God leads me.

I am reaching Delhi on the 25th. I will have to stay there for at least one week. After that I may go either to Patna or Calcutta.

Blessings to you all from
BAPU

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

[1] Anand Hingorani's son by his first wife, Vidya

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481. LETTER TO ARBAB SHER AKBAR KHAN[1]

May 21, 1947

In view of the draft of the agreement[2] you have sent me, I hardly think it worthwhile our meeting. The agreement seeks, in my opinion, to displace the Government for a particular purpose. This, I think, no government can or should do. . . .[3] My views being as strong as they are, the best way for you is to settle directly with the Government.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 328

482. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

BIKRAM,
May 21, 1947

First, let me congratulate you on the perfect silence you maintained throughout the prayer, in spite of the mammoth gathering here, and on the correct beating of time. Those who beat time should learn to do it well which would show that they were praying wholeheartedly. I will request the sisters to learn it well.

I hear there was no outbreak of lawlessness in this *thana*[4]. The Congressmen and others here came together and saw to it that there was no trouble. Usually once a riot starts it spreads like an epidemic and infects all. It is good that the people here curbed the riot before it could spread. Chand Saheb, Secretary of the District Congress Committee, told me that tension did prevail and people were afraid of the possible trouble. As a result many Muslims fled. Some of them have since returned but not all.

I advise those who have returned to persuade all the others to return. There has been no damage to property. You should clean the houses which are lying vacant. On hearing the news

[1] President, Khaksar Negotiating Committee

[2] Between the Government of Bihar and Khaksars regarding rehabilitation of refugees in Bihar. *Vide* pp. 50, 53-4 and 515.

[3] Omission as in the source

[4] Police circle

that their properties are being looked after they will all come back. If this is done in all places, it would be very good.

I shall tell you now what I was going to say yesterday. The Congress has come to have a tradition of its own. For years —for more than sixty years—it has fought the British Government. As Tulsidas says, "The name of Rama has become greater than Rama Himself"; similarly the name of the Congress has become greater than the Congress. But what is the condition of the Congress now? Congressmen think that now it is their government. Formerly there were not even a hundred or two hundred rupees in the Congress fund which would need any elaborate accounts to be maintained. With great difficulty a crore of rupees were collected for the Tilak Swaraj Fund. An equal amount could never be collected again for the Congress. Now in every province crores of rupees come to their coffers and the Congress leads thousands of people. But truly speaking one can only be a servant of the people, not their leader. It would be a misfortune if the spirit of service disappears and everyone thinks only of grabbing a share out of the crores of rupees. It would be no service to the nation if devoid of the spirit of service we concern ourselves only with serving our own ends or those of our relatives and friends by seeking the favours of the Chief Minister or by capturing the Congress office to further our own interest. Everywhere Congressmen are thus scrambling for power and favours. This is true not only of Bihar but of all provinces. If this continues, I am afraid, we shall not be able to hold the reins of the Congress firmly, nor will those who are in the Government be able to run it efficiently. A government seems to have only military power behind it, but it cannot run on the strength of that power alone. What is the real power of the Government? The real power is in your hands. Their power is only what you delegate to them. Therefore once you have your own government you become your own masters. It is a different matter if you fail to recognize your own strength and remain in darkness. But if we realize that real power is now in the hands of India, i. e., in our own hands, we should use it judiciously. No doubt, there had been riots all over the country, not only in Bihar. But if we do not hold firmly to the power that has come to the hands of the Congress, if we do not have harmonious relations among ourselves and refuse to fulfil our duties, I am afraid our whole purpose would be defeated. And I too shall not be able to do what I have come here for. It might

be suggested that I should finish the work of establishing good relations among the Hindus and the Muslims, for which I have come here, and should not take up any other task; that first the Hindu-Muslim conflict should be settled and any other problem should be tackled only after that. But it is not like this, all these problems are inter-related. In tackling one problem others too have to be tackled.

A rot has set in in the Congress. It means that Congressmen are no more honest. If those who are selfish capture the Congress it cannot function well. Now there are various groups in the Congress and all of them have the one thought of capturing the Congress. But in this way none of the groups will be able to hold the organization. The Congress would slip from their hold and pass into the hands of unscrupulous men. And they are white-[clad] goondas who appear respectable but are goondas at heart. How can our purpose be served, if the reins of the Congress pass into their hands? We will all perish if we ourselves disintegrate into groups such as the Forward Bloc, the Socialists, and so on. We all belong to the Congress. The Congress aims at serving the whole nation, not any particular party or group.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 1-6-1947

483. FROM THE DIARY

May 21, 1947

No *bhajan* could be sung at the prayer-meeting. Signed the letter that I had dictated. Letters to . . .[1] 5.10 Went for a walk, Madu accompanying. Had the letters from . . .[2] read to me while I had my meal. Talked with Shah Nawaz at 9 o'clock. Got news from Rawalpindi that the Hindus have surrendered. Went to sleep at 10.30. Took coconut water. Attempted to read Arunanshu's letter in Bengali. Letter from Bal has arrived. Span. Listened to [the reading of] newspapers. 12.10 Mud-pack. Talk with Doctor Saheb. Wrote letters. Wrote out reply to the Khaksars. 2.15 Krishnavallabh Babu[3] called. 3.45 Gen. Stable and his A.D.C. called. Two policemen who were released on bail called at 4 o'clock. 4.15 Took some jaggery. Anugraha

[1] & [2] The names are omitted in the source.

[3] Minister for Revenue and Forest in Bihar

Babu (Home Minister) called. Sarju Prasad also called. 4.35 Went to the hospital to see Manu. From there proceeded to Vikram in a car. After the prayers returned at 8.40. Members of the Cabinet—Shri Babu, Krishnavallabh Sahai, Anugraha Babu, Binodanand Jha[1], Ansari—came. Did not take milk. Ate some grapes. Looked through the discourse written by Dev. Went to sleep at 10 o'clock.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 389

484. LETTER TO ARBAB SHER AKBAR KHAN[2]

May 22, 1947

I see that we do not see eye to eye on things. I have never accused the Bihar Government of "shameful and disgraceful conduct". I would like you to send me the paper from which you have quoted me. I cannot suggest another draft agreement. There can be none. It is open to you to place any blame you like on me for things done or not done by the Bihar Government. I can see nothing wrong or offensive in the Government letter of which you have sent me a copy.[3]

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 328-9

[1] The source, however, has "Vivekanand Jha".

[2] This was in reply to the addressee's letter which read: "We have read the agreement drafted by us . . . and I fail to see how the agreement 'seeks to displace the Government for a particular purpose'. I assure you that there is no purpose (behind it) except quick, smooth and efficient work of rehabilitating the unfortunate lakhs who are now groaning under what you yourself called 'shameful and disgraceful conduct of Bihar Ministry'. . . . If you don't say anything nothing will happen. . . . The blame for nothing having been done so far, I fear, rests on you. . . . I shall agree to the draft you propose. Please keep it ready when we meet you tomorrow."

[3] To this the addressee replied, "There is no question of 'our not seeing eye to eye on things'. We . . . can accommodate ourselves in spite of difficulties. You have already expressed yourself on the matter of rehabilitation and you can mend matters if others cannot. . . . you may point out our shortcomings in the proposed draft." For Gandhiji's draft, *vide* pp. 522-3.

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485. LETTER TO DR. M. D. D. GILDER

PATNA,
May 22, 1947

BHAI GILDER,

Chi. Samyukta is my grand-daughter. She is Chi. Manu's sister and daughter of my nephew, Jaisukhlal Gandhi. She has been suffering for a long time. Her father, therefore, has wired to me to write a letter of introduction to you, requesting Dr. Jivraj Mehta and you to examine her and suggest some treatment for her.[1]

I think you have once examined her. I do not know if Dr. Mehta is there. I am, therefore, writing to you. Please do your best. Chi. Samyukta's husband can afford to pay your fees. You may, therefore, charge whatever fees you wish. They want a letter of introduction only because they are not sure whether you will now be able to spare time from your public work. If I write a letter of introduction to you, they hope to be able to see you.

Hope you all are happy.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

486. LETTER TO SAMYUKTA H. SHAH

PATNA,
May 22, 1947

CHI. YUKTI,

I had a wire from Jaisukhlal. I have also discussed the matter with Manu. Your passing so much blood in the sputum has worried Jaisukhlal. He, therefore, has asked me to write letters of introduction to Dr. Gilder and Dr. Jivraj.

I am sending the original letter to Dr. Gilder himself. A copy of it is enclosed. You two should seek an appointment with Dr. Gilder and see him. Whether you will benefit or not

[1] *Vide* also the following item.

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God alone knows. It may be one's duty, however, to try to seek hope from whatever source one is likely to get it. There is only one unfailing remedy in the world, and that is Ramanama, together with the observance of such rules as may be necessary to make oneself fit to use that remedy. But this is a remedy which all of us are not able to try. I could not have patience in Manu's case. Besides, how will my being patient help? I cannot kill the girl who has been entrusted to my charge. How can I judge the depth of her faith in Rama, how indeed? In my impatience, therefore, I consulted the doctors here and they advised an operation. She was operated upon on the very same day. She is in the hospital just now and is better. She will accompany me to Delhi on the 24th. We shall stay for a few days in Delhi —how many, God alone knows.

I got your wire. I did not send a wire in reply, since you must have received Manu's letter by now and I also hope that your husband will be patient.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

487. ADVICE TO NURSES[1]

May 22, 1947

Your work is such that you serve others even while serving your own interests. It is only as a result of accumulated merit that one acquires such training leading to unselfish service. Therefore bring credit to this profession of serving others which God has blessed you with and give up the desire for money.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Biharni Komi Agman, p. 398

[1] The two nurses attending on Manu Gandhi had asked for Gandhiji's autograph, not knowing that he charged Rs. 5 for it. But Gandhiji remarked that he was giving it free for Manu's sake.

