THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

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THE COLLECTED WORKS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

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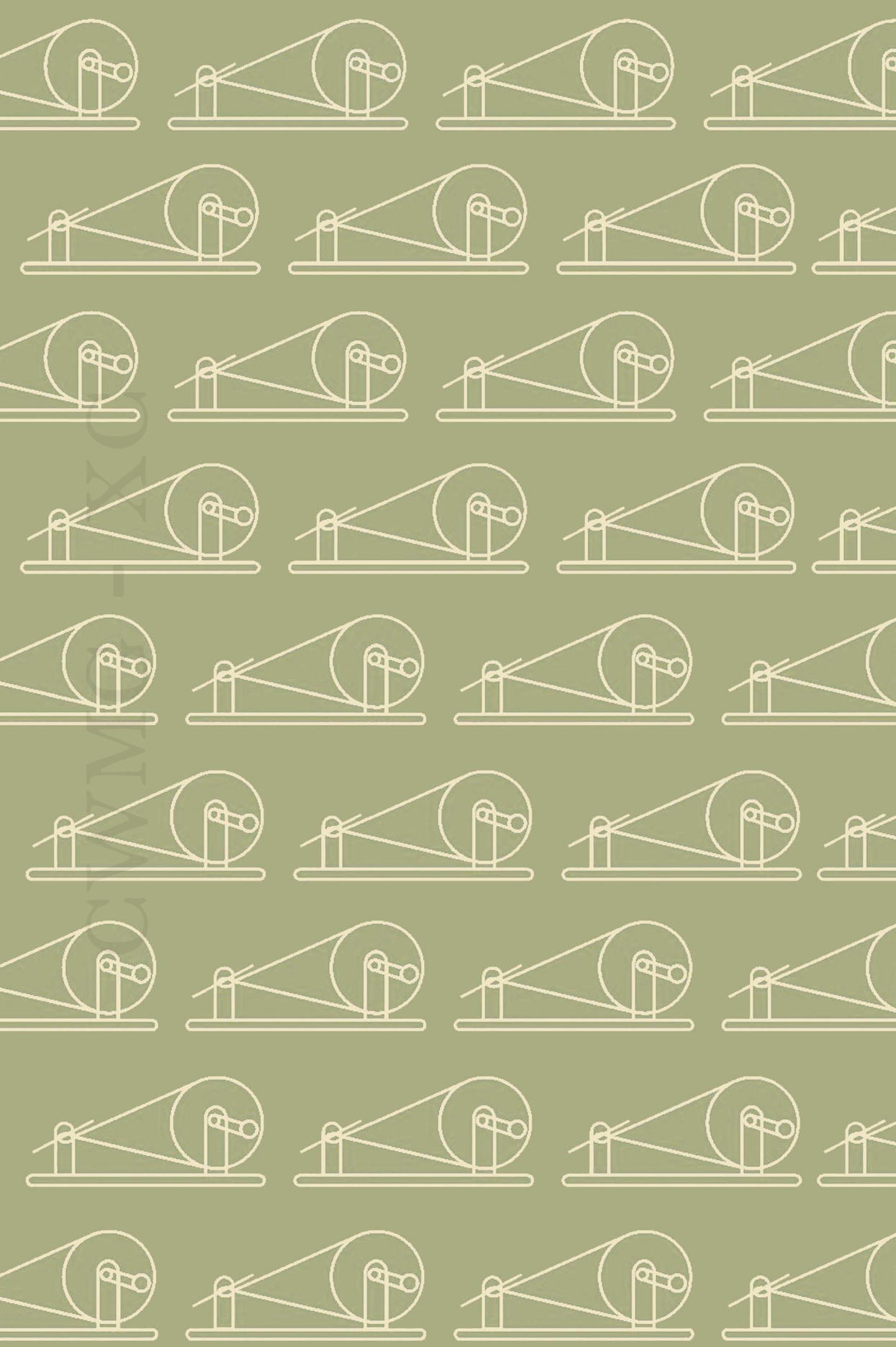
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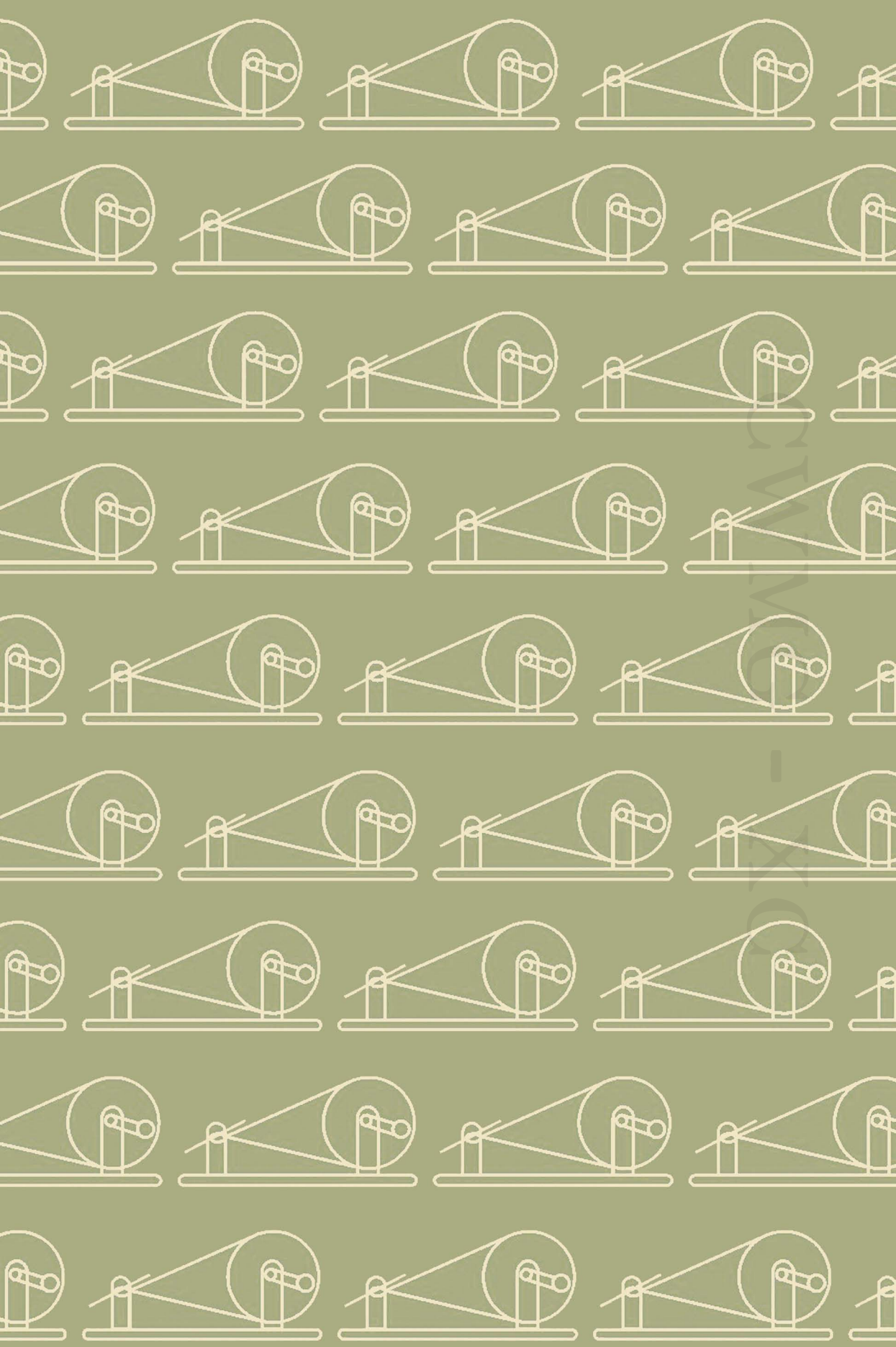
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THE PUBLICATIONS DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
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PRIME MINISTER
INDIA

FOREWORD

Mahatma Gandhi once wrote, as a warning to those disciples who placed more store by his word than his spirit: "My writings should be cremated with my body. What I have done will endure, not what I have said or written." But he was one of those who spoke as he thought and acted as he spoke, one of those few in whom no shadow fell between word and deed. His words were deeds, and they built a movement and a nation and changed the lives of countless individuals.

That is why the Government of India decided to collect and publish everything that Mahatma Gandhi wrote, and every authentic account of what he had said. I am glad that with this ninetieth volume the Collected Works series comes to a culmination.

When Gandhiji was assassinated, Jawaharlal Nehru remarked: "We will not see him again as we have seen him for these many years. We will not run to him for advice and seek solace from him." But this set of books will enable us to seek guidance and solace from a man who showed how to locate and nurture the strength within. Through his experiments with the power within himself he became a Mahatma.

Gandhiji warned us against the danger of making a sect out of his thought. In reading him we should be guided by what he said about his writings:

> My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment. The result has been that I have grown from truth to truth. . . . My words and deeds are dictated by prevailing conditions. There has been a gradual evolution in my environment and I react to it as a Satyagrahi.

The volumes of the Collected Works provide a record of the evolution of one of the greatest men of history; they also provide source material on the making of our nation.

Gandhiji was a great persuader. He took interest in people's problems and tried to bring them around to his point of view. Many sought his advice on personal matters. So he spoke and wrote incessantly on a variety of subjects: not only eternal values like truth and non-violence but practical matters like keeping homes and streets clean.

I wish to place on record my appreciation and that of the Government of India of the dedication and competence of Professor K. Swaminathan and his team of editors, research scholars and staff who have laboured over the last twenty-five years to complete this monumental work.

CAMP: GOA,
November 26, 1983

Indira Gandhi

(Indira Gandhi)

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PREFACE

This volume covers the last eighty-one days of Gandhiji's life, from November 11, 1947 to January 30, 1948, the fateful Friday, when martyrdom mercifully ended his prolonged agony as he witnessed the fires of hatred burning fierce on both sides of the country's new Western border. In fulfilment of his vow to "do or die", to establish peace in Delhi or perish in the attempt, he undertook on January 13 a fast which did have a cleansing effect on most people in both countries, but which roused the resentment of a few fanatics who promptly put out the light that hurt their eyes. Then the whole world passed through a moment of hushed silence, the "calm of mind, all passion spent", which follows any profound aesthetic experience. This perfect end to a life which was a perfect poem, composed of deeds, not words, lifted the protagonist from Indian history to world mythology where human imagination (in Coleridge's phrase) repeats in time and space "the eternal act of creation in the Infinite I AM". The *Kavi* and the *Kapi* merged; the Mahatma became Hanuman, the servant through Time of the Eternal Master.