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488. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 22, 1947

Somebody had told me that you had been ill. Yesterday I suddenly remembered it. One falls ill owing to one's own fault. What was your fault? Why did you commit it? Does not service suffer on account of illness? Where is . . .[1] ?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 397

489. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

FATEHPUR,
May 22, 1947

It was my good fortune that last evening I could congratulate the people at the prayer meeting on maintaining proper silence and correctly beating time to *Ramdhun*. Today I am again fortunate to congratulate you here. I would also like to congratulate the volunteers because, while I was coming in the car, in spite of quite a few persons having gathered along the route, there was no noise or shouting. As a result I could carry on my work as I wanted. The purpose behind holding prayer meetings at different places every day is that all people can attend them and I can tell them what I want to say. To walk four or five miles is nothing for the young, even for little boys and women it is nothing much. I would suggest that you define a circle with the venue of the prayer meeting as its centre. It would be nice if people living within a radius of five miles from the point come to attend the meeting. This would be a sort of training for setting up panchayat raj. It is a good idea.

If the work being done in Bihar continues to progress well, it would be a great thing for the whole country. I have been told that a peace committee has been formed here and it has

[1] The name is omitted in the source.

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both Hindus and Muslims on it. In Bihar the Muslims form only 13 or 14 per cent of the population. But we ought to cover them all through the committee. Then alone will a peace committee in the true sense be formed. The work of the peace committee is easy enough. It has to compensate for the damage caused by us and repair the houses which have been burnt. If it succeeds in doing this much, the rest would be easy to accomplish.

A sister has asked me how women could help in this work. The sisters who are sitting here do not observe purdah. They can work in these areas. True purdah should be of the heart. What is the value of the outer veil? I go so far as to say that even the Koran Sharif does not mention outward purdah. How rapidly the times we are in are moving. Today we are here, tomorrow we will have moved far ahead. In such times what is the point in continuing the worthless custom of purdah? If the Hindu women here have sincere love for their Muslim counterparts, I would ask them to go to them and try to relieve their suffering. For this one need not be a B.A. or an M.A. It is enough to be true and sincere.

Today I heard from a sister about an incident at Masaurhi, where Maj. Gen. Shah Nawaz is doing [rehabilitation] work. At the milk distributing centre there a Muslim sister did not allow her child to take milk as she thought it should not drink milk from the container used by Hindu children. I would only say that although this is not good we should not take offence at it. It is we Hindus who observe untouchability; Islam does not know it. It does not admit of untouchability in any form. It rather preaches the lesson of peaceful co-existence. We were the first to observe untouchability. Later on it spread to the Muslims and now it is being taught to the children as well. Those sisters who are sincere and have realized that we have plundered and massacred the Muslims and ostracized them should go among the victims. They should visit the women of the neighbouring Muslim families. Our greatest dharma is to go and work at places where atrocities were committed. We should also go to places where no untoward incident happened and bring about unity of hearts between the Hindus and the Muslims. They have to make the Muslim women their true sisters and teach the lesson of true love to the children.

My grand-daughter who had been in the hospital recently related to me an incident that occurred there. The people at the hospital have come to believe that Congressmen have grown very

arrogant. They now seem to think that everything belongs to them, even the hospital is their private property. To think like this is not wrong. But it is misinterpreted and misused that is certainly wrong. It is not as if donning a white cap or khadi alone entitles one to rule over others or makes one a saheb. My grand-daughter told me that since she had fever the gate-keeper at the hospital had orders not to allow anyone to visit her. But when a khadi-clad gentleman came to visit her and was stopped he created trouble for the gate-keeper protesting that he could not be stopped. He was an M.L.A., and no one could stop him. How arrogant we have grown! I would say, let alone an M.L.A., even if Dr. Mahmud had been there he should have been stopped. It is the doctors and the nurses who are the authorities of the hospital. Their word should prevail there. Even Shri Babu cannot interfere in such matters. In a way Congressmen have a right in all matters, but regarding the internal affairs of an institution the officer in charge there should be the sole authority. Without discrimination all patients should be accommodated in rooms which are vacant. Even for a minister no one should be asked to vacate his room. My grand-daughter is sharp enough. She asked me if nothing could be done about this. I wish that the rights we have acquired should not be abused. It would be well if my message reached the educated too.

I would like to say one thing more. I hear black-marketing is rampant in Bihar. It is difficult to say whether it is more widespread here or in the U. P., or in the States like Orissa, Gujarat and Maharashtra. Since I am now here, I take it that black-marketing flourishes on a large scale in Bihar. Rajendra Babu was saying the other day that there would be great scarcity of foodgrains in July-August and we would be able to manage only if we got some from outside. I feel very unhappy when I hear this. India is not a country which should face scarcity of foodgrains. We had always fed others. Our granaries used to be full and everyone had his fill, such used to be the food position. And if it is no more so we can still bring about that state. People should be told that they must put in hard labour to produce and store more foodgrains. It is essential to work hard. Hard work alone would keep them in good health. All this can be done in Bihar. I grant that there is scarcity of foodgrains and cloth in the country. But the fact is that a thing not available in the open market is available in the black-market, though at a higher price. In other words, what cannot be

obtained honestly in the open market can be had through dishonest means in the black-market. This is a complicated problem. It is a problem for the Ministry, the Congressmen and for everyone. But things would be all right if everyone resolved not to buy anything in the black-market. Matters would improve if the traders decided against black-marketing. But people succumb easily to corruption. Trades are to be carried on to serve the people, not only to fill the coffers of the traders. Money can be earned through honest means as well. What shall we do if we did not get foodgrains from outside? When we made a request to the Australians for wheat they asked for linseed in return. They have a right to ask for it and we would also give it to them if we had it in surplus. But in case we do not have linseed in surplus, they should accept money instead. But such are the conditions nowadays that we have to accept the terms they lay down. If we do not, they become aggressive. If we hit them they hit back with double force. I would, therefore, say that if all the traders carried on their trades in an honest way, it would also facilitate their business. Bihar is the land of King Janaka and Lord Buddha. It would be a great misfortune if the people here turn dishonest and resort to corrupt practices. I earnestly appeal to the black-marketeers to run their trades honestly so that they may ward off the difficult times looming large before us.

[From Hindi]
Harijan Sevak, 1-6-1947

490. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

[*May 22, 1947*][1]

I know, if I had refused to get you operated upon and you had died as a result, your father would not have minded in the least. On the contrary, he would have welcomed it (as a sacrifice in a noble cause). But I had not the courage to let a girl entrusted to me die like that. . . . Call it attachment, weakness, or what you will, but there it is.

During the last eight days, since I sent you to the hospital, I have been constantly thinking where I stand, what God

[1] According to *Biharni Komi Agman*. Gandhiji spoke while taking his grapes; *vide* the following item.

demands of me, where He will ultimately lead me. . . . Though I have no longer the desire to live for 125 years, as I have said again and again of late, my striving to meet death unafraid with Ramanama on my lips continues. I know my striving is incomplete; your operation is a proof. But if I should die of lingering illness, it would be your duty to proclaim to the whole world that I was not a man of God but an impostor and a fraud. If you fail in that duty I shall feel unhappy wherever I am. But if I die taking God's name with my last breath, it will be a sign that I was what I strove for and claimed to be.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 195

491. FROM THE DIARY

May 22, 1947

4.45 Manudi returned. The doctors also came. Had Chi. Manu's cot arranged in my own room facing my seat. Sat by Manudi's side for a while. . . .[1] Returned at 8.30. Sat by Manudi's side on her cot to eat my grapes.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 395

492. DRAFT PROPOSALS FOR KHAKSARS[2]

May 23, 1947

Where houses are not already rebuilt and the refugees themselves choose to rebuild, the Government will grant not more than Rs. 1,000 against proof of actual and necessary expense to that extent. Special cases requiring greater expense will be considered on merit.

Rehabilitation grant not exceeding Rs. 500 per family of five members will be granted when required.

Artisans and agriculturists will get interest-free loans to be repayable in five years in five instalments for the purchase of seeds or implements such as looms, etc.

[1] Omission as in the source

[2] *Vide* footnote 3, p. 515.

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Free education will be provided for children and work will be given to those who may need it. Rations against work during the recuperation period will also be provided.

Provision for orphanages and widows' homes will also be made.

From a photostat: G. N. 5121. Also *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 329

493. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

MANER,
May 23, 1947

About eight hundred years ago Saint Makhdum Maneri lived in Maner. Though communal tension did prevail here, with the efforts of the Congressmen Maner was spared the devastation that follows a riot. As I had said[1] [the day before] yesterday, since most of our social problems are inter-related I cannot help mentioning other problems along with my present task of rehabilitating the people who had fled to other places. Take for instance the question of the zamindars. You all know that the century-old reign of the white indigo-planters was brought to an end by the will and concerted action of all the people and their leaders, prominent among whom were the late Brijkishore Babu and Rajendra Babu. But I have been told that the tyranny of the white rulers is being continued even today by the Indian zamindars. They exploit their ryots economically, terrorize them through their officials and escape due punishment through collusion with the authorities. If it is true, the zamindars are digging their own graves. They can survive only if they become trustees of their ryots.

But as a devotee of truth and justice I must discuss the other side of the problem as presented to me by the zamindars. Because of my friendship with all, the zamindars also regard me as a friend, although they know my identification with the masses. They tell me that with the Congress coming into power and drawing its sanction from the masses the ryots feel that they can commit all sorts of excesses, dispossess the zamindars of their entire property, destroy their crops and terrorize them by other acts of violence. Similarly, under the influence of false

[1] *Vide* pp. 512-4.

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propaganda, labourers in the mills think that they can become the masters of the mills by damaging them.

As one of the masses I can only say to the peasants and labourers that they are only harming their own cause by following this senseless policy. They constitute the real masses and they should realize their own strength. In a mad fury, the millions can easily destroy the handful of zamindars but ultimately their madness would bring about their own ruin.