The volume indeed reads like the last act of a Greek tragedy, with Gandhiji playing the double role of hero and chorus, the bird that eats the fruit and the bird that looks on, till the President of the Immortals pulls some string and stills the moving music into synchronic silence.

In a convocation address on December 13, 1947 Nehru said: "Freedom came to us, our long-sought freedom, with a minimum of violence. But immediately afterwards we had to wade through oceans of blood and tears . . . Horror piled on horror and a sudden emptiness seized us. . . . The lights seemed to go out. But one bright flame continued to burn and shed its light on the surrounding gloom. And looking at that bright, pure flame, strength and hope returned to us . . . There was the Spirit of India, strong and unsullied, rising above the turmoil of the present . . . during the past four months, in a dissolving world, he has been like a rock of purpose and a lighthouse of truth".

The volume opens with Gandhiji's speeches on Diwali, the festival of lights, symbolizing the triumph of good over evil. Using the myth for interiorizing the historical situation and its moral imperative, Gandhiji reminds his hearers that all men, even Rama and Ravana, are brothers, that Rama is the light

divine within each human heart and Ravana the darkness which is but deliberate denial or forgetfulness of that light. It is within each human heart that the great war between good and evil is being perpetually waged. The paramount need, then, was to keep alive "the light of love within". The Diwali festival would be celebrated in truth only when all the Muslims who had fled in fear were brought back (pp. 18-9).

While humbly admitting his failure to understand the working of ahimsa (pp. 2-3 and 34), Gandhiji never lost his faith in God and in the power of His Name, which gave him a peace transcending his mental agony. This faith sustained his strength as he struggled with patience beyond measure to save India's humanity (pp. 37, 82, 101 and 273). In prayer speeches and in talks with visitors and with refugees in their camps, he urged Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims alike to shed anger and hatred, reminding them of the common human proneness to "commit mistakes" and also of the need and the ability "to forgive and forget" (p. 52). Admitting that the Muslim League started the mischief long before August 15, 1947 and that Pakistan's sins were "terrible enough", he told the Hindus and Sikhs that by copying the sin they had become "fellow-sinners" (pp. 99 and 123) and that confession of one's guilt "purifies and uplifts" (p. 228). He spoke again and again of reported atrocities against Muslims in Jammu, Junagadh and elsewhere, even at the risk of his remarks being exploited in Pakistan (pp. 115, 117-9, 140-3 and 169).

With Indian Muslims he was gentler but not less frank. He wanted them to acknowledge their part in bringing about the tragedy and to atone for it. He told them, "I shall never advise you to go away from here. . . . you should stay, for India is your home. And if your brethren should kill you, you should bravely meet death" (p. 154).

In Calcutta where Suhrawardy had shown such heroic courage and faced the angry Hindus, a miracle had been possible. But in Delhi there was no responsible Muslim who could approach the Hindus "if only to die"; even the nationalist Muslims had "lost this strength" (pp. 23-4). Nevertheless he looked forward to the day when "all those who had been driven away from their hearths and homes would return . . . and resume their avocations in perfect security and peace as before" (p. 262). That Hindus and Muslims could not co-exist was a "poisonous doctrine" which he pledged himself to resist and to do or die in the attempt (p. 222).

Gandhiji had to do some plain speaking in the Congress Working Committee and the A. I. C. C. which represented "the vast

ocean of Indian humanity'' (p. 38). He told them, ''The Muslim League indeed is culpable, but not every Muslim. . . . it is your prime duty to treat Muslims as your brothers, whatever may happen in Pakistan'' (p. 41). The All-India Congress Committee did pass a resolution urging that ''every effort should be made to enable the evacuees and refugees from either Dominion ultimately to return to their homes and to their original occupations under conditions of safety and security'' (pp. 538-9). But its implementation required reciprocity and this was not forthcoming from Pakistan.

Far from responding to this gesture of friendship, Pakistan made mutual reconciliation impossible by its cynically one-sided approach to the problem of the princely States. In Junagadh it readily accepted the Muslim ruler's accession without reference to the will of the people (most of whom were Hindus), but it objected to Kashmir's accession to India, though it was on the advice of Sheikh Abdullah and subject to confirmation by the people. The Maharaja's decision was precipitated by the invasion of the State by tribesmen, permitted, if not incited, by Pakistan's rulers and later actively supported by its army. The conflicts over the two States destroyed whatever chances there might have been for a wise and humane solution of the refugees problem.

For Gandhiji and the Government of India, accession was a matter to be decided by the will of the people. Even so, Gandhiji was not at all happy over his nephew Shamaldas Gandhi's role in frightening away ''the poor little ruler of Junagadh'' to Karachi instead of winning him over through love (pp. 101-2).

In Kashmir, Gandhiji would have preferred non-violent mass resistance to the Afridis, but in the absence of such moral strength in the people, he had to yield ''tacit consent'' to the Government of India's action in sending the army to defend Kashmir against the invaders (p. 511). But once this ''righteous war'' had been won, he would have liked a mutually agreed settlement so that ''we could live as peaceful neighbours''. Mistakes had been made on both sides, but we should not ''persist in those mistakes'' (p. 357).

The Government of India tried to put pressure on Pakistan, and so procure a quick, agreed settlement, by postponing payment of the agreed share of the cash balances of undivided India. In a statement to the Press on January 12, Sardar Patel explained at length the rationale of this decision. However, as a result of Gandhiji's fast beginning on January 13 ''in the cause of the Muslims'' (p. 415), the Indian Cabinet reversed a ''settled fact'' and in order to save Gandhiji's life and remove a ''cause of

friction between India and Pakistan'', decided to give immediate effect to the agreement about cash balances and to transfer Rs. 55 crores to Pakistan's account (Appendix V, pp. 550-6).

Like a mother giving bitter pills to her children, Gandhiji gave to ministers, constructive workers and over-zealous reformers much salutary advice, however harsh it might have sounded at the moment. He warned people that freedom was not ''suicidal anarchy'', that it called for self-sacrifice and self-restraint, for everyone thinking of ''the whole of India'', not of oneself and one's family alone (p. 86). Refugees should learn to live together, should work for and earn their bread, clothing and shelter, keep their camps clean and ''build ideal cities'' (pp. 84 and 186). Since controls encouraged laziness and corruption (which was even worse than violence), they should be removed so that the millions would learn to be far-sighted, ''by making mistakes and rectifying them'' (p. 197). In a democracy, government should trust the people and educate them in and through the exercise of freedom (p. 344). ''Real democracy people learn not from books, not from the government who are in name and in reality their servants. Hard experience is the most efficient teacher in democracy'' (p. 399). Gandhiji had unbounded faith in the inborn goodness of the common people and their capacity to learn. For the communal disturbances he held others, intellectuals and leaders, responsible, not the common people (pp. 83 and 248). People should be educated in freedom so that they could ''keep the ministers on their toes'' (p. 391). A good government should ensure both freedom and welfare and thus promote ''the largest good of the people with the minimum of controls'' (p. 325).

While busily engaged in containing and quenching the fire raging round him, Gandhiji never lost sight of the ultimate goal of building a better India on the secure foundation of self-reliant citizens in prosperous villages. He asserted that future governments (whether Congress, Socialist or Communist) would, after stumbling in attempts to compete with America or Russia, realize the truth that India had no option ''except to develop village industries'' (p. 57). On December 11 and 12 he called a meeting of various constructive work organizations and told them that ''the social order of our dreams cannot come through the Congress of today'', that the task of the constructive workers was to ''improve our national character'', that with imagination and intellect these institutions could be forged into ''instruments for the building up of democracy'', and that this aim could be achieved only if they kept away from the competition for political power

(pp. 215-23). Renunciation of power was the prerequisite for the development of soul-force or the power of love. Compassion was the root of dharma, and its outward expression was loving service of the common people, and its fruit was spiritual authority strong enough to prevail over temporal power. Indeed, the weapon of satyagraha could be effective only in the hands of a "man of God" who "renders unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, but who knows how to deal with the usurpation if Caesar forgetting his limits oversteps them" (p. 119).

In the flames of hatred raging round him Gandhiji saw, not the failure of ahimsa, but his own failure to understand and apply the truth behind ahimsa. In a letter to Karl Struve he humbly confessed that he had not "exhibited any heroic and demonstrable" non-violence in himself as yet (p. 337). On January 1, he wrote to a friend that the peace in Delhi was only from fear of the police. "There is fire in people's hearts. That fire must either consume me or must be extinguished" (p. 339). On January 4, he wrote: "Everything about me is uncertain. But I am moving towards light" (p. 353). On January 8, he wrote: "There is still much fire smouldering. One cannot say when it may not leap into flames" (p. 383). Some Maulanas of Delhi saw him on January 11 and one of them asked for help to enable them to go away to England. Gandhiji had no answer to give them (p. 422). In his prayer speech that evening, he pleaded: ". . . we must forget that we are Hindus or Sikhs or Muslims or Parsis. . . . we must be only Indians. It is of no consequence by what name we call God in our homes. In the work of the nation, all Indians of all faiths are one. . . . We are Indians and we must lay down our lives in protecting Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs and all others" (pp. 403-4).

For days he had been brooding over his "impotence" to give the right answer to the Muslim friends who had sought his guidance. The final conclusion flashed upon him on the afternoon of the 12th and it made him happy. Without consulting anyone, not even Nehru or Patel, who had called on him a couple of hours earlier, he drafted a statement to be read out at the prayer meeting in the evening, announcing the commencement of an indefinite fast the following day. This was his answer to the Maulanas. The fast was to quicken conscience, not deaden it, to turn the searchlight inwards and seek self-purification. "No man, if he is pure, has anything more precious to give than his life. I hope and pray that I have that purity in me to justify the step" (p. 409).

The step was indeed justified as it evoked the right response from all quarters. Numerous telegrams from Pakistan as well as India conveyed assurances of communal amity. On the 16th, the Government of India announced the decision to release forthwith the cash balances due to Pakistan. On the 17th, leaders of all communities, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, met in Delhi and on the 18th a hundred representatives of various organizations called on Gandhiji with a joint statement pledging themselves to fulfil the conditions he had laid down for breaking the fast. Satisfied at last, he said, "... till today our face was turned towards Satan, we have now resolved to turn towards God" (p. 446). Then the fast was broken.

Even during this ordeal Gandhiji retained his detachment and sense of humour. He wrote to Mirabehn that his meal consisted of 8 oz. of hot water "sipped with difficulty" and he took several such "poison-tasting but nectar-like" meals. "Yet I claim to be fasting and credulous people accept it" (p. 430). Among these credulous people, strangely enough, were two famous former critics of fasting as a method of coercion. This time Arthur Moore of *The Statesman* and Nehru himself went on a sympathetic fast.

After breaking the fast, Gandhiji wrote to co-workers, "From calm I have entered storm" (pp. 454 and 468). In two days it became clear what shape the storm would take. During his prayer meeting on the 20th a group of angry Hindus made the first attempt on his life. Gandhiji did not know at the time that it was a bomb explosion. The following evening he adjured his listeners not to hate the bomb-thrower. In fact, he pleaded his case and cited in his defence a verse from the *Gita*. "He had taken it for granted that I am an enemy of Hinduism" and "thinks he has been sent by God to destroy me" (p. 472).

Deprecating the security measures taken by the Government, he told his host G. D. Birla, "... it is Rama who protects me ... everything else is futile" (p. 470). As the end drew near, it became clear that the oft-repeated *mantra* "Do or die" had only been the sombre, strident counterpoint to the steady, bright, basic melody: we are all in the hands of Rama, playthings, dancing to the tune He sings, dancing as He pulls the strings (pp. 96, 273).

On January 24, he wrote to a friend, "I am a servant of Rama. I will do His work so long as He wills.... if I have been sincere in my pursuit of truth, non-violence, non-stealing, *brahmacharya* ... I shall certainly be granted the kind of death that

I seek . . . that should someone kill me I may have no anger against the killer . . . and I may die with Ramanama on my lips'' (p. 489).

With such serene faith in Rama, he was busy as usual, discussing with co-workers how the Congress could be reorganized and made ''a strong and efficient instrument of public service and of public will'' in free India (p. 506). He planned a ten-day visit to Sevagram in February to study the ''possibility of uniting the various organizations for constructive work into one body . . .'' (p. 520). To an angry refugee who advised him to retire to the Himalayas, he replied, ''I want to find peace in the midst of turmoil or I want to die in the turmoil. My Himalayas are here'' (p. 525).

On the last day of his life on earth Gandhiji was preoccupied with the reported rift between Nehru and Patel. In a long discussion with Patel from 4 p. m. up to the minute he had to leave for the prayer, he told him that the presence of both himself and Nehru in the Government was ''indispensable'' (p. 534). While he was busy talking with Patel, some visitors from Saurashtra sent in a request for an appointment and received the message: ''Tell them I shall talk with them during my walk after the prayers, if I am alive'' (p. 533).

The last words he uttered were ''Hey Ram''. The real Ruler of the Universe, whose names are many and whose ways are mysterious, loved his patient servant and would not on the rack of this tough world stretch him out longer.

Gandhiji's political legacy, a functioning democracy albeit mounted on a rickety machine, was safe in the hands of a team of selfless patriots led by Nehru, an idealist with a heart of gold, and Patel, a realist with a mind of steel. Friendship with the British people was intact and promised to be permanent. Their rule had gone, but the use of their language would never go (p. 443).

No such concrete success could be expected for Gandhiji's larger mission of ''spiritualizing'' politics and public life. Indeed there was for a moment the danger of ''politicizing'' religion and so destroying it. The fast which restored the Hindus to sanity averted this danger and was not the least of the Mahatma's services to his mother religion. Right from his early South African days, he had continued and carried forward the process of purifying and revitalizing the ancient dharma, a process begun in South India by Ramalinga Swami and in Bengal by Swami Vivekananda. The former was the mentor of the Tamil ''coolies'' whose steadfast faith in dharma opened the eyes of the barrister to the integrity of the common people and transformed him into

a mahatma bound by mutual trust with the masses of India. The latter set up Daridranarayana (God in the form of the poor) as the living image whose service was the highest *sadhana*. In a letter to Wybergh in 1910 (Vol. X, pp. 247-8), Gandhiji had declared that the ideal of *moksha*, the highest value and the immediate aim of all mankind, should not be lowered for anyone or withheld from anyone. Unbridled "materialism", the bane of modern civilization, did not add one inch to man's moral stature. The reduction of economic and social disparities was most smoothly effected by the simultaneous satisfaction of the survival needs of the poor and the Being needs of the rich. Gandhiji therefore asserted that self-realization was "impossible without service of, and identification with, the poorest" (Vol. XXXI, p. 511). What Gandhiji meant was not relief or charity, but radical restructuring of the present exploitative economic system.

By thus bringing the light and warmth of dharma to bear on *artha*, Gandhiji did succeed in some measure in breaking down the barriers between Brahmin and "untouchable", between the rich elite and the poor masses, between sacred and profane. He spread far and wide the faith and the feeling that all life is holy, all selves are one and all human beings potentially divine. Man was not an ape drunk with Mephistophelean power, but a god *manque*. Life on earth was a constant ascent; the Hindu should become a better Hindu, the Muslim a better Muslim, the Christian a better Christian and so on (p. 293).

This Vaishnava dharma, which is the undying poetry of earth, lives embodied in Rama and Krishna, gods whom one does not fear and obey, but loves as friends and admires as heroes, and freely chooses to play with and work for. In this myth, metaphysics and morals meet as the beauty of truth in thought and deed; like any athlete, artist or mathematician, the devotee of Vishnu rejoices as much in discipline as in freedom, and the ego wears away in the service of Narayana, who is Goodness, Beauty and Truth combined. The wheel of dharma would not let the servant rest one moment, but at its still centre there is peace for the strong. This too Gandhiji knew: "My God is Formless and Faultless and it is He who is giving me strength" (p. 37).

Identity with others is a felt, though not permanent, experience, taken for granted by ordinary people uncorrupted by materialism and is comparable to the aesthetic delight in agony as in ecstasy. It is not rhetoric, but a reminder of our common humanity, when Gandhiji says, ". . . when someone commits a crime anywhere I feel I am the culprit. . . . If I were to commit

any crime you should also think that you too were guilty of it. Let us all merge in each other like drops of ocean. If the drops of ocean remain apart they would dry up'' (p. 133).

The *Gita* teaching Gandhiji summed up to this effect: This whole universe exists in God, and even thieves and tigers are ourselves. ''It is man's nature to do good, for all selves are one. . . . When this is realized man's ego melts away'' (Vol. XXXII, pp. 218 and 280).

All human beings are thus born friends bound together by love and kindness. Hence mutual co-operation is normal, natural and necessary in any society where wants and desires are limited to legitimate needs. Hatred, distrust, cruelty and war are ugly and unnatural, and therefore to be shunned. ''Love, otherwise ahimsa, sustains this planet of ours'' (p. 195). The rule of life is friendly co-operation with all. However bad a man may be ''we must treat him as a friend and work with him. We must never under any circumstances treat anyone as an enemy'' (pp. 450-1). Satyagraha is effective because it is a good friend's deliberate and temporary withdrawal of co-operation in some action or policy which is ugly and painful as it tends to disrupt the essential unity that binds all human beings. All of us are prone to commit sins sometimes, and also prone more often to perform saintly actions. *Swadharma* consists in responding courageously to the call of the Inner Ruler and rising above our usual selves. Only so can one realize the ultimate truth through the pursuit of beauty in action. ''Everybody must act on the promptings of his conscience; you, on yours; I, on mine; others, on their own; and from that at last truth will come out'' (p. 225). Inwit, the Inner light, illumining head and heart alike, would guide the seeker of Truth from step to step on the path of action.

If beauty is a means to Truth, so too is utility. If a beautiful myth moves the heart to heroic action, a lemma, like the assumption of a separate and surviving self, may well be used to support morality. In a letter of 1935, Gandhiji defines realization as ''pure and selfless service of all living creatures'' (Vol. LX, p. 2). In another letter he further explains: ''For a belief in rebirth, it is necessary to believe in the existence of 'I'. If I do not exist and God alone exists, then who is to be reborn and how? This realization itself is rebirth, isn't it? . . . When you truly believe . . . that 'God alone exists', then there is no rebirth for you. The man who becomes one with God is liberated. . . . Realization comes through the heart. The head can provide only logic. . . . Service alone can bring about realization'' (Vol. LX, p. 159).

However much doctrines and theories may differ, all real religion ". . . makes for peace, love and joy in the world. . . . science and religion are complementary to each other" (p. 316). One's *swadharma* is not determined by casuistry, but by the inner call to prompt and precise action to relieve tension in human relationships. All religions, applied in a "scientific" way to any concrete situation, tend to converge and "make for peace, love and joy". A wooden slate-frame gone out of shape could be set right by firm, correct handling of the one corner one happens to hold (p. 84).

Taking the utmost responsibility on oneself and conceding the utmost freedom to others, feeling and thinking globally and acting locally, Gandhiji's empirical religion reconciles the dualism of Madhva and Islam, the modified non-dualism of Ramanuja and Christianity and the non-dualism of Sankara and pure science. Where people are unconsciously moved to action by the poetry of religion, goodness and beauty attend their thoughts, words and deeds as naturally as leaves, flowers and fruit come to a living tree. It is this humanizing Hinduism with its pluralistic world view and non-violent way of life that Gandhiji was proud of and claimed to be the universal religion which would free the world from all its ills (p. 248) and which would live as long as the sun shines in the sky (p. 79). From Man's spiritual element, the ocean of compassion, all religions arise and into it again must Islam, Christianity and other streams flow back (p. 177).

The golden age which began with Ramalinga Swami and included Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Tagore, Narayan Guru, Bharati and Ramana Maharshi, and which ended with Vinoba Bhave provided the congenial milieu for Gandhiji's political and social action. It was Gandhiji's spiritual mission to try and harmonize all religions and make multitudes of men and women doers of the Word of God instead of being merely its preachers and hearers.

NOTE TO THE READER

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

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

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

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

In the source-line, the symbol S. N. stands for documents available in the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad; G. N. refers to those available in the Gandhi National Museum and Library (Rashtriya Gandhi Sangrahalaya), New Delhi; M. M. U. for the reels of the Mobile Microfilm Unit and S. G. for the documents of the Sevagram collection, which are also available in the Gandhi National Museum and Library. 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. *WHEN A BLESSING BECOMES A CURSE*

In declining to give a blessing I said the following to a friend:

No one who wants to start a worthy enterprise should ever wish to have anybody's blessings, not even of the highest in the land. A worthy enterprise carries its own blessing. On the other hand, if an unworthy project receives any blessing from outside, it becomes, as it should become, a curse. Indeed, I have come to the conclusion that a blessing from outside interferes with the even progress of one's enterprise, because it very often induces a false hope and turns one away from the industry and watchfulness required for the success of a cause.

Though I have often said some such thing to many persons, it is best that this considered opinion is reproduced for the benefit of those who continue to ask for blessings for their enterprise. Thus, I have been asked to bless memorials about great men and I have felt compelled to give much the same answer as the above.