I have heard destructive criticism of the Government by the people who can neither wield the power that has come to the nation nor let others who deserve wield it. The ministers on the other hand should be true servants of the people from whom they derive their power. They should not show any partiality while allocating jobs to the candidates, should be free from the evil of bribery and mete out equal justice to all.

If all the three—the zamindars, the ryots and the Government in Bihar—do their duty, Bihar would set a noble example for the whole nation.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 1-6-1947

494. NOTE ON REHABILITATION[1]

[Before *May 24, 1947*][2]

If I were Minister in charge of rehabilitation work, the first thing I would do would be to have my duty clearly defined. The Ministers would have to put me in charge of the magistracy and the police, in so far as I need them, to enable me to clothe the refugees with full protection against loot, arson and murder and give me control over the movement and prices of foodstuffs, clothing and building material for the refugees. Having thus secured my position, I would proceed immediately to find out the number of those who have returned, where they are and how they are faring. I would do this personally and deal with their complaints there and then.

As to those who have not yet returned, I would issue notices in the Press and distribute leaflets in the language of the

[1] Gandhiji discussed the scheme of rehabilitation formulated by Abdul Qayum Ansari for quick disposal of work and later put down his ideas in the form of a note for his guidance.

[2] The note was written before Gandhiji left Bihar on May 24, 1947.

province, stating precisely the terms under which they may return. I would not worry about those that do not return. . . .[1] The Government's duty . . .[2] commences only when they return. I would promptly deal with the communications from or on behalf of those who wish to return and even get private persons to help the needy to return. The lands and buildings of the absentees, I would hold in trust for them but would give notice that, after the lapse of the period stipulated in the notice to be issued, the buildings and the land would vest in the State for it to make such use as it deems fit for the benefit of the absentee's next of kin or failing them the Muslims of the province or a portion thereof.

I would invite the co-operation of the local League and give their recommendations every legitimate consideration.

I would not give doles to the refugees but expect them to do some work which they are capable of doing against rations or other aid given to them. I would make them feel in every way that they are fully worthy of all the aid the State can give them in this manner.

I would bring to trial without delay all those who are detained as suspects and arrest those who are still evading justice. No stone should be left unturned in order to trace culprits and bring them to justice.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 338

495. LETTER TO ARBAB SHER AKBAR KHAN

PATNA,
May 24, 1947

DEAR NAWAB SAHEB,

With reference to the draft proposals[3] a copy of which was sent you last evening by Shrimati Mridulabehn and which I would be prepared to recommend for adoption by the Bihar Government, I hope your organization will be able to work under the Government and its instructions. Of course, the Ministry will be at liberty to vary the proposals from time to time as may be required by circumstances. I would advise you

[1] & [2] Omissions are as in the source.

[3] *Vide* pp. 522-3.

to see Ansari Saheb, the Minister in charge and settle details of work.[1]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

NAWAB ARBAB SHER AKBAR KHAN
PRESIDENT, NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE
SHAMSUL ULEMA MOHIBUL HAQ
BANK ROAD, PATNA

From a copy: G. N. 5121

496. LETTER TO SARAT CHANDRA BOSE

PATNA,
May 24, 1947

MY DEAR SARAT,

I have your note.[2] There is nothing in the draft stipulating that nothing will be done by mere majority. Every act of Government must carry with it the co-operation of at least two thirds of the Hindu members in the executive and the legislature. There should be an admission that Bengal has a common culture and a common mother tongue—Bengali.

Make sure that the Central Muslim League approves of the proposal notwithstanding reports to the contrary.[3] If your presence is necessary in Delhi I shall telephone or telegraph. I propose to discuss the draft with the Working Committee.[4]

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 10534

[1] But before the Khaksars could get in touch with Ansari they came in conflict with the police and many of them were arrested. The Government released them later when they offered to leave the province.

[2] Enclosing a copy of the draft proposal for United Sovereign Bengal the addressee had sought Gandhiji's "help and guidance" in securing an agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League; *vide* also pp. 442-4 and 464-5.

[3] On May 20 the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League adopted a resolution to the effect that it had nothing "to do with the proposal that had been published in newspapers for the settlement of a constitution for Bengal" and that it "stood firmly with the Muslim League demand for Pakistan."

[4] The A. I. C. C. however passed a resolution on June 15, accepting the partition plan; *vide* Vol. LXXXVIII.

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497. TALK WITH KHAKSARS

May 24, 1947

We may attain complete independence in the coming few days. However precious political independence may be, we should not rest quiet till something tangible is done in terms of national welfare. We must now have such a social system from which exploitation will be completely eliminated and in which all work will be carried out in a democratic manner. Whatever may be the desire of the British or any other nation, it is not possible now to delay our independence which is just round the corner. If we are not vigilant in the intervening period, our condition will be like that of a typhoid patient. We nurse the typhoid patient while he is running temperature. But he needs to be really looked after only after the fever has come down. If the patient does not have proper care after his fever has come down he suffers a relapse and faces the danger of death. Such is going to be the period immediately after independence. If we want to qualify ourselves for independence we shall have to learn to put up with some hardships. We shall have to be large-hearted. We should be as accommodating as the ocean. The waters of many rivers and a lot of dirt from the banks go into it; many creatures live in it and a number of steamers sail on it and still it is considered sacred and we believe that we can wash away our sins by bathing in it. Even so, if we can be generous and ignore the harsh words of some people and even assaults by them, regarding them as our brethren, we shall become as sacred as the ocean. We have won freedom through non-violence and truth. I am going around right now with the idea of creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and a feeling of equality. But I need your help in that work. Peace established with the help of the army and police is no peace at all, it conceals a smouldering fire of revolution. I have no doubt that if the police are away even for a little while this fire would burst into flames. Forced peace is no peace at all. The only way of removing fear is that every member of legislature and every minister should, along with his family, mix with the common people. The Hindu members should mix with the Muslim population and the Muslim members should mix with the

Hindu population. Women should mix with other women and children should laugh, play and study with other children while the menfolk should, in the light of their own understanding, exchange views as to how best independent India can be served. If this is done, I have no doubt that the standard of our society would rise high. No minister will then think of himself as a ruler. No minister's wife would think of her husband as the boss of a particular department. And his children too would not think of themselves as minister's children. If even half a dozen ministers and their families in each State create such an atmosphere of mixing with the common people, I have no doubt that we would not be facing times like these. It is my personal knowledge that Shri Babu was more sociable before he became a minister. Today, when he has become a minister, his position is the same as mine was when I was in the grand mansion of the Aga Khan Palace.[1] I am not singling out Shri Babu. What I say applies to every minister. When they became ministers, they at once started having police guards at their gates. Now that they have become ministers, they have to get their guards ready in advance. How can they go about without body-guards? They have got themselves entangled now. While before they became ministers, if they wanted to go anywhere in the middle of the night they could jump out of their beds and start off. Frankly speaking, I pity the ministers and, if I should speak my own language, their condition is worse than that of prisoners.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 398-400

[1] From August 9, 1942 to May 6, 1944

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ADDENDA

1. LETTER TO SHYAMLAL

PATNA,
April 29, 1947

CHI. SHYAMLAL[1],

I replied to a portion of your letter of the 21st instant on the 25th.[2] The second part relates to the constitution of the Medical Board. Section 14 of part one of the constitution seems unsatisfactory. Supposing half of the members approve of a resolution while one-third of them disapprove of it without any discussion among themselves, can the resolution still be passed? It makes me think that if opinion is to be sought through letters, a resolution should not be passed even if a single member disapproves of it. If a member does not reply while others remain silent, their signatures must be obtained as a token of their approval. Subject to this proviso I hereby . . .[3] sign the constitution.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi: Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

[1] Secretary, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust
[2] The letter is not available.
[3] Omission as in the source

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2. LETTER TO VIDYAVATI

SODEPUR,
May 9, 1947

CHI. VIDYA[1],

You will learn from the back of this what I have done.[2] Now something will have to be done there itself. What makes you think you will go mad? Those who have faith in God can never lose their head. Bear with patience whatever unhappiness comes your way.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: Rani Vidyavati Papers. Courtesy: National Gandhi Museum and Library

3. LETTER TO LADY MOUNTBATTEN

NEW DELHI,
May 18, 1947

DEAR SISTER,

So you are celebrating [the][3] silver jubilee of your wedding amid a shower of congratulations and good wishes. Let me add mine to them. I hope that your joint career here will blossom into citizenship of the world.

I hope your daughter is fully restored.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

LADY MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA

From a photostat: G. N. 10831

[1] Of Hardoi

[2] This was a letter from the Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals, Bihar, regarding the admission of a Talukdar from U. P. to the European Mental Hospital, Kanke.

[3] The source has "your".

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APPENDIX I

CLEMENT ATTLEE'S STATEMENT[1]

February 20, 1947

It has long been the policy of successive British Governments to work towards the realization of self-government in India. In pursuance of this policy, an increasing measure of responsibility has been devolved on Indians, and today the civil administration and the Indian armed forces rely, to a very large extent, on Indian civilians and officers. In the constitutional field, the Acts of 1919 and 1935 passed by the British Parliament, each represented a substantial transfer of political power. In 1940, the Coalition Government recognized the principle that Indians should themselves frame a new constitution for a fully autonomous India and, in the offer of 1942, they invited them to set up a Constituent Assembly for this purpose as soon as the war was over.

The declaration of the Prime Minister of 15th March last, which met with general approval in Parliament and the country, made it clear that it was for the Indian people themselves to choose their future status and constitution and that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, the time had come for responsibility for the Government of India to pass into Indian hands. . . .

The Cabinet Mission . . . proposals, made public in May last, envisaged that the future Constitution of India should be settled by a Constituent Assembly composed in the manner suggested therein, of representatives of all communities and interests in British India and of the Indian States.

Since the return of the Mission, an Interim Government has been set up at the Centre. . . . In all the Provinces, Indian Governments, responsible to legislatures, are in office. . . .