NEW DELHI, November 11, 1947
Harijan, 23-11-1947

2. *A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION*

The following is from Mr. Richard B. Gregg, whom many readers of the *Harijan* know as an American friend who used to live in Shantiniketan as also with me in Sabarmati years ago:

> Though because of my ignorance I am hesitant, yet I venture to send you an idea that seems to me not only to explain with perhaps less moral blame a part of the recent communal violence in India but also to offer hope for the future.
>
> It seems to me probable that much of this violence is an expression not so much of inter-communal suspicion and hatred, but rather, and more deeply and originally, of the long-pent-up resentments of the masses because of their oppression. The oppression was not only by foreign political rule but by foreign modern social, economic and financial ways which are contrary to the ancient habits of dharma which were a very part of the nature of the masses. By foreign ways I mean such things

as the English land-holding system, usurious money-lending, heavy taxes payable not in kind but in money, and other interferences with long-established village life common to all Indian communities.

Psychological studies have shown clearly that severe frustrations suffered during the childhood of an individual generate resentments which are suppressed and remain suppressed long after the person who caused the original frustration had died, but later some occasion pulls a trigger, as it were, and releases the pent-up energy of the old resentment which then pours forth in violence upon some perfectly innocent person. This explains many crimes of violence, and perhaps some of the cruelties against the Jews in Europe. In India the establishment of religious electorates created a channel into which it was easy for this energy to flow, but I believe the fearful energy of the explosion of wrath comes from the older cause I have mentioned. Such an idea as this would help explain why in all countries all through history a major change of political power results in more or less violence and disorder. The masses always suffer some oppression and, therefore, have resentments which flare up upon a shift of control or may be exploited by selfish leaders.

If this surmise is true, it suggests that the suspicion and hatred of one community towards another is not so deep as now appears. It also means that as soon as the masses can be guided back into their ancient ways of life with the chief emphasis on religion and small organizations —village panchayats and communal family systems—the energy of the people will be turned from violence into creative channels. I would expect that khadi work among the refugees might help start such a diversion of energy into sound channels. In such a development I see hope.

Forgive me if this seems to be presumptuous. I write it only in the hope that an humble outsider, just because he is outside, may see a gleam of encouragement that is not so easy to see in the dust and distraction of the struggle. Anyhow, I love you and India.

Though many psychologists have recommended a study of psychology, I am sorry I have not been able, for want of time, to study the subject. Mr. Gregg's letter does not mend matters for me. It does not fill me with any impelling enthusiasm for undertaking the study. Mr. Gregg gives an explanation which mystifies the mind instead of clearing it. "Hope for the future" I have never lost and never will, because it is embedded in my undying faith in non-violence. What has, however, clearly happened in my case is the discovery that in all probability there is a vital defect in my technique of the working of non-violence. There was no real appreciation of non-violence in the thirty years' struggle against British Raj. Therefore, the peace the masses maintained during that struggle of a generation with

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exemplary patience, had not come from within. The pent-up fury found an outlet when British Raj was gone. It naturally vented itself in communal violence which was never fully absent and which was kept under suppression by the British bayonet. This explanation seems to me to be all-sufficing and convincing. In it there is no room for failure of any hope. Failure of my technique of non-violence causes no loss of faith in non-violence itself. On the contrary, that faith is, if possible, strengthened by the discovery of a possible flaw in the technique.

NEW DELHI, November 11, 1947

Harijan, 23-11-1947. Also C.W. 4525

3. *LETTER TO R. B. GREGG*

November 11, 1947

MY DEAR GOVIND,

I have your lovely letter which I am reproducing in the columns of *Harijan*[1] with such remarks as occur to me. If I finish my note on it in time, a copy will accompany this letter.

I am glad Radha[2] is "slowly but steadily" improving through vegetarian dietetics. If she recovers completely, I would like you to write out your experience of this experiment for the sake of the general reader of *Harijan*.

By the way, has vegetarianism a real foothold in America or is it merely a fad of cranks like you and me? Have the dietetic reformers found anything which can be described as a complete substitute for milk? I must confess that I have failed miserably in that direction and, in the absence of the discovery of a complete substitute, I have come to the conclusion that some form of animal fat and animal protein is necessary for human sustenance in health.

You have yourself written 'Radhabehn' instead of mere 'Radha'. According to Indian custom, between friends 'Radhabehn' is mere 'Radha'. The omission of the suffix *behn*, meaning sister, is a mark of great endearment and intimacy. If you were writing to a casual acquaintance or an utter stranger, then you will naturally mention 'Radha' by her full name 'Radhabehn'. Therefore, I dare not call you 'Govindbhai' and 'Radha'

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

[2] Addressee's wife

as 'Radhabehn'. *Bhai* means brother, but when *behn* and *bhai* are used as suffixes to a name, they have merely an honorific value.

How are you getting on yourself ? Have you lost all the physical weakness which you had developed here? Also tell me, when you write, what you are doing for earning. Or, are you living on past savings when you were practising as a lawyer?

Love to both of you.

BAPU

Enclosure: 1

RICHARD B. GREGG, ESQ.
FULLER MEMORIAL SANATORIUM
SOUTH ATTLEBORO, MASS.
U. S. A.

From a photostat: C. W. 4524

4. *FRAGMENT OF A LETTER*

November 11, 1947

I did get the news that Shamaldas[1] showed bravery and won the battle.[2] But today I am not happy about it. Why should I talk of my happiness and sorrow? To whom shall I talk? And who will listen today?

I have taken a vow that I shall not step out of Delhi till I have achieved something or perished. Therefore it is not possible for me to go to Kathiawar. Kathiawaris have maintained friendly relations with Muslims through the ages. If they do so now, it will certainly have an impact on conditions here. See that Kathiawar's honour is not sullied. . . .[3]

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 256

[1] Shamaldas Gandhi, son of Gandhiji's elder brother, Lakshmidas Gandhi

[2] The Junagadh State subjects, at a meeting held in Bombay on September 25, had challenged the decision of the Nawab of Junagadh to accede to Pakistan and set up a provisional government, led by Shamaldas Gandhi, and to take all necessary steps for Junagadh's formal accession to India.

In response to a request from the Dewan of Junagadh, the Indian troops entered Junagadh city and the Government of India took over its administration on November 9. *Vide* also pp. 6-9.

[3] Omission as in the source

5. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO A WOMAN WORKER[1]

November 11, 1947

What you say is true. But you should have so much love in your heart that the children themselves would have the urge to finish their household work early and run to you. The attraction should be so intense that the parents will ultimately allow their children to go to you, realizing that the children are actually growing wiser. From your very long letter and the fact that you notice no change in the narrow-mindedness of the villagers even after two years, I feel that you yourself are to blame in some way. One should be able to discover one's own shortcomings. Moreover, I am of the view that it will be easier for you to work amongst the less intelligent villagers as you call them, than with the so-called polite and intelligent people of the cities. Do give serious thought to this letter. If it is necessary to change your attitude or style, do so; then your work will shine forth.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 257

6. EXTRACT FROM A LETTER

November 11, 1947

. . .[2] Who knows, my ahimsa might be tested at the fag end of my life. A proverb says that 'a dying flame burns the brighter before it burns itself out.' Maybe my end is approaching. I am fully prepared. Everyone should be prepared. I write all this to explain to you what passes in my mind as I see the way things are going, as I see the explosion of violence and the disappearance of human kindness. Try to understand this if you can; otherwise just watch whatever unfolds itself.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 257

[1] The addressee had reported lack of enthusiasm among villagers regarding education of their children.

[2] Omission as in the source

7. LETTER TO SAHASRABUDDHE

NEW DELHI,
November 11, 1947

BHAI SAHASRABUDDHE,

I have your letter. I think that I have not received the unconditional endorsement by both the parties made on one document. If this impression is correct, there remains nothing that I can do. But if my impression is wrong, then I must not break my word however busy I may be. Yet I would like to say that you should spare me this responsibility at this hour. Since I cannot concentrate on any other matter except my present responsibility, I am afraid my judgement in other matters might not be as correct as it ought to be.

You must have recovered fully by now.

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

8. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 11, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I told you yesterday that the Provisional Government had entered the State of Junagadh at the request of its Prime Minister[1] and Deputy Prime Minister[2]. I was surprised as well as happy to tell you this because I had not expected that the struggle which was being carried on on behalf of the people of Junagadh would have such a happy ending.[3] I had also expressed

[1] Shah Nawaz Bhutto

[2] Major Harvey Jones

[3] A Press communique issued by the Government of India said : "the Regional Commissioner of Rajkot was approached . . . by Major Harvey Jones . . . with a letter from the Junagadh Dewan, appealing to the Government of India to take over the Junagadh administration . . . to save the State from complete administrative break-down . . . pending honourable settlement of several issues involved in the Junagadh accession.

We have considered this request and with a view to avoiding chaos in the State and its repercussions have agreed to take over the administration of Junagadh with immediate effect."

the fear that if the request of the officials of Junagadh did not have the sanction from the Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah[1], it would not be proper to feel happy about it right now. Hence, you would be amazed and distressed to know that the officials of Pakistan have protested against the Provisional Government assuming power on behalf of the people of Junagadh. They have demanded "withdrawal of Indian troops from the State territory and relinquishment of the administration to the rightful Government and stoppage of violence and invasion of the State by people from the Indian Union". They also say that neither the Nawab nor the Dewan of Junagadh has any legal authority to negotiate permanent or provisional settlement with the Indian Union. According to Pakistan the action of the Government of India is "a clear violation of the Pakistan territory and a breach of international law".

Looking at the Press reports that have appeared yesterday, I find that there was neither a breach of international law in this matter, nor any operation by the Union Government to establish control over the State. As far as I can see, there is nothing illegal in the campaign carried on by the Provisional Government on behalf of the people of Junagadh. It is true that the Union Government sent military help for the safety of the whole of Kathiawar at the request of the rulers of Kathiawar. For that reason, I find nothing illegal in this whole action. As against this, whatever the Dewan of Junagadh did by publicly changing his stand was illegal. I look at the whole situation like this—the Nawab of Junagadh had no right at all to accede to Pakistan without the consent of his people, of which I am told 85% are Hindus.[2] The sacred hill of Girnar and all the temples on it are part of Junagadh. The Hindus have spent a lot of money on those temples and thousands of pilgrims go to the Girnar on pilgrimage from all parts of India. In free India, the whole country belongs to the people. Not even the smallest portion of it is the private property of the Princes. They can retain their claim only by becoming trustees of the people and that is why they would be required to give evidence of popular support for every action of theirs. True, the Princes have

[1] Governor-General of Pakistan

[2] The Nawab of Junagadh after consenting to accede to India, had revoked his decision, fled to Pakistan and executed an Instrument of Accession on September 15 whereby the State was declared to have acceded to Pakistan. The Government of India refused to accept the accession of Junagadh to Pakistan in the circumstances in which it was made.

not yet realized that they are the trustees and representatives of the people. And it is also true that with the exception of the alert subjects of some States, the people of all States have not yet realized themselves as the true rulers of their States. But that does not diminish the value of the principle I have laid down.

Hence, only the people of a particular State have a legal right to accede to one of the Unions. If the Provisional Government does not represent the people of Junagadh at any stage, it is merely a group of people who are unjustly occupying seats of power in the State and it should be driven out by both the Dominions. If any ruler joins any of the Unions in his personal capacity, the Dominion cannot stand before the world to justify his action. From this point of view, I think that the Nawab's accession has been baseless from the very beginning till it is proved that the people of the State have given their consent to the accession by the Nawab. The dispute as to which Union Junagadh would finally accede to can be resolved only by taking public opinion, that is, by referendum. This task should be properly carried out and should not involve violence or show of violence. The stand taken by the Government of Pakistan and now also by the Prime Minister of Junagadh, has created a strange situation. Who was to decide whether Pakistan was in the right or the Union Government? One cannot even think that it can be decided by an appeal to the sword. The only honourable way is to decide the matter through arbitration. We can find many impartial individuals in the country itself but, if the parties concerned cannot agree to arbitration by Indians, I for one will have no objection to any impartial person from any part of the world.

Whatever I have said about Junagadh equally applies to Kashmir[1] and Hyderabad[2]. Neither the Maharaja of Kashmir nor the Nizam of Hyderabad has any authority to accede

[1] On October 23, some two thousand or more Afridis and other tribesmen entered the Kashmir State and indulged in loot, arson and murder. In view of the grave emergency prevailing in the State, Maharaja Harisingh of the Jammu and Kashmir State appealed to the Indian Union for military help and signed the Instrument of Accession on October 27.

[2] The Nizam wanted "Hyderabad to be an independent sovereign State" and refused to accede to the Dominion of India. After prolonged discussions between the Government of India and the Nizam, a delegation led by the Nawab of Chhatari, arrived at a draft standstill agreement on October 22. The Nizam, however, against the advice of his Council, dissolved the delegation and appointed a new one on October 29. *Vide* also "Fragment of A Letter", 26-11-1947.

to either Union without the consent of his people. As far as I know, this point was clarified in the case of Kashmir.[1] If it had been only the Maharaja who had wanted to accede to the Indian Union, I could never support such an act. The Union Government agreed to the accession for the time being because both the Maharaja and Sheikh Abdullah[2], who is the representative of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, wanted it. Sheikh Abdullah came forward because he claims to represent not only the Muslims but the entire masses in Kashmir.

I have heard people talking in whispers that Kashmir could be divided. Jammu would come to the Hindus and the Muslims would have Kashmir. I cannot even think of such divided loyalty and division of the Indian States into several parts. Hence, I hope that the whole of India would act sensibly and this ugly situation would be avoided soon at least for the sake of lakhs of Indians who have been compelled to become helpless refugees.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 66-9

9. *LETTER TO MORARJI DESAI*

November 12, 1947

BHAI MORARJI[3],

I am dictating this letter to you at 4 in the morning. Dr. Dinshaw and Jehangir Patel are at present with me. We sat together and came to the conclusion that Dr. Dinshaw should earn as much as he needs for his maintenance by charging fees for the nature-cure treatment he offers outside the Trust[4] formed in Poona. There was a time when we had thought of paying Dr. Dinshaw his maintenance allowance out of the Trust funds.

[1] The Government of India, while accepting the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India, had "made it clear to the Maharaja that, as soon as the invaders have been driven from the soil of Kashmir, the people of the State should decide the question of accession".

[2] Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah (1905-82), President, All-India States' People's Conference; President, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. After Kashmir's accession to the Indian Union he was sworn in Head of the Emergency Administration in Jammu and Kashmir on October 31, 1947.

[3] (b. 1896); Minister, Bombay, 1937-39 and 1946-51; Chief Minister of Bombay, 1952-56; Minister, Union Cabinet, 1956-58, 1958-62; Deputy Prime Minister, 1967-69; Prime Minister, 1977-79

[4] All-India Nature Cure Trust

But it was something Dr. Dinshaw could not bring himself to accept. Then it was thought that he should engage himself in some other occupation and earn enough for his maintenance. That also is not possible at present. He should therefore accept fees from the townspeople, offering them treatment in his own style and practise nature cure as he conceives it. He should do it either by expanding his own clinic which he runs in Bombay or with the assistance of the hospital unit at Purandar. From a broader point of view, between the two I would prefer Bombay to Purandar. Neither institution has a place for nature cure as I conceive it. It can be practised only with village background and nowhere but in a village. At the root of it lies the great question of changing individual life as well as social life. This Trust therefore must maintain its separate identity. If the treatment is meant for the townspeople it must have Government's aid, without which nowadays no accommodation can be had. In Bombay extra floors will be required where Dr. Dinshaw carries on his practice, or he will have to have another building to meet his requirements. The point is that you should offer Dr. Dinshaw the necessary accommodation in Purandar through a non-government source at a reasonable rent or cost without bestowing any special favour on him. The main consideration here could be nothing but service to the public. The rich can get nature-cure treatment also by paying for it. We can expect such accommodation for a person whom the Government regards as suitable. This letter will not be out of place if only the Government of Bombay could think about it from this point of view.

We trustees are considering a different plan for the site that belongs to Jagtap.[1] If we expect the Government to do anything about it I shall write to you some other time.

I cannot say from here how much land will be required either in Bombay or in Purandar or where it should be. I ought to have more information as well as understanding, neither of which I have. Hence only Dr. Dinshaw and Jehangir can discuss the matter with you. A similar letter for Dr. Dinshaw.

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

[1] *Vide* pp. 13-4.

10. LETTER TO JEHANGIR PATEL

November 12, 1947

CHI. JEHANGIR,

I have read your letter carefully.

Lack of fertilizers has nothing to do with the poverty of our soil. There is great divergence of opinion on inorganic manure. We waste a tremendous quantity of organic manure. It is all a question of the education of the growers, whether owners or not.

I have no doubt that food control is an unmixed evil and it should go.

About alcohol, we must discuss the subject again when we meet. For the time being do not write anything for publication.

Do return if you can with Dinshaw and we shall discuss many things.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

11. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 12, 1947

Today is Diwali day; but the nation has gone bankrupt. . . .[1] Let us pray to God that people may see true light. The situation is tense here. Order cannot be maintained without the police or the army. Murders and shootings have become common occurrences. Let us see what I can do.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 262

[1] Omission as in the source

12. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 12, 1947

Shamaldas has, true to his nature, behaved like a Nawab. Even this does not please me. But no one need worry whether I am pleased or displeased; nor should anyone care. Ultimately, everyone has to rely on his own strength. Therein lies the true success of democracy.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 262

13. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 12, 1947

I appreciate your desire to get your daughter admitted to the Ashram. Only bear in mind that I am not there. But what of that? Many others are there. Ashadevi Aryanayakum[1] is there. Kishorelal does not stay there these days. She should study the complete course under Nayee Talim; also all processes associated with khadi. She should learn Hindi and Sanskrit well. If she learns all these subjects with a steady mind, she will become an expert in my view. And she can teach me many things if I am still alive at that time.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 262

[1] Wife of E. W. Aryanayakum; Joint-Secretary of Hindustani Talimi Sangh; Editor of *Nayee Talim*, an organ of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh

14. LETTER TO D. B. JAGTAP

November 12, 1947

BHAI JAGTAP,

I had your letter. Your complaint about this letter of Dr. Dinshaw should be regarded as directed against me. If you have been at all humiliated it is my fault, although it could never have been my intention, for the language in Dr. Dinshaw's letter is mine. Won't you please now forget the matter? Dr. Dinshaw and Jehangir Patel have been here for the last four-five days. I had long discussions with them. On the basis of that I am of opinion that if you wish to reject the Trust Deed you can do so now, you can also remove the Sanatorium. It will not involve any legal procedure or even arbitration. You may, if you want, make some addition to the present list of Dr. Dinshaw or have a talk with him. I can only say that if you want the Trust to stay you should donate to the Trust the land which I was occupying and where the patients were being treated. This should also include the rear portion which was being used for the labourers. The place is not to be used for producing anything but only to be developed in case we have to accommodate a few people there for the sake of some patients. The rest of the land should be returned to you. Then it cannot have the Sanatorium either. It means that apart from the land and building I have asked for, you will use the portion which you are now occupying and which is included in the schedule. When I am free myself from the work here, the other trustees and I can live on the premises donated to the Trust. Dinshaw, his wife, mother and such other relatives as can be accommodated on the premises can live there; the Trust has recognized their right to reside on the premises. Jehangir says you have another complaint that Dr. Dinshaw does not at all intend to let me be your guest. This is not correct. If my suggestion is accepted, even if I stay in the house donated by you, I shall still be your guest because, if you wish, arrangements for goat's milk, etc., will be made by you. Goats, etc., cannot be kept on the premises I expect from you. I may say one more thing, namely, that you are going to lose nothing by your donation to the Trust. Dr. Dinshaw has invested more than a

lakh in your property. He has also spent a substantial sum on the construction of bathrooms and a steamhouse, etc., on the premises I am asking for. If you take all the land these expensive additions will be of no use to you. Now you may do whatever you think proper. You can have a further talk in this connection with Dr. Dinshaw and Jehangir.

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

15. A LETTER

November 12, 1947

I don't know how long I shall have to stay here. Take it that I have to 'do or die'. I have no middle course.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 262

16. TALK WITH MUSLIM STUDENTS

NEW DELHI,
November 12, 1947

Truly speaking, there should not be too many student organizations. There should be one students' body, and differences of caste and creed should have no place in it. In the present critical situation the Muslim students and youths, if they make up their minds, can render great service. You should say, 'We are of course Muslims. You may not trust us. Still we entreat you to trust us for the moment and accept our services.' If your hearts are pure and if you would serve India, there can be no better service than this at the present juncture.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 263

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17. BROADCAST TO REFUGEES AT KURUKSHETRA CAMP[1]

November 12, 1947

MY SUFFERING BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I do not know if it is only you or whether others too are listening in to me today.[2] This is only my second experience at the radio. My first was many years ago[3] when I was in London for the Round Table Conference. Though I am speaking from the Broadcasting House, I am not interested in such talks. To suffer with the afflicted and try to relieve their suffering has been my life's work. I hope, therefore, that you will accept this talk in that light.