His Majesty's Government are anxious to hand over their responsibilities to a government which, resting on the sure foundation of the support of the people, is capable of maintaining peace and administering India with justice and efficiency. It is therefore essential that all parties should sink their differences, in order that they may be ready to shoulder the great responsibilities which will come upon them next year. . . .

Cabinet Mission . . . obtained . . . the method by which a Constitution should be worked out. . . . His Majesty's Government there agreed to recommend to Parliament a constitution worked out in accordance with the proposals made therein by a fully representative Constituent Assembly. But if it should appear that such a constitution will not have been worked out by a

[1] *Vide* p. 12. Only extracts are reproduced here.

fully representative Assembly, before the time mentioned in paragraph 7, His Majesty's Government will have to consider to whom the powers of the Central Government in British India should be handed over, on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India or, in some areas, to the existing Provincial Governments, or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people.

Although the final transfer of authority may not take place until June 1948, preparatory measures must be put in hand in advance. It is important that the efficiency of the civil administration should be maintained and that the defence of India should be fully provided for. But, inevitably, as the process of transfer proceeds, it will become progressively more difficult to carry out, to the letter, all the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1935. Legislation will be introduced in due course to give effect to the final transfer of power.

In regard to the Indian States, as was explicitly stated by the Cabinet Mission, His Majesty's Government do not intend to hand over their powers and obligations under Paramountcy to any government of British India. It is not intended to bring Paramountcy, as a system, to a conclusion earlier than the date of the final transfer of power, but it is contemplated that for the intervening period, the relations of the Crown with individual States may be adjusted by agreement.

His Majesty's Government will negotiate agreements in regard to matters arising out of the transfer of power with representatives of those to whom they propose to transfer power.

His Majesty's Government believe that British commercial and industrial interests in India can look forward to a fair field for their enterprise under the new conditions. The commercial connection between India and the United Kingdom has been long and friendly and will continue to be to their mutual advantage.

His Majesty's Government cannot conclude this statement without expressing, on behalf of the people of this country, their goodwill and good wishes towards the people of India as they go forward to this final stage in their achievement of self-government. It will be the wish of everyone in these islands that, notwithstanding constitutional changes, the association of the British and Indian peoples should not be brought to an end; and they will wish to continue to do all that is in their power to further the well-being of India.

The Indian Annual Register, 1947, Vol. I, pp. 142-3

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APPENDIX II

LETTER FROM J. B. KRIPALANI[1]

March 1, 1947

... These matters are, I find, beyond my depth. Moreover I have enough to do to keep myself morally straight to sit in judgement on others and specially those who are morally and spiritually miles ahead of me. I can only say that I have the fullest faith in you. No sinful man can go about his business the way you are doing. Even if I had a lurking suspicion, I would rather distrust my eyes and ears than distrust you. . . .

Sometimes I thought that . . . you may be employing human beings as means rather than as ends in themselves. But then I take consolation in the thought that that consideration cannot be absent from your mind and that if you are sure of yourself, no harm can come to them. Then knowing you to be a great student of the *Gita* I have wondered if you are not doing violence to the principle of *lokasangraha* (conservation of social good), wisely propounded therein. But this consideration, too, I am sure, must not be absent from your calculations, in this experiment of yours. . . . I know your attitude to woman is the only right attitude as you are one of those who consider her an end in herself and not merely as a means. You have never exploited her.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 221

APPENDIX III

LETTER FROM SIR HUGH DOW[2]

GOVERNOR'S CAMP,
BIHAR,
March 17, 1947

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Thank you for your letter of today's date. I have always held that no public man can hope to reform other people and make them better unless he searches his own heart and devotes his first attention to trying to become a better man himself. I do not know why you should have been so surprised at this view being held by what you call a bureaucrat: it is probably not rarer among them than among other loosely labelled classes.

[1] *Vide* pp. 13-4. Only extracts are reproduced here.
[2] *Vide* pp. 99-100.

I do not wonder that my Ministers reacted strongly to your summary of our conversation. May I put your points a little more fully:

(1) From the beginning of the riots I thought my Ministers should have at once declared their intention to compensate those who had suffered damage in them. Had it been done immediately, I think a good deal of the organized hostility against the Ministry's measures would not have arisen. As it was, it was only after considerable delay that an announcement was made.

The Prime Minister is well aware of my views about this. On my part, I quite realized the difficulties he felt about making a commitment of unknown financial liability.

(2) I think it is true that some officials drew from this the inference that the Ministry did not regard the matter as urgent. When I visited Chapra in the middle of January, no money or materials had actually been distributed, although the riots had taken place at the end of October, and the debris was just as the rioters had left it.

I told the Prime Minister my impressions on my return, and I am glad to say that he took the necessary steps at once by impressing on district officers that rehabilitation was the most urgent work before them. I believe the Prime Minister has always realized this, and I certainly did not intend to convey to you, that the Ministry themselves were in any way half-hearted about it. But for some months, in my opinion, this view was held by many subordinate officials, because of the original delay in getting off the mark.

(3) I have no recollection of having touched at all on the topic of punishment of the guilty. Perhaps, as you have been seeing so many people in rapid succession, you have attributed to me views given by some of your visitors.

Actually, my views on this are rather the reverse of those suggested. I do not think it is going to be possible to punish, judicially, any but a tiny fraction of the culprits, and that a lot of time of police and magistrates, that might be better spent, is likely to be entirely wasted in the attempt. In my opinion, the only effective way in which this matter could have been effectively dealt with was by the imposition of collective fines.

(4) I do not think the Ministry has turned down League demands merely because they were League demands. But I think the Hindu public of Bihar was, and perhaps is, averse from treating Muslim refugees more generously than they think Hindu refugees are treated in Bengal, and in the beginning there was a tendency to wait and see.

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I think we have been unwise in taking a hostile attitude to "pockets". What we should have done was to have been prepared to consider such proposals on their merits, and to place on the Muslims themselves the responsibility for suggesting definite schemes and carrying them out if they were sanctioned. I have discussed this with the Prime Minister who is aware of my views and I think not hostile to them. When we have paid compensation to a sufferer, it should be left to him to decide where and how he will spend it, just as it would be if he had drawn his compensation from an insurance company.

As regards the question of minorities in general, differences between me and my Ministers have never, I think, gone to a stage when they were not resolved by friendly discussions. In this particular matter of the recent disturbances, I have never had occasion to think of exercising any special powers in opposition to ministerial advice. The question of restoring confidence between the two great communities is one of extraordinary difficulty, and I should not like you to get the impression that there has been any lack of co-operation between me and the Ministers on this subject.

As regards the mica industry, I will send you a note as soon as I can prepare it. But my personal concern in this is not about the condition of the working men in the industry, about which I know little, but about the way in which child labour is exploited.

Yours sincerely,
HUGH DOW

M. K. GANDHI, ESQ.
PATNA

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 229-32

APPENDIX IV

N. K. BOSE'S LETTER TO KEDAR NATH AND OTHERS[1]

PATNA,
March 16, 1947

MY DEAR . . .,

. . . Swami Anand asked me this morning if he could say to his friends that I disapproved of Gandhiji's action. It is with reference to this question that I should try to make my position clear. Hence this letter.

. . . From a serious study of Gandhiji's writings I had formed the opinion, which was perhaps not unjustified, that he represented a hard, puritanic form of self-discipline, something which we usually associate with mediæval Christian ascetics or Jain recluses.

[1] *Vide* p. 102. Only extracts are reproduced here.

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So, when I first learnt in detail about Gandhiji's *prayog* or experiment, I felt genuinely surprised. I was informed that he sometimes asked women to share his bed and even the cover which he used, and then tried to ascertain if even the least trace of sensual feeling had been evoked in himself or his companion. . . .

But when I learnt about this technique of self-examination employed by Gandhiji, I felt that I had discovered the reason why some regarded Gandhiji as their private possession; this feeling often leading them to a kind of emotional unbalance. The behaviour of A, B or C, for instance, is no proof of healthy psychological relationship. Whatever may be the value of the *prayog* in Gandhiji's own case it does leave a mark of injury on the personality of others who are not of the same moral stature as he himself is, and for whom sharing in Gandhiji's experiment is no spiritual necessity.

This has been the reason why I have sometimes spoken or written strongly to Gandhiji on the subject of repression and its effects upon those who come under his influence either in private or in public life. But, you will see, this charge is quite different from the one to which you or your friends subscribe. This is also the reason why I have drawn a distinction in the case of Manu, whose relation to Gandhiji is of a completely different order.

I hope my position is quite clear. But if it is not, please do not hesitate to write.

Yours sincerely,
NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

Post-script

Even with regard to the 'experiment', I would stand by Gandhiji, if —

1. the other party were a willing agent, voluntarily entering into the experiment with a knowledge of the possible consequences upon her own personality;
2. and the public knew about the experiment and expressed their mind over it.

The second is otherwise unnecessary, but has only been called for because Gandhiji himself invited public opinion on this subject twice in his prayer speeches in Noakhali. He expected the public to express an opinion even when they did not know the entire details of the situation. But, even if after knowing everything, the public thought that Gandhiji was in the wrong, while he considered himself to be right, I would stand by him.

My Days with Gandhi, pp. 173-5

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APPENDIX V

LETTER FROM N. K. BOSE[1]

MASAURHI,
March 18, 1947

BAPUJI,

After receiving your letter written yesterday in the train, I had about an hour's talk with you in which I tried to refute the charge against me that I had formed judgement hastily without giving A or others any chance of presenting their case fully. . . .

Personally, I have practised the Freudian technique of dream analysis on myself and have derived immense benefit, as it has helped to bring to the surface submerged desires which had been causing trouble, and thus helped me to deal with them satisfactorily. . . .

Bapuji, you originally called me to service under you while you were in Bengal. The University gladly granted me indefinite leave so long as you needed my services. But the interest of my students has also been suffering. When I have to choose between the amount of service I can render to you here in Bihar and for science in the University, I would place the latter first. But if it had been in Bengal, I would have sacrificed the latter interest, because I would then have known that so far as translating your speeches into Bengali was concerned, I would have been more useful than most of your other assistants. But now that you are in Bihar, men like Pyarelalji or others would be in their elements with their mastery over Hindustani and their undoubtedly great ability for secretarial work. So I would love to make room for anyone whom you may choose.