I was distressed when I heard that over two lakhs of refugees had arrived at Kurukshetra and more were pouring in. The moment the news came to me, I longed to be with you but I could not get away at once from Delhi because the Congress Working Committee meetings were being held and my presence was required. Seth Ghanshyamdas Birla suggested that I should broadcast a message to you and hence this talk.

Quite by accident, Gen. Nathusingh who has organized the Kurukshetra Camp came to see me two days ago and told me about your sufferings. The Central Government asked the military to take over the organization of your Camp, not because they wanted to coerce you in any way, but simply because the military are used to doing such organization and know how to do so efficiently.

Those who suffer know their sufferings best of all. Yours is not an ordinary camp where it is possible for everyone to know each other. Yours is really a city and your only bond with your co-refugees is your suffering.

I was sorry to learn that there is not that co-operation with authority or with your neighbours that there ought to be in order to make the Camp a success. I can serve you best by drawing attention to your shortcomings. That has been my life's

[1] As Gandhiji was escorted to the studio he remarked: "You can regard me as an almost uncivilized person and tutor me about my talk." Gandhiji spoke in Hindustani.

[2] The following two sentences are reproduced from *The Hindustan Times*.

[3] On September 13, 1931. *Vide* Vol. XLVIII, pp. 8-10.

motto, for therein lies true friendship and my service is not only for you or India; it extends to the world, for I know no barriers of race or creed. If you can get rid of your failings, you will benefit not only yourselves but the whole of India.

It pains me to know that many of you are without shelter. This is a real hardship, particularly in the cold weather which is severe in the Punjab, and it is increasing daily. Your Government is trying to do everything it can for you. The burden is heaviest, of course, on your Prime Minister[1]. The Health Department which is served by Rajkumari[2] and Dr. Jivraj Mehta[3] is also working very hard to lighten your sufferings. No other government could have done better in this crisis. The calamity is immense and the Government too have its limitations. But it is up to you to face your sufferings with as much fortitude and patience as you can summon to your aid and as cheerfully as you can.

Today is Diwali. But there can be no lighting of *chirags*[4] for you or for anyone. Our Diwali will be best celebrated by service of you and you will celebrate it by living in your Camp as brothers and looking upon everyone as your own. If you will do that you will come through victorious.

The General told me of all that still needed to be done in Kurukshetra. He told me that no more refugees should be sent there. It seems as if there was no proper screening of refugees and it is hard to understand why they come and are dumped in various places without proper intimation to the local authority. In my post-prayer speech last evening I criticized the East Punjab Government for this state of affairs. I have just had a letter from one of their ministers to say that the fault is not theirs but the Central Government is responsible for it.

Now that all governments, whether central or provincial, belong to the people, it does not befit one to throw the blame on the other. All must work together for the general good. I tell you this in order that you may realize your own responsibility also.

You must help in the maintenance of discipline in the Camp. You must take the sanitation of the place in your hands. I have

[1] Jawaharlal Nehru

[2] Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Minister for Health in the Union Cabinet

[3] Gandhiji's personal physician; Director-General of Health Services, Government of India, 1947; Dewan of Baroda, 1948-49; Minister of Public Works in Bombay, 1952, and later of Finance; Chief Minister of Gujarat, 1960-63; High Commissioner in London, 1963-66

[4] Earthen lamps

known the Punjab well since the Martial Law days[1]. I know the good qualities and failings of the Punjabis. One of them, and that is not confined to the Punjab alone, is the utter lack of knowledge of social hygiene and sanitation. Therefore it is that I have often said that we must all become Harijans. If we do, we shall grow in stature. I ask you, therefore, to help your doctors and your Camp officials—every one of you, men, women and even children—to keep Kurukshetra clean.

The next thing I want to ask you to do is to share your rations. Be content with what you get. Do not take or demand more than your share. Community kitchens are a thing which should be cultivated. In this way too you can serve each other.

I must also draw your attention to the danger of refugees getting accustomed to eating the bread of idleness. They are apt to think that it is Government's duty to do everything for them. Government's duty is certainly there but that does not mean that your own duty ceases. You must live for others and not only for yourselves. Idleness is demoralizing for everyone and it will certainly not help us successfully to get over this crisis.

A sister from Goa came to see me the other day and I was delighted to learn from her that many women in your Camp are anxious to spin. It is good to have the desire to do creative work which helps. You must all refuse to be a burden on the State. You must be as sugar is to milk. You will become one with your surroundings and thus help to share with your Government the burden that has fallen on them. All camps should really be self-supporting but perhaps that may be too high an ideal to place before you today. All the same I do ask you not to despise any work but rejoice in doing anything that comes your way in order to serve and thus make Kurukshetra an ideal place.

The response to my appeal for warm clothing and quilts and blankets[2] has been very good. People have responded well to the Sardar's[3] appeal too. Your share of these is also there. But if you quarrel among yourselves and some take more than their due, it will not be well with you. Your suffering is grave even now but wrong action will make it even worse.

Finally, I am not one of those who believe that you who have left your lands and homes in Pakistan have been uprooted

[1] In April-May 1919

[2] *Vide* Vol. LXXXIX, pp. 283-5.

[3] Vallabhbhai Patel, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister-in-charge, Home, States and Information and Broadcasting

from there for all time. Nor do I believe that such will be the case with the thousands of Muslims who have been obliged to leave India. I for one shall not rest content and will do all that lies in my power to see that all are reinstated and are able to return with honour and safety from where they have today been driven out. I shall continue as long as I live to work for this end. The dead cannot be brought back to life, but we can work for those who are alive. If we do not do so it will be an eternal blot on both India and Pakistan and therein will lie ruin for both of us.

Harijan, 23-11-1947. Also *The Hindustan Times*, 14-11-1947

18. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 12, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today is Diwali and I congratulate all of you on the occasion. It is a great day in the Hindu calendar. According to the *Vikram Samvat*, New Year begins tomorrow on Thursday[1]. You must understand why Diwali is celebrated every year with illuminations. In the great battle between Rama and Ravana, Rama symbolized the forces of good and Ravana the forces of evil. Rama conquered Ravana and this victory established Ramarajya in India.

But alas! Today there is no Ramarajya in India. So how can we celebrate Diwali? Only those who have Rama within can celebrate this victory. For, God alone can illumine our souls and only that light is real light. The *bhajan*[2] that was sung today emphasizes the poet's[3] desire to see God. Crowds of people go to see artificial illumination but what we need today is the light of love in our hearts. We must kindle the light of love within. Then only would we deserve congratulations. Today thousands are in acute distress. Can you, everyone of you, lay your hand on your heart and say that every sufferer, whether Hindu, Sikh or Muslim, is your own brother or sister? This is the test for you. Rama and Ravana are symbols of the unending struggle between the forces of good and evil. True light comes from within.

With what a sad heart has Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru returned after seeing wounded Kashmir! He was unable to attend the

[1] According to the Gujarati calendar

[2] "Light thy heart and sweep out from there evil thoughts and anger." *Vide* Vol. XLIV, p. 463, hymn 251.

[3] Ranchhod

Working Committee meeting yesterday and also this afternoon. He has brought some flowers from Baramula[1] for me. I always cherish such gifts of nature. But today loot, arson and bloodshed have spoiled the beauty of that lovely land. Jawaharlal had been to Jammu also. There too all is not well.

Sardar Patel had to go to Junagadh at the request of Shri Shamaldas Gandhi and Dhebarbhai[2] who had sought his advice. Both Jinnah and Bhutto are angry because they feel that the Indian Government has deceived them and is pressing Junagadh to accede to the Union.

It is the duty of everyone to banish hatred and suspicion from his heart in order to establish peace and goodwill in the country. If you do not feel the presence of God within you and do not forget your petty internal quarrels, success in Kashmir or Junagadh would prove futile. Diwali cannot be celebrated till you bring back all the Muslims who have fled in fear. Pakistan also would not survive if it does not do likewise with the Hindus and Sikhs who have run away from there.[3]

Tomorrow I shall tell you what I can about the Congress Working Committee. May you and all India be happy in the new year which begins on Thursday. May God illumine your hearts so that you can serve not only each other or India but the whole world.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 69-71

[1] After a brutal attack by the raiders the town was recaptured by the Indian troops.

[2] U. N. Dhebar (1905-77); organized Rajkot Mill Kamdar Mazdoor Sangh; Minister of Saurashtra, 1948, President, Indian National Congress, 1955-59; Chairman, Scheduled Tribe Areas Commission, 1960; elected to Lok Sabha, 1962; President of Bharatiya Adim Jati Sangh, 1962-64

[3] Gandhiji then referred to his visit to the Broadcasting House.

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19. LETTER TO MANIBHAI B. DESAI

NEW DELHI,
November 12, 1947

CHI. MANIBHAI,

I have your letter of the 5th. I had a long discussion with Dr. Dinshaw and Jehangir Patel.

I am glad that the inauguration is to be done by Kakasaheb[1].

Tell all the friends at Uruli that I am both happy and sorry that I shall not be able to attend the function. I am happy because the work I am doing here is also, according to me, part of the work that is being done at Uruli; for, the nature cure of my conception includes treatment of both body and mind. If we look at the matter from that point of view, curing the people here of their psychological perversion is bound to have an effect in Uruli also and would serve as a fine illustration of nature cure.

I am not sorry that Gokhale and Paramanand have left. It will be enough if Dr. Bhagwat[2] stays on. I should be glad if Dhiru clings to the institution till the end and observes all the rules, too. But I will be satisfied if at least Balkoba[3] and you[4] remain. That is, I should be very pleased even if you alone decide to dedicate your life to Uruli. By and by you will find other workers from the local population. I should think it a disgrace to have to import workers from outside. It would mean failure of nature cure.

The present heavy burden on you will not last. You should admit only as many patients as you can easily look after. If you can persuade some young men there to volunteer their services, you can train them. You will need a woman worker from outside. By yourself, you will not be able to attract any woman worker from among the local people. Let us see what the future brings.

The division into nature cure, village uplift work and Ashram life seems all right to me. But from the point of view of nature

[1] D. B. Kalelkar (1885-1981); educationist, litterateur and a close associate of Gandhiji; Vice-Chancellor of Gujarat Vidyapith, 1928-36; President, Hindustani Prachar Sabha

[2] Dr. A. K. Bhagwat

[3] Balkrishna Bhave, younger brother of Vinoba Bhave

[4] The addressee was manager of the Nature Cure Clinic at Uruli Kanchan

cure the three are indivisible. When you develop nature cure to its highest potential, it will include village uplift work also. And I cannot conceive of nature cure for village people which does not imply the Ashram ideal of life. If you start cultivation work through the institution itself and with the help of paid labourers, I think you will have to repent it in the end. But notwithstanding this view of mine, I shall accept what all of you decide to do after careful thinking.

Since Bhansali[1] sees a flaw in the offer of the donation, I would prefer to decline it. It seems pointless to me to accept the thing on a ninety-nine-year lease.

Jehangir told me about everybody.

I have already tried to explain why we should prefer cows to buffaloes. If Balkrishna cannot collect the required amount, forget about that scheme. The matter is not worth worrying about at all. I shall be able to say more after I know the final outcome.

It would be best, of course, if Premabehn[2] undertakes some work there on behalf of the Kasturba Memorial Fund. But we can assume no financial liability for such work. You may permit her to do what she can within the limits of the Kasturba Fund.

Do not entertain any hope of being able to get an expert on nature cure from outside. Acquire whatever knowledge you yourself can. If Dhiru stays there, he also should become proficient in it. He already knows a little.

If you get any nature-cure expert who does not agree to abide by the Ashram rules, I will not accept him as suitable for our purpose. I will write to Dr. Bhagwat afterwards, as also to Balkrishna.

I am dictating this at night. I must not overexert myself now.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C. W. 2723. Courtesy : Manibhai B. Desai

[1] Jayakrishna P. Bhansali

[2] Prema Kantak, Agent of Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust Maharashtra

20. NO INCONSISTENCY

A subscriber to the *Harijan* presents as follows what appears to him to be a conundrum to which I have sent the following reply :

> The other day you admitted[1] that you had not seen God face to face. In the Preface[2] to *My Experiments with Truth* you have stated that you have seen God in the embodiment of Truth from a far distance. The two statements appear to be incompatible. Kindly elucidate for proper understanding.

There is a big gulf between 'seeing God face to face' and 'seeing Him in the embodiment of Truth from a far distance'. In my opinion the two statements are not only not incompatible but each explains the other. We see the Himalayas from a very great distance and when we are on the top we have seen the Himalayas face to face. Millions can see them from hundreds of miles away if they are within the range of that seeing distance, but few having arrived at the top after years of travel see them face to face. This does not seem to need elucidation in the columns of the *Harijan*. Nevertheless, I send your letter and my reply for publication in the *Harijan*, lest there may be some like you who think that there is any inconsistency between the two statements quoted by you.

November 13, 1947
Harijan, 23-11-1947

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXXVIII, p. 407.
[2] *Vide* Vol. XXXIX, pp. 1-5.

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21. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 13, 1947

The New Year commences from today. Of course you have my blessings. But it would seem my blessings have no value these days. May God grant us new strength and wisdom so that we may overcome our present madness.

What shall I write about language? My view is clear, namely, the national language should be such as can be spoken by millions of our countrymen. But we behave, knowingly or unknowingly, as if it was our birthright to oppose and contest every issue. As a result, we are able to achieve nothing. Though I do like to face such difficulties and am able to overcome them also, have you ever considered how much of our energy and time is wasted over this? Often a person who raises opposition is considered to be a leader and, therefore, those who aspire to become leaders oppose things. But we are what we are and we have to find a way out of the existing difficulties.

"The path is surrounded by thick darkness; will that arrest your step?"[1]

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 270

22. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 13, 1947

. . .[2] The restoration of peace in Calcutta was due to the Muslims there and the credit should go to them.[3] Suhrawardy and his co-workers had helped me there. The situation in Delhi is quite different. Here I don't find a single responsible Muslim who can approach the Hindus, if only to die, or whose

[1] A Bengali song by Rabindranath Tagore

[2] Omission as in the source

[3] At the instance of Muslim friends Gandhiji had prolonged his stay in Calcutta in August, 1947. He stayed with H. S. Suhrawardy, the ex-Chief Minister of Bengal, under a Muslim roof in a disturbed area and they went round together to establish harmony between the two communities. *Vide* also Vol. LXXXIX, p. 116.

word weighs with the Muslims. Maulana Saheb[1] and the nationalist Muslims have also lost this strength. Hence my work here is much more difficult than it was in Calcutta. I am doubtful whether I shall fulfil my vow of doing something here. But my other vow, that of dying, will certainly be fulfilled. For that I have not the least worry. May God take from me whatever work He intends me to do.

If all of you stay there and carry on constructive work, it will certainly have its impact. We had recognized the need for constructive work when we were slaves. We will need it many times more to transform swaraj into *surajya*[2]. Let not anyone think that the 18-point programme[3] is of no use now that we have attained freedom.

Today is the New Year day. May God light our path and cleanse our impure hearts.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 271

23. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 13, 1947

I have your letter. I was very much pained to read it. . . .[4] Where are we going today? What is happening to us? I fail to understand why we think or say that we should not have a single Muslim in our country. If that happens, let me tell you that you will once again be slaves. I intentionally write "you" because I do not wish to see slavery again. I hope God will take me away before such a day comes.

Today is our New Year day. May God grant good sense to all of us and guide us on the right path.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 270-1

[1] Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958); President, All-India Khilafat Committee, 1920; President of Unity Conference (Delhi), 1924; President, Indian National Congress, 1923 and 1940-46; Minister for Education in the Union Cabinet

[2] Good government

[3] For Gandhiji's booklet on the Constructive Programme, *vide* Vol. LXXV, pp. 146-66.

[4] Omission as in the source

24. TALK WITH DAHYABHAI AND YASHODA PATEL[1]

NEW DELHI,
November 13, 1947

I do not wish to be sarcastic but this language slavery has gone so deep that one begins to wonder. When even Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's daughter-in-law, who, poor thing, certainly does not know much English, is so obsessed with teaching her son English words, what am I to say of others? It makes me unhappy. If mothers could solve this question of language we could be free of English and develop the national language. Without doubt English is a very rich and beautiful language. And if one learns it or teaches it out of love for it I should have no objection. But thus to impose words on an innocent child is nothing but an instance of our deep-rooted and incurable slavery.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 272-3

25. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 13, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Yesterday was Diwali and today is the New Year. I have heard and I heard it all the more yesterday that Delhi has great illuminations on Diwali day which perhaps beat even the illuminations in Bombay. There are magnificent illuminations in Bombay every year. I was pleased to hear that people had realized that this is not the time to celebrate Diwali. But the superstition still persists that there should be at least some lights on Diwali day. Hence, oil lamps were seen at some places. There were some electric lights, too, though very few. I do not go out but I get all the information.

[1] They had come to Gandhiji with their little son. On Gandhiji's offering him a piece of bread the mother insisted that the child should say 'thank you'.

The new year begins today. I had already mentioned it yesterday, but I may as well refer to it again. On New Year day we make some pious resolutions and by the grace of God try to follow them all through the year. If we do this, and if the atmosphere prevailing today changes and the Hindus and Muslims live together in amity, we shall have a right to celebrate the next Diwali with illuminations. We can accomplish nothing by regarding one another as enemies. That is why I stressed that this is no occasion for an outward celebration of Diwali. We should try to illumine our hearts. Rama resides in our hearts and there is a continuous battle between Rama and Ravana raging inside us. If, in our hearts and not outside, Ravana triumphs over Rama, it means that there is no light but darkness in our hearts. If, instead, it is Rama who triumphs over Ravana, then there is indeed light in our hearts and this entitles us to have illuminations outside as well. Hence, all is well if the light outside is the symbol of the light within. Instead, if there is darkness in our hearts and we have illuminations outside and try to convince ourselves that everything is fine, we are hypocrites and liars. I only hope that we are never untruthful.

I told you yesterday that I would say something about the meetings of Congress Working Committee. There was no time yesterday because I did not want to take more than fifteen minutes. Today is the third day of the Congress Working Committee meeting. It is still in session. One important thing that I am entitled to tell you is that the members of the Working Committee and others[1] who have been specially invited by Acharya Kripalani[2] have been sitting together in the meetings for the last three days. It is a good thing that they are unanimously of the opinion that it has been the policy of the Congress since its inception, that is, for the last sixty years, that Congress is not an institution that propagates any particular religion. There are people of all religions in the Congress or, say, because it belongs to people of different religions, it does not belong to any one particular religion. It is an organization of the masses and it has

[1] The special invitees to the Congress Working Committee meeting were: B. G. Kher, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, S. K. Patil, Jayaprakash Narayan, Kamaraj Nadar, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Prof. N. G. Ranga.

[2] J. B. Kripalani (1888-1982); Principal, Gujarat Vidyapith, 1920-27, General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, 1934-45; its President, 1946-47; Member, Constituent Assembly; started the Krishak Mazdoor Praja Party which later merged into the Praja Socialist Party; resigned from the Praja Socialist Party in 1954

to function only for political goals. It does not remain a religious body if it functions that way. Supposing one of the policies of the Congress is to provide food to all the people, to be true to its name it must provide food for everybody. If the Congress provides food only to those who are with it or, say, only to the Hindus and the Sikhs because they are in a majority and allows others to starve and says that it is not bothered about them, it would be a religious body superficially but in fact it would become an irreligious organization. If it advocates service of only those who are its followers and wants others to be killed, it would not be dharma, but *adharma*[1] in the name of dharma.

If I am a worshipper of Rama and do not worship any god, the law cannot force me to do so. It is another matter if I act against my faith or become a coward and say that a particular man is carrying a sword and that if I do not obey him he would kill me. But, if I am not a coward, when I am forced to worship Allah instead of Rama, I should have, and I have, a right to insist that I would worship only Rama and not Allah. All that the other person can do is to cut my throat. Let him do so. Then it is a matter of faith, which we call personal or individual dharma. There is no power on earth which can destroy one's personal dharma. Of course, it can be destroyed when the individual himself wants to do it, or when, instead of light, there is only darkness in one's heart. In such circumstances, when he cannot make up his mind he takes help from someone or just follows the bidding of some other person because he is surrounded by darkness. But the person who is steadfast in his faith would listen to the command only of God and none else. Likewise, when an organization functions for the welfare of the people, only the things which are consistent with dharma apply to everybody and nothing else. And in this way it embodies dharma and not *adharma*. That, in my view, is the true meaning of politics and the Congress has followed this from the time of its inception. You should be happy that it is so, whether you belong to the Congress or not. Even I do not belong to the Congress. But so what? After all, I have been a Congress worker and have served it. What does it matter if I do not pay four annas for membership? I must pay the membership fee of four annas if I want to be its President. But that is not the question. If all of you think like me, it is really remarkable. It is good if you have registered yourselves as Congress members. It