When once more you are in Bengal and feel the need of my services, the University will gladly grant me leave for service under you without hesitation.

Hence my plan is to leave for Calcutta even tonight if you do not object.

Yours affectionately,
N. K. B.

My Days with Gandhi, pp. 178-81

[1] *Vide* p. 109. Only extracts are reproduced here.

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APPENDIX VI

CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE'S RESOLUTION ON THE PUNJAB[1]

During the past seven months India has witnessed many horrors and tragedies which have been enacted in the attempt to gain political ends by brutal violence, murder and coercion. These attempts have failed, as all such attempts must fail, and have only led to greater violence and carnage.

The Punjab, which had thus far escaped this contagion, became six weeks ago the scene of an agitation, supported by some people in high authority, to coerce and break a popular ministry which could not be attacked by constitutional methods. A measure of success attended this, and an attempt was made to form a ministry dominated by the group that had led the agitation. This was bitterly resented and has resulted in increased and wide-spread violence. There has been an orgy of murder and arson and Amritsar and Multan have been scenes of horror and devastation.

These tragic events have demonstrated that there can be no settlement of the problem in the Punjab by violence and coercion, and that no arrangement based on coercion can last. Therefore, it is necessary to find a way out which involves the least amount of compulsion. This would necessitate a division of the Punjab into two provinces, so that the predominantly Muslim part may be separated from the predominantly non-Muslim part.

The Working Committee commend this solution, which should work to the advantage of all the communities concerned, and lessen friction and fear and suspicion of each other. The Committee earnestly appeal to the people of the Punjab to put an end to the killing and brutality that are going on, and to face the tragic situation, determined to find a solution which does not involve compulsion of any major group and which will effectively remove the causes of friction.

The Indian Annual Register, 1947, Vol. I, pp. 118-9

[1] *Vide* pp. 124-5.

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APPENDIX VII

INTERVIEW WITH LORD MOUNTBATTEN[1]

Top Secret *April 1, 1947*

Mr. Gandhi . . . gave me his views on the origin of Hindu-Muslim animosity, and though he did not hold the British responsible for its origin, he said their policy of "Divide and Rule" had kept the tension very much alive, and that I should now reap what my predecessors had deliberately sown.

He urged me whatever happened to have the courage to see the truth and act by it, even though the correct solution might mean grievous loss of life on our departure on an unprecedented scale.

Finally, he gave me the first brief summary of the solution which he wishes me to adopt:

Mr. Jinnah should forthwith be invited to form the Central Interim Government with members of the Muslim League. This Government to operate under the Viceroy in the way the present Interim Government is operating.

Any difficulty experienced through Congress having a majority in the Assembly to be overcome by their able advocacy of the measures they wished to introduce.

I need not say that this solution coming at this time staggered me. I asked "What would Mr. Jinnah say to such a proposal?" The reply was, "If you tell him I am the author he will reply 'Wily Gandhi'." I then remarked, "And I presume Mr. Jinnah will be right?" To which he replied with great fervour, "No, I am entirely sincere in my suggestion."

At this moment the A. D. C. reported that the Tibetan Mission had arrived, and our conversation therefore had to be terminated until the following day.

I did however obtain Mr. Gandhi's permission to discuss the matter with Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad, in strict confidence, the next time they came to see me.

ADDENDUM:

During the course of the discussion Mr. Gandhi gave it as his considered opinion as a student of history and of world politics that never before, in any case of history he had read about in recent or past times, had so difficult or responsible a task been imposed on any one man as that

[1] As recorded by Lord Mountbatten. *Vide* pp. 179-80.

which now faced me. I thanked him sincerely for realising the position in which I was placed.

From a photostat: C. W. 11020. Lord Mountbatten Papers. Courtesy: Broadlands Archives Trust. Also *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. X, p. 69

APPENDIX VIII

INTERVIEW WITH LORD MOUNTBATTEN[1]

Top Secret *April 2, 1947*

The meeting lasted from 2.30 p. m. to 4.30 p. m.

To begin with we discussed the question of holding enquiries in Bihar and Bengal. I told him the views of the Governor of Bihar, of Sardar Patel and of myself, that enquiries were a waste of time and money, as well as a potential source of further communal strife.

He flatly disagreed, and said that it was, in his opinion, essential that the Congress Government in Bihar should in all events show good faith by holding an enquiry which would reveal the appalling excesses committed by the Hindus in Bihar.

We both agreed, however, that this was really a matter for the Provincial Government to settle, and I suggested that he should discuss the matter in the meanwhile with the Home Member, Sardar Patel.

After this Mr. Gandhi came down firmly for his great plan, which he had revealed to me originally on Tuesday. I will repeat it here in greater detail.

He wants me to invite Mr. Jinnah to form a new Central Government for India, which will be the Government to which I am to turn over power. He suggests I should leave it to Mr. Jinnah to select the Ministers, if necessary entirely from the Muslim League, but if he feels so inclined he can of course then make it a coalition Government by including Nehru and other Congress Ministers as well as representatives of Minorities. In fact he suggests that Jinnah would be well advised to try and get the highest class team together and one likely to enjoy the greatest confidence of the Assembly.

He assured me that the Muslim League had many men of greater calibre than, for example, Nishtar and Ghazanafar Ali Khan.

The essence of the scheme was that it should be put through quickly in order that I might have as many months as possible as Viceroy and President of the Cabinet, and, by retaining the right of veto, continue to exercise complete control in the interests of fair play. The fact that I should be there to see fair play for the first few months would ensure Mr. Jinnah's Government not doing anything foolish which would prejudice its reputation in the

[1] As recorded by Lord Mountbatten. *Vide* p. 198.

Assembly or in the country; and he felt that I could guide them along in a manner which would ensure their continuing along the straight and narrow path after I left in June 1948.

If Mr. Jinnah refused this offer, then, Mr. Gandhi pointed out, the offer would have to be made to the only other great party in India—Congress. He hoped that Congress would invite Ministers from all shades of opinion including the Muslim League to participate in a Coalition Government.

I twitted him that he really desired me to form a Central Government run by Congress, to whom I would turn over power, and that the preliminary offer to Jinnah was merely a manœuvre.

He assured me with burning sincerity that this was so far from being the case that he then and there volunteered to place his whole services at my disposal in trying to get the Jinnah Government through, first by exercising his influence with the Congress to accept it, and secondly by touring the length and breadth of the country getting all the peoples of India to accept the decision. He convinced me of his sincerity, and I told him so.

He agreed that I should discuss this plan with Maulana Azad and Nehru.

Finally, he said that he proposed also to discuss it with those two and with Mr. Kripalani. He agreed as to the supreme importance of complete secrecy, particularly as far as the Press were concerned.

He asked if he might quote me as being in favour of this plan, to which I replied that the most he could say was that I was very interested by it, but that I would require an assurance from some of the other leaders that they considered it capable of being implemented before I would commit myself to its support.

We discussed alternatives, and I told him I favoured the Cabinet Mission plan most of all, and he replied that he too would be in favour of it if it could be revised.

Finally I discussed the possibility of turning over power to the areas of India in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the residents in those areas. Broadly speaking this would make a Hindu India with a Congress Government in Delhi, a truncated Pakistan, and the large states like Mysore, Travancore, Hyderabad, Kashmir, and groups of States, each having separate power turned over to them, owing allegiance to a Central authority for Defence, External Affairs, Communications, and possibly food.

He agreed that whatever the decision, it should be taken soon and implemented as early as possible, and that meanwhile it would be an excellent thing if I remained in charge of the Central Government with the power of veto until June 1948.

From a photostat: C. W. 11021. Lord Mountbatten Papers. Courtesy: Broadlands Archives Trust. Also *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. X, pp. 83-4

APPENDIX IX

INTERVIEW WITH LORD MOUNTBATTEN[1]

Top Secret *April 3, 1947*

The meeting lasted from 2.30 p. m. to 4.30 p. m.

We continued our talks on Mr. Gandhi's great scheme for the All-India Jinnah Government. He informed me that those of the leaders of the Congress he had spoken to had all agreed that it was feasible and would support him, but that he had not yet had time to talk to Pandit Nehru, which he intended to do that evening.

He was more than ever intense about his scheme as being the best solution. But he agreed that if I was unable to decide on that solution, he would support me in any other solution which I could put before him as being in the best interests of the Indian people.

He agreed that if the Muslim League were completely intransigent, partition might have to come, though he was most anxious to retain as strong a Centre as possible in this case.

He agreed that an early decision was vital to end communal conflict and to give time to implement the decision. And finally he reiterated his desire that whatever happened I should retain firm charge at the Centre till June 1948 at the very earliest, in order to act as an umpire and exercise a guiding hand during the early stages of self-government.

He said that his great friend Badshah Khan was staying with him. I had never heard the name and asked him to elucidate. He referred to him as the Frontier Gandhi, and I then recognized him to be the same person as I knew under the name of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, brother of Dr. Khan Sahib the Premier of the Congress-Muslim Government in the N. W. F. P.

Mr. Gandhi said that Abdul Ghaffar Khan had informed him that the Governor, Sir Olaf Caroe, had demanded the resignation of his brother, Dr. Khan Sahib and had shown himself to be very partial towards the Muslim League and to influence the British officials in that Province accordingly.

In view of the fact that Lord Ismay had just returned from a visit to the N. W. F. P. I sent for him, and Mr. Gandhi repeated his allegation.

Lord Ismay explained the position as he saw it, and pointed out that there must have been misunderstanding.

I invited Mr. Gandhi to bring Abdul Ghaffar Khan at 2.30 the following day to meet Lord Ismay and myself.

From a photostat: C. W. 11022. Lord Mountbatten Papers. Courtesy: Broadlands Archives Trust. Also *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. X, pp. 102-3

[1] As recorded by Lord Mountbatten. *Vide* p. 198.

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APPENDIX X

INTERVIEW WITH LORD MOUNTBATTEN[1]

Top Secret *April 4, 1947*

The meeting lasted from 2.30 p. m. to 4.30 p. m.

Mr. Gandhi brought with him as promised Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Lord Ismay attended the meeting.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan gave a very forthright denunciation of the Governor of the N. W. F. P. and all his officials, particularly the political officers dealing with the tribes. . . .

I asked Mr. Gandhi for his views. He said he feared that there were many British members of the I. C. S., particularly among the highly placed ones, who could not bear to see the British leave India, and who had clung all along to the theory that if they could only support the Muslim League actively, to the point at which it could be held that the British could not leave India to civil war, then the British would be compelled to stay.

He pointed out that the views held by Mr. Winston Churchill were so well known that had he been in power or had there been any chance of his returning to power, the line taken by all those I. C. S. officials would have achieved its object. . . .

I asked Mr. Gandhi for some more examples of biassed officials. He said that although he did not know Sir Francis Mudie personally, all his friends in Sind told him that he was extremely pro-Muslim League and much too friendly with his Government.

I pointed out that he had previously agreed with Abdul Ghaffar Khan that Sir Olaf Caroe was insufficiently friendly with his Congress Government in the N. W. F. P., and now he accused Sir Francis Mudie of being too friendly with the Muslim League Government in Sind.

Mr. Gandhi replied that he did not wish Governors to be biassed one way or the other; their friendliness with their Governments should be the impartial friendliness which a constitutional monarch should bestow upon any government which came to power.

He advised me most strongly to get rid of any officials who could not be brought to see that they must remain impartial and helpful during the final stages.

After this Mr. Gandhi spoke about the Princes. He said that the Princes were really the creation of the British; that many of them had

[1] As recorded by Lord Mountbatten. *Vide* pp. 199-200.

been gradually created up from small chieftains to the position they now held, because the British realized that they would become strong allies of the British under the system of paramountcy.

In fact, he maintained that the British had, from the imperialistic point of view, acted very correctly in backing the Princes and the Muslim League, since between these two, had we played our cards really well, we could have claimed it was impossible for us even to leave India. He appreciated that my task was rendered all the more difficult by the line taken by my predecessors.

He considered it wicked of Sir Stafford Cripps not to have recommended the turning over of paramountcy to the Central Government representing the sovereignty of the Indian nation.

I replied that although I could see the argument for turning over paramountcy to a really strong Central Government representing the whole of the Indian nation, I had not yet seen any workable scheme for producing a really strong Central Government, and in fact the chances of there being anybody to whom paramountcy could be turned over seemed to me to be remote.

Only one scheme would achieve this, and that was the famous Gandhi scheme. I therefore asked him to explain this once more for Lord Ismay's benefit. On conclusion I asked Abdul Ghaffar Khan if he really thought that Congress would accept this scheme, and that it would be workable. To this he gave a very definitely affirmative reply.

I then invited Lord Ismay to take Mr. Gandhi to his room and put his scheme in writing.

From a photostat: C. W. 11023. Lord Mountbatten Papers. Courtesy: Broadlands Archives Trust. Also *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. X, pp. 120-1

APPENDIX XI

LETTER FROM LORD ISMAY[1]

Personal

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,
NEW DELHI,
April 6, 1947

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Thank you for your letter of 5th April. It was very kind of you to dictate it at such a late hour in order that it might reach me last night.

I think that there has been some misunderstanding about the form of the short note which I prepared last Friday. As I understood it, Lord Mountbatten, on the conclusion of his talk with you, asked if you would be so good as to spare a little more time for a talk with me about your plan, in

[1] *Vide* pp. 199-200 and 213-4.

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order that I might prepare a short note summarizing its salient features in general terms. He had no intention, so far as I know, that I should attempt anything formal or elaborate. I have now shown him your letter and he confirms that my interpretation of his wishes was correct.

I have prepared a revised copy of my note substituting your version of point 7 for the original and including your point 8. This covers much the same ground as my original points 3 and 4, which therefore now become redundant.

Lord Mountbatten has asked me to say that he much looks forward to having another talk with you about your plan before you leave.

May I conclude with an expression of my personal thanks for having spared me so much of your time last Friday.

Yours sincerely,
ISMAY

[PS.]

The Viceroy assures you that he will not mention your plan to Mr. Jinnah until he has had a further talk about it with you.

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 239-40, and *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. X, p. 140

APPENDIX XII

LETTER FROM LORD MOUNTBATTEN[1]

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,
NEW DELHI,
April 7, 1947

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Ismay has shown me your letter to him of 6th April, and we both are most upset to think that any act, or omission, on our part should in any way increase the great burden you are bearing. I therefore think it right to send you the following personal explanation.

As we were parting last Friday afternoon, I said that your plan had many attractions for me and I asked you if you would be so good as to explain it to Ismay, who had not been present when you first propounded it. On your agreeing to do so, I asked Ismay to make a note of its salient features, and I authorized him to talk it over in confidence with the Reforms Commissioner. I am extremely sorry if by these observations I gave you the impression that I wished your plan reduced to the terms of formal agreement.

As I explained to you during the many talks that we have enjoyed, my aim has been and is to keep a perfectly open mind until I have had

[1] *Vide* pp. 213-4.

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the advantages of discussions with important Indian political leaders with the object of seeking an agreement between all parties, so that peace can be restored in the country and an acceptable basis for the transfer of power be worked out. When these preliminary conversations have been completed, I shall then have to make up my mind as to what I am going to recommend to His Majesty's Government and, before I do so, I shall most certainly take advantage of your kind offer of further discussion with you.

Yours sincerely,
MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA

M. K. GANDHI, ESQ.
BHANGI COLONY
READING ROAD
NEW DELHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 241-2, and *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. X, pp. 145-6

APPENDIX XIII

LETTER FROM LORD MOUNTBATTEN[1]

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,
NEW DELHI,
April 7, 1947

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Many thanks for your letter of today. I find it difficult to advise you. Though the root causes of the disturbances in the Punjab still exist there has been a considerable measure of success in dealing with immediate disturbances, and I doubt whether you ought to exhaust yourself by undertaking any tour in the Punjab at this time of the year.

I quite agree that those outbreaks of violence are not a mere detail. What we have to secure is a settlement between the parties at the centre and, if possible, a combined front against violence. It is the effort to find a solution which will occupy all my efforts in the near future, and I know I can rely on help from you wherever you may be.

I enjoyed meeting you so much and found all you had to say of the greatest interest.

Yours sincerely,
MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 242-3, and *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. X, p. 147

[1] *Vide* p. 223.

APPENDIX XIV

INTERVIEW WITH LORD MOUNTBATTEN[1]

Top Secret *April 12, 1947*

The meeting lasted from 11.45 a.m. to 1.45 p.m.

I thanked him for the letter he had sent me the previous day saying that he had been unable to get his great plan for a Jinnah government through responsible members of Congress, and had therefore had to withdraw it. He regretted his failure very much, but said he thought I could still go ahead on the plan myself if I ardently believed in it.

I told him that however much I believed in it I couldn't possibly go ahead with success in a matter in which he had already failed himself with the Congress.

I then told him I wanted to report to him in strict confidence all my conversations with Mr. Jinnah, to put him in the picture.

I then said that although my mind was still open I was now particularly studying two alternative solutions:
(a) the Cabinet Mission plan; (b) a truncated Pakistan. I asked him how much he personally favoured a united India, and of course he said he was extremely anxious for it. I asked him how far he thought Congress would go towards accepting the Cabinet Mission plan and warned him that Mr. Jinnah was bitterly opposed to the Cabinet Mission plan and therefore Congress would have to go at least as far as Mr. Jinnah wanted before he would even consider it.

Mr. Gandhi said that the whole bone of contention was the interpretation of the meaning of the Cabinet Mission plan, and he suggested that I should call in the High Court to interpret it. I told him that the differences of opinion had already been resolved by the statement of the Cabinet of the 6th December; but he held that the people who drafted the statement were not the people who had to interpret it, and gave as an analogy Acts of Parliament. He said that if a difference of opinion arose as to the meaning of a particular clause in law, it was the judge who settled the meaning and who interpreted the law and not the people who framed the law. He seemed convinced that the Congress would accept any interpretation the High Court gave.

I told him I did not see how we could possibly have a different interpretation put on the meaning of the Cabinet Mission plan to that which the

[1] As recorded by Lord Mountbatten. *Vide* pp. 254-5 and 261.

Cabinet Mission themselves had announced on December the 6th after taking legal advice.

I then discussed the joint statement calling for a truce and a denunciation of the use of force to obtain political ends. He said he would gladly sign the statement shown to him or any similar statement if Mr. Jinnah and I wished him to do so; though he must point out that the statement, to have any value, should be signed by Mr. Kripalani on behalf of the Congress as a whole.

He said he had told Pandit Nehru that if indeed I could get Mr. Jinnah to sign and abide by this statement, I should have taken the greatest step politically in the recent history of India, and one which he hoped he had been instrumental in putting into my head.

Although I have absolutely no recollection of Mr. Gandhi making any such suggestion, I felt it would be politic not to point this out. For although I believed it to have been my own idea, I am only too delighted that he should take the credit.

In the meanwhile Lord Ismay came down at my request with the Cabinet Mission plan and the Statement of December the 6th. Mr. Gandhi appeared never to have read this statement although he knew of its existence. He thought he was at Noakhali at the time and did not have time to read it. After reading it very carefully he came back to his original point of view that the Cabinet Mission statement should be submitted to the High Court for interpretation, and he felt sure the Congress would abide by their decision.

Lord Ismay pointed out that it was less a matter of finding out what the actual legal interpretation was than of ascertaining what common interpretation would be acceptable both to the Muslim League and the Congress; and to this Mr. Gandhi unreservedly agreed.

Meanwhile he called upon me to renounce the use of the British Army, and said that he included the British officers of the Indian Army in that term; in other words any of the armed forces under my orders.

I pointed out that except for the Punjab, which is under a Section 93 Government, in all other provinces it was the local Government that called out the troops, and that if he wanted that practice to stop why didn't he make a start by talking to the Congress Government in Bihar where he was off to that evening. He said sadly he had already spoken to them, and that if they had had a strong conviction of non-violence they would offer themselves as sacrifices rather than allow these massacres to continue or trying to stop them by the use of troops.

I did not altogether follow his argument here, and may have misquoted him. But since it appeared to be purely academic, and a matter he was going to put before the local Congress Government in Bihar, I did not pursue it.

He then said that he advised me to go on strengthening the Interim Government, and making them function correctly for the next 14 months;

after which he considered I should hand over power to the Interim Government. This staggered Lord Ismay and myself, and we both pointed out that that meant handing over power to one party, namely Congress, to the grave disadvantage of the other party, the Muslim League, which would not fail to produce strife, possibly leading to civil war.

Mr. Gandhi, with a wily smile, pointed out that if Mr. Jinnah indeed signed the paper we were sending round to him he could not again use force for political purposes.

I must say I was speechless to find that he proposed, if Mr. Jinnah indeed meant to sign and stick to the statement, to take advantage of this to impose a Congress Government over the Muslims. Here again I find it hard to believe that I correctly understood Mr. Gandhi.

Finally, after substituting the word "communities" instead of "peoples" and having the declaration of truce retyped, Mr. Gandhi appended his signature in all three scripts: English, Urdu and Gujarati; and Lord Ismay took the paper for Sir Eric Mieville to take round to Mr. Jinnah.

From a photostat: C. W. 11024. Lord Mountbatten Papers. Courtesy: Broadlands Archives Trust. Also *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. X, pp. 211-3

APPENDIX XV

INTERVIEW WITH LORD MOUNTBATTEN[1]

Top Secret *Sunday, May 4, 1947, 1605 to 1730 hrs.*

I thanked him for the strong and courageous statement he made rebuking the Press in general, and his own in particular, for their uncalled-for attack on me.

He said that he thought that the Press in India was very immature and had only just been released from censorship and did not realize the harm they were doing by the methods they adopt.

I outlined the plan which Lord Ismay had taken to London and asked Mr. Gandhi if he agreed that the method I was proposing to adopt, whereby the people of India would decide how they wished power to be transferred, was not a good one. He replied that he did not agree that we were leaving the people of India a free choice since we were practically imposing partition on them.

I then asked him what his plan was and he returned to his original idea and reiterated that if I believed in it firmly I could put it through.

In fact, he finally invited me to turn over power either to the Muslim League or, if they would not take it, to Congress for the whole of India, and give them immediate Dominion Status and then remain as

[1] As recorded by Lord Mountbatten. *Vide* p. 410.

Governor-General for 13 months and then leave them to their own devices. When I pointed out that this would lead to a civil war and a blood bath, he replied "not if Mr. Jinnah means what he has signed with me".

I told him Jinnah signed in good faith when he thought I was going to give a fair decision and that I did not for one moment suppose the Muslims would not immediately go to war if I attempted to betray them in this matter. In any case, I pointed out that H. M. G. would never allow me to hand over a colossal minority like the Muslims into the power of Congress and I much regretted therefore that his plan was not acceptable. I did, however, say I would report it to London.

From a photostat: C. W. 11025. Lord Mountbatten Papers. Courtesy: Broadlands Archives Trust. Also *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. X, pp. 610-1

APPENDIX XVI

M. A. JINNAH'S STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

May 6, 1947

We discussed two matters. One was the question of division of India into Pakistan and Hindustan and Mr. Gandhi does not accept the principle of division. He thinks division is not inevitable, whereas, in my opinion, not only is Pakistan inevitable but this is the only practical solution of India's political problem.

The second matter which we discussed was a letter[2] which we both have signed jointly appealing to the people to maintain peace and we both have come to the conclusion that we must do our best in our respective spheres to see that that appeal of ours is carried out and we will make every effort for this purpose.[3]

The Hindu, 7-5-1947

[1] *Vide* p. 432.

[2] *Vide* p. 261.

[3] Asked whether there would be any further meeting with M. A. Jinnah Gandhiji replied that no further meeting was likely. M. A. Jinnah however declined to answer.

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(*The*) *Bombay Chronicle*: English daily published from Bombay.

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Harijan Sevak (1933-56): Hindi weekly published under the auspices of Harijan Sevak Sangh. First published on February 23, 1933 from New Delhi.

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Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan.

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CHRONOLOGY

(*February 21, 1947—May 24, 1947*)

February 21: Gandhiji was on a walking tour in Noakhali, covering "a village a day".
Left Char Larua and reached Kamalapur at 9 a. m.
Had talk with E. W. Aryanayakum.
Met Satis Chandra Das Gupta and Niranjan Singh Gill.
Spoke at prayer meeting.

February 22: Left Kamalapur at 7.35 a.m.
Reached Char Krishnapur.
Met A. V. Thakkar, Shardeshananda and other workers.
At prayer meeting answered questions.

February 23: Left Char Krishnapur at 7.30 a. m.
Reached Char Soladi at 8.30 a. m.
At prayer meeting answered questions.

February 24: Left Char Soladi at 7.25 a.m.
Visited Ramakrishna Mission Ashram on way.
Reached Haimchar, the last stage of second part of walking tour.
Had discussion with A. V. Thakkar.
In letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, expressed views on Clement Attlee's statement.
Spoke at prayer meeting.

February 25: Had talk with Deb Nath Das.
Addressed public meeting in afternoon.
Spoke at prayer meeting.

February 26: In statement to Press denounced South African Government's refusal of passports and impounding of identity certificates of Y. M. Dadoo and G. M. Naicker.
At prayer meeting described his *Ramarajya* or Khudai Raj as Kingdom of God on earth.

February 27: Had discussion with Fazlul Huq.
Answered questions at prayer meeting.

February 28: In statement to Press endorsed boycott by Asiatics and Africans of celebrations in connection with Royal visit to South Africa.

Spoke at prayer meeting.

March 1: Gave interview to World Youth Delegation.
Spoke at prayer meeting.

March 2: Left Haimchar.
Reached Chandpur at 3.40 p. m.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Commenced silence.
Boarded steamer at 10 p.m., left Chandpur.
Had talk with Jiwan Singh.

March 3: Reached Goalando at 2.30 p. m.
Boarded train, had talk with D. B. Kalelkar, reached Sodepur at 9.30 p. m.
Gave interview to U. P. I.

March 4: Had talk with H. S. Suhrawardy.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Left Sodepur at 7.30 p. m.
Boarded train to Patna.

March 5: Reached Patna in morning.
Had discussion with Rajendra Prasad and Bihar Ministers.
Addressed prayer meeting.

March 6: Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, Arvind Bose, Jayaprakash Narayan, Shrikrishna Sinha and Anugraha Narayan Sinha.
Met Muslim League leaders and Hindus from Chhapra.
Spoke at prayer meeting.
Had talk with John Wardle Houlton, Relief Commissioner.

March 7: Had talk with Syed Mahmud.
Met nationalist Muslims' deputation, members of Muslim Students' Federation, khadi workers and Khaksars.
Addressed prayer meeting.

March 8: Met Muslims from Bhavalpur, Colonel Mahboob Ahmed of I. N. A., a Shia deputation, Sachchidananda Sinha and Anugraha Narayan Sinha.
Gave interview to Mohammad Yunus.
Spoke at prayer meeting.
Abdul Ghaffar Khan arrived.

March 9: Gandhiji in interview to U.P.I. said that there was "no present intention of fasting".
Had discussion with Binodanand Jha.

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Addressed Provincial Congress Committee members.
His written speech was read out at prayer meeting.

March 10: Addressed prayer meeting.
Had discussion with Ministers.

March 11: Had talk with Muslim League members.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Met Ministers.

March 12: Sent cable to *Cavalcade*.
Addressed prayer meeting at Mangal Talao.
Visited ruined houses and mosques on way.

March 13: Met Sikh deputation, Shah Nawaz Khan, S. M. Majmudar, Mahamayaprasad, Anugraha Narayan Sinha in afternoon.
Visited ruined houses on way to Ebbadullah Chowk.
Addressed prayer meeting.

March 14: Gave blessings to Syed Mahmud's son on eve of his wedding.
Addressed prayer meeting at Khusropur village.

March 15: Had discussion with Muslim League Relief Committee members.
Met Hugh Dow, Governor of Bihar.
In prayer speech referred to his visit to Governor.
Had discussion with Swami Anand and Kedar Nath.

March 16: Discussion with Swami Anand and Kedar Nath continued.
Had talk with Dr. Syed Mahmud, S. N. Maulvi, Azad Hussain and Hakim Tasadduq Hussain.
Met Muslim refugees and women.
Had discussion with Bihar Ministers.
Commenced silence.

March 17: Reached Masaurhi at 5.10 p.m.
Addressed prayer meeting.

March 18: Visited ruined places.
Had discussion with refugees.
Had talk with N. K. Bose.
Left for Bir at 3.45 p. m.
Reached Bir at 5.10 p.m.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Had talk with Shrikrishna Sinha.

March 19: Had discussion with Congress workers.
Had talk with village representatives.

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Addressed prayer meeting at Goriakharhi; returned to Bir.
Had talk with Anugraha Narayan Sinha.

March 20: Left Bir at 6 a.m.
Reached Masaurhi at 9.30 a. m.
Met Y. M. Dadoo and G. M. Naicker.
Visited Harla village.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Sent telegram to H. S. Suhrawardy about increasing cases of loot and arson in Noakhali.
Had talk with Ministers.

March 21: Left for Hansdih.
Saw ruined houses on way.
Reached Hansdih at 9 a. m.
Had talks with Muslim refugees and village representatives.
Visited neighbouring villages.
Addressed prayer meeting at Ghorhuan.

March 22: Visited Kharant village.
Reached Pipalwan.
Had talk with women refugees.
Arrived in Patna at 10 a.m.
Addressed prayer meeting.

March 23: Had talks with Syed Mahmud and Giadys Owen.
Addressed meeting of women workers of Kasturba Memorial Fund.
His written speech was read out at prayer meeting.

March 24: Met Gladys Owen.
Visited Barhavan.
Addressed prayer meeting at Rajghat.
Returned to Patna.
Lord Mountbatten sworn in as Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

March 25: Gandhiji addressed prayer meeting.

March 26: In letter to Viceroy, accepted his invitation to visit Delhi.
Reached Jehanabad at 3.25 p. m.
Visited Kako Relief Camp and Saistabad.
Addressed prayer meeting.

March 27: Visited Amthua, had talk with Muslims.
Visited Belti.
Halted at Ghosi.

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Visited Abdullachak, Julfipur, Abdullapur and Okri.
In prayer speech, at Okri, appealed to striking policemen to call off strike.

March 28: Had talks with Muslim refugees, representatives from surrounding villages and striking policemen.
Addressed Congress workers in afternoon.
Addressed prayer meeting at Allahganj.
Abdul Bari shot dead.
Gandhiji reached Patna at 9.30 p. m.
Concluded third part of his tour programme in Bihar.

March 29: Attended funeral of Abdul Bari; offered condolence to family.
Met Anugraha Narayan Sinha, Krishna Vallabh Sahay and Jayaprakash Narayan.
In prayer speech paid tribute to Abdul Bari.
Met Ministers.

March 30: Met Jayaprakash Narayan and Prabhavati.
Left Patna at 9.30 a. m.

March 31: Reached Delhi in morning.
Met Jawaharlal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari, Sucheta Kripalani, G. D. Birla, and Vallabhbhai Patel.
Met Viceroy in evening.
Visited ailing Sarojini Naidu.
Met Amrit Kaur and Shantikumar Morarjee.

April 1: Met Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari and Rajendra Prasad in morning.
Met Viceroy at 9 a. m.
Met Choithram Gidwani and workers from Sind.
Addressed Inter-Asian Relations Conference.
Spoke at prayer meeting.
Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.
Had talk with Mirabehn.

April 2: Gave message to Maharaja of Kapurthala.
Had interview with Viceroy in afternoon.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Spoke at concluding session of Inter-Asian Relations Conference.

April 3: Met Abul Kalam Azad, Rajendra Prasad and Amrit Kaur.
Delegates from Tibet, Japan and Burma called in.

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Gandhiji had discussion with Y. M. Dadoo and G. M. Naicker.
Addressed prayer meeting.

April 4: Had talk with refugees from Rawalpindi.
Had interview with Viceroy in afternoon.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Had talk with Egyptian delegates.

April 5: Had talk with Dr. Sjahrir and European visitors.
Met delegates from Malaya.
Spoke at prayer meeting.

April 6: Met J. B. Kripalani, Shankarrao Deo, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Abdul Majid.
Participated in mass spinning.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Met Begum Ghazanafar Ali and Viet-Namese delegates.

April 7: Sent telegram to H. S. Suhrawardy appealing for prompt action regarding increasing lawlessness in Noakhali.
His written speech was read out at prayer meeting.
Discussed constructive programme with two communist visitors.

April 8: Gave interview to Sir M. Derling.
Had discussion with C. Rajagopalachari, Abul Kalam Azad, Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru and other Congress leaders.
Gave interview to American journalists.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Had discussion with Cabinet Ministers.

April 9: Had talks with people from Kathiawar and Abul Kalam Azad.
Addressed prayer meeting.

April 10: Had talk with women workers.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Discussed draft formula with Jawaharlal Nehru, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, J. B. Kripalani, C. Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad and other leaders; failed to "convince them of the correctness" of his plan.

April 11: In letter to Viceroy, conveyed his failure with Congress Working Committee members and expressed his intention to leave for Patna next day.
Visited ailing Rajendra Prasad.

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Had talk with Y. M. Dadoo and G. M. Naicker.
At prayer meeting told people about his decision to go to Bihar.

April 12: Met Rajendra Prasad and C. Rajagopalachari and Gopalaswami Ayyangar.
Had talk with Sikhs.
Called on Viceroy, signed "Joint Appeal" denouncing violence and calling upon all communities to refrain from using force.
Met Arab delegation, a Chinese visitor, Baldeo Singh, C. H. Bhabha, Sir Datar Singh, V. K. Krishna Menon, French Ambassador and Congress leaders.
At prayer meeting appealed to people to observe fast on April 13, the last day of National Week.
Visited ailing Sarojini Naidu.
Left Delhi at night.

April 13: Wrote to Viceroy on train.
Had discussion with Manibhai B. Desai on Rural Reconstruction Trust, Uruli Kanchan.
Reached Patna at 7.10 p.m.

April 14: Telegraphed to Viceroy that Congress President should also sign Joint Appeal, but left decision to Viceroy.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Had talk with Muslim League members.

April 15: Met Shah Nawaz Khan.
Had talk with Syed Jafar Imam and Bihar Ministers.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Joint Appeal signed by M. A. Jinnah and issued to Press.

April 16: Gandhiji addressed prayer meeting.
Had discussion with Ministers.

April 17: Had talk with women and Congress workers.
Gave message to Maharaja of Darbhanga.
Met zamindars.
Had talk with representatives of Jamiat-ul-Ulema.
Addressed prayer meeting.

April 18: Had talk with Syed Mahmud and other nationalist Muslims, zamindars, peasant and labour leaders.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Had talk with Muslim students.
Met Anil Roy and Lila Roy.

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April 19: Addressed workers of Hindustani Talimi Sangh and A. I. V. I. A.
Attended meeting of A. I. S. A.
Met two English women.
Talking to Ministers explained ideal conduct for Ministers and Governors in independent India.
Addressed prayer meeting.

April 20: Addressed workers of Hindustani Talimi Sangh and A. I. V. I. A.
Addressed prayer meeting.

April 21: Attended meetings of A. I. S. A. and Hindustani Talimi Sangh.
His written speech was read out at prayer meeting.

April 22: Met khadi workers.
Addressed Hindustani Talimi Sangh meeting.
Had talk with Ministers.
Addressed prayer meeting.

April 23: Had talk with Muslim League members.
Addressed meetings of Hindustani Talimi Sangh and A. I. S. A.
Had talk with Peace Committee members.
Addressed prayer meeting.

April 24: Had talk with Houlton.
Addressed Harijan workers at Sadaquat Ashram.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Had talk with Bihar Ministers.

April 25: Had talk with two Englishmen.
Addressed prayer meeting.

April 26: Addressed prayer meeting.
Attended Jamiat Islamia Conference.

April 27: Had talk with Muslim women.
Spoke to I. N. A. men.
Addressed prayer meeting.

April 28: Gave advice to students in writing.
Announced his decision to leave for Delhi on April 30.

April 29: Had discussion at Peace Committee meeting.
Had talk with Bihar Ministers.
Addressed prayer meeting.

April 30: Left Patna at 8 a.m. for Delhi.

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May 1: Reached Delhi in morning.
Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.
Addressed prayer meeting.

May 2: Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.
Addressed prayer meeting.

May 3: Addressed prayer meeting.

May 4: Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.
Called on Viceroy.
Addressed prayer meeting.

May 5: Issued statement to Press regarding proposed non-European rally on question of racial disabilities. Gave interview to Reuter's special correspondent.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Called on M. A. Jinnah in evening.
Had discussion with Socialist leaders.

May 7: Addressed prayer meeting.
Left Delhi.

May 9: Reached Calcutta, put up at Sodepur Ashram.
Met Sarat Chandra Bose.
Addressed prayer meeting.

May 10: Gave interview to Abul Hashem.
Addressed prayer meeting.

May 11: H. S. Suhrawardy called on Gandhiji.
Gandhiji addressed prayer meeting.

May 12: His speech was read out at prayer meeting.
Had talk with H. S. Suhrawardy.

May 13: Discussed with Shyamaprasad Mookerjee scheme for united sovereign Bengal.
Addressed prayer meeting.

May 14: Visited riot-affected areas in Calcutta.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Left Calcutta.

May 15: Reached Patna.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Manu Gandhi operated upon for appendicitis; Gandhiji was present during the operation.

May 16: Visited Manu Gandhi at hospital.
Had talks with Abdul Qayum Ansari, Mridula Sarabhai,

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Anugraha Narayan Sinha and Jayaprakash Narayan.
Addressed prayer meeting.

May 17: Visited Manu Gandhi.
Met Syed Mahmud and Jayaprakash Narayan.
Visited Dinapur, could not address prayer meeting due to lack of order in the audience.

May 18: Sent message for South Africa through Y. M. Dadoo and G. M. Naicker.
Had talk with Abdul Qayum Ansari and Mridula Sarabhai.
His written speech was read out at prayer meeting.
Visited Manu Gandhi at Hospital.

May 19: Met Y. M. Dadoo, G. M. Naicker, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Satyanarayan Sinha and Maharaja of Cooch Bihar.
Visited Barh; addressed prayer meeting.
Visited Manu Gandhi at hospital.

May 20: Met deputation of zamindars and Khaksars.
Visited Manu Gandhi at hospital.
Visited Hilsa; addressed prayer meeting.

May 21: Met Bihar Ministers.
Visited Bikram; addressed prayer meeting.

May 22: Visited Fatehpur; addressed prayer meeting.

May 23: Visited Maner; addressed prayer meeting.

May 24: Met Khaksars.
Left Patna for Delhi.

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ERRATA

PAGE	FOR	READ
7 * Footnote 1, line 1	Srinagpur	Shrirampur
31 * Item 32, line 3	October.	October. I
46 * Paragraph 1, line 7	I could by	I could do by
434 * Paragraph 4, last line	if will keep	if you will keep
479 * Footnote 1	on June	on June 4.

* Due correction made.