[1] Contrary to dharma

is well, too, if you are serving the Congress from outside. I have been sitting with the Congress Working Committee for the past three days. There are many differences of opinion in the Working Committee. The members are human beings after all, they are not stones. One member says one thing and another member says something else. There may be differences of opinion, but there should be no contradiction in behaviour. That is why they spent three days in discussing these differences. But they are all united about one thing, that is, that the Congress should continue to be what it has been so far. If in the process it has to perish, let it perish. Of course it cannot be completely wiped out, though it can remain in minority. And I doubt if it is in majority at present. For there should have been no Pakistan if the Congress were in majority. I can quote many instances to show how much the Muslims have been oppressed in India. But what should I say? You know more than I do. Have the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan been oppressed less? But let us not talk about it. It is not for us to think of those things. Should I stop following my religion because others in the world do not adhere to theirs? That is why the Congress, whether it is in majority or minority, must adhere to its original objective. It is framing its resolutions from that point of view. It wants to present its views in a straightforward, sincere manner. What can be more straightforward than that we do not wish to compel a single Muslim to go away from here? The point is not whether the Muslims are good or bad. Can we claim that only angels have a right to live in India, and, if not angels, only good people can remain here? And, if only the good people can live here, are there no bad or wicked people among the Hindus and the Sikhs? And if there are wicked people among them, what would you say to them? Would you order them to leave and threaten to cut their throats with a sword if they refused to oblige? You have no right to consider anybody wicked or to kill him. We have committed excesses against the Muslims. There may be some exaggeration in the reports I receive every day. But ultimately I find that there is truth in those reports. When anything is done in the name of the Congress, the A. I. C. C. has to be summoned. The plenary session of the Congress is held once a year. It is like a big show and because there is such a big crowd nobody can even think clearly. But they know that the A. I. C. C. carries on its work with due deliberation and so they put their seal on what it does. Thus the A. I. C. C. is always on

the alert. It is going to meet the day after tomorrow. It is the Working Committee which has to place the agenda before the A. I. C. C. It is subservient to the A. I. C. C. If the Working Committee does not place the agenda before it, then the A. I. C. C. can say that they have not functioned well and the members of the Working Committee have to resign. The A. I. C. C. can form the Working Committee or terminate it. If the A. I. C. C. does not accept its proposals or makes great amendments to those proposals, then also it should resign. That is why the Working Committee says that it wants to do everything in the name of the A. I. C. C. If it does anything in its own name, it does not have the same effect. For, what is the use of 15 individuals proclaiming that not a single Muslim should be killed? If the same thing is done in the name of the A. I. C. C., its effect is much greater. That is why I have been advising the Congress Working Committee for the past three days that it should categorically state that this is the only thing it wishes to carry out. Let us not worry if this pleases the people or displeases them. If we are true servants of the Congress, then this is the only thing we have to do. Let the A. I. C. C. brush it aside if it so wishes. After all we, and also Pakistan, have to stand before the world. We do many things because we are worried about what the world may say. I would say that you should do only what you think is correct. Then the world too would regard it as correct. It is said that the word of the *Panch*[1] is like the word of God. The world is like the *Panch*. That is why what the world says is divine justice in the true sense.

The Working Committee is in session today. It would be meeting again tomorrow. It is my prayer that it should place before the A. I. C. C. such a resolution which would bring victory to India and everybody would be able to live in peace here. It does not mean that we should let the traitors do as they please. But we should not take it for granted that a particular person is a traitor. If someone is proved to be a traitor, you may kill him, hang him, shoot him. But if you say that no Muslim can ever be loyal or that only the Hindus and the Sikhs have a monopoly of loyalty, then I would say that it would be a grave thing. I am confident that the Congress would never do such a thing. You must also pray that through the advice of the Congress we and the whole country as well as other parts of the world rise high. The Congress is meant only to raise

[1] Elected members of a village panchayat; also, an arbitrator

the country high. But the Congress does not wish to raise itself by depriving anybody of his wealth or other property. The Congress would die for the sake of the whole world, but would not kill anyone. This has been the objective of the Congress, not since I entered it, but for many years. The Congress has tried to prevent the Europeans who come here from looting the country, so that people of Asia and Africa could live in peace. India has to remain alive for this purpose. It is for this that India has attained her independence and for no other purpose.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan— II, pp. 71-7

26. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,
November 14, 1947

For the last few days meetings of the Working Committee have been going on. Its resolutions, I am sure, will be good. How far they will be put into practice God only knows. My suggestion is that, in so far as the Congress was intended solely to achieve swaraj and that purpose has been gained—personally I do not think that what we have gained is swaraj but at least it is so in name—this organization should be wound up and we should put to use all the energies of the country. In this way we shall be able to do a great deal. For instance, Jayaprakash[1] has immense energy. But he does not come forward because of party considerations. I therefore feel that if the country can get the benefit of whatever energy each one of us has, it will prosper.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 278

[1] Jayaprakash Narayan (1902-79); one of the founders of the All-India Congress Socialist Party; member, Congress Working Committee, 1936; leading member of the Socialist Party and the Praja Socialist Party; joined the Bhoodan and the Sarvodaya movements

27. *FRAGMENT OF A LETTER*

November 14, 1947

. . .[1] In no other country are widows insulted as much as they are in our country. But I place widows in the category of spiritual *rishis*. I do not have the least hesitation in advising you and other sisters to organize yourselves and see that if widows are not allowed to be present on auspicious occasions, or if restrictions are imposed on their diet or dress, the same rules apply to widowers. It is another matter if a wife voluntarily makes a sacrifice on the death of her husband. But I have no doubt that the rigidity of social customs and conventions must be broken.

I am keeping well. I am dictating this letter to Chi. Manu. I am lying under a covering because it is cold. It is now 5.30 a. m. I snatch a nap while dictating letters. The work in Delhi is arduous. God will do what He chooses. Why should we worry over it? However, I think some untoward events are taking place. I expect you will understand a lot from these few words. A word is enough for the wise.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 278-9

[1] Omission as in the source

28. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 14, 1947

I have no doubt at all that so long as prominent people do not propagate Hindustani, it will decline. That means that our culture will die. It is our misfortune that these days in our homes father and son and brothers and sisters speak only English. Not even their own mother tongue! When the ocean is on fire who can put out the fire?

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 279

29. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 14, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

When I was on fast[1] in the Aga Khan Palace which was turned into a jail to imprison me, Sarojini Devi[2], Mirabehn[3] and Mahadevbhai[4], this *bhajan*[5] had captured me. Here I do not wish to go into the causes of the fast.

I would like to mention only one thing in that connection, and it is that I survived for 21 days not because of the amount of water I used to drink, or the orange juice which I took for some days, or the extraordinary medical care, but because I had installed in my heart God whom I call Rama. I was so much attracted by the lines of this *bhajan* that I instructed the persons concerned to send me the correct words by

[1] From February 10 to March 3, 1943; *vide* Vol. LXXVII.

[2] Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949); poetess and orator; President of the Indian National Congress in 1925; Governor of U. P., 1947-49

[3] *Nee* Madeleine Slade; joined Gandhiji in 1925

[4] Mahadev Desai (1892-1942); Gandhiji's private secretary from 1917 till his death on August 15, 1942

[5] और नहीं कछु कामके, मैं भरोसे अपने रामके। "I depend solely on my Rama, all others are of no avail," a *bhajan* by Tulsidas

telegram, as I had forgotten those words at the time. I was very happy when I received the whole *bhajan* by reply telegram. The essence of the *bhajan* is that Ramanama is everything and other gods count for nothing compared to Him. I am mentioning this instructive episode in my life because I want the A. I. C. C. members to think and deliberate with God in their hearts when they meet for the important session on Saturday. They will have to do so because they are representatives of all Congressmen. Hence, if the leading Congressmen have Satan instead of God in their hearts they are not true to their salt.

The Working Committee discussed for full three hours the resolutions to be placed before the A. I. C. C. During the discussion the question arose as to how the Hindu and the Sikh refugees could be honourably and safely sent back to their homes in West Punjab. They came to the conclusion that the trouble started from the Pakistan side, but they also realized that when the wrong was copied on such a large scale and when the Hindus and the Sikhs resorted to acts of retaliation in East Punjab and the adjoining areas of the Union, the question of where the trouble started became insignificant. If the A. I. C. C. could claim with confidence that so far as the Indian Union was concerned, the days of madness were over and sanity reigned from one end of the Union to the other, the Committee could also say that the Dominion of Pakistan would be obliged to call back the Hindu and Sikh refugees with honour and safety. Such a situation can be created only when all Hindus and Sikhs install Rama in their hearts instead of Ravana. For, when you drive Satan out of your hearts and give up the present madness, every Muslim child will be able to move about with as much freedom as a Hindu or a Sikh child. Then, I have no doubt, the Muslim refugees who have left their homes under duress will gladly come over and the way will be cleared for the honourable and safe return of the Hindu and Sikh refugees to Pakistan.

Will my words have an echo in your hearts and will the A. I. C. C. be able to come to a wise and just conclusion?

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 78-9

30. MESSAGE TO STUDENTS' PEACE CONFERENCE[1]

NEW DELHI,
[On or before *November 15, 1947*][2]

An auspicious deed needs no blessings, for it is ever blessed.

The Hindustan Times, 16-11-1947

31. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

November 15, 1947

I know that I cannot realize Truth if I get impatient. That in the judgment of the world I may seem to have overcome my ego is of little consequence. And if that belief is not true, my realization of ahimsa and truth is imperfect. Then the argument about the success of ahimsa does not arise at all. Where ahimsa is perfect, there can be no failure. One must, therefore, conclude that whenever ahimsa is found to have failed, that ahimsa cannot be perfect. Who is qualified to pass judgment as to its success or failure is of course another matter. I myself cannot see the traces of ego and impatience that may be lurking within me. Only other people can observe them to some extent. But God alone sees the whole truth. I should not give the slightest impression, either, that I rebuke the Hindus more than the Muslims.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 221

[1] & [2] The Conference began at Agra on November 15.

CWMG-XC

32. *FRAGMENT OF A LETTER*

November 15, 1947

I find that God keeps me wide awake these days. How grateful I am! I often think how blind I was years ago; or was it that God had deliberately made me blind? If I say that, however, I think I would be trying to avoid blame in a subtle way; hence only the first half of the previous sentence is correct. You are a student of the Vedas and the Shastras and therefore, I presume, you will understand what I mean.

Recently there was an incident. I have with me two young girls. They are almost of the same age; but not of equal education. One of them, it may be said, was brought up by me at Aga Khan Palace since her childhood. She is my granddaughter. The other . . .[1] is also a close relation. I have put Chi. Manu to various tests in Noakhali. She is younger than . . . by one year. It must be said that by now Chi. Manu has learnt a good many things. But I have not been able to impress even the importance of prayer on . . . It is more desirable that we accept her as she is, rather than that I should forcibly wake her up or make her do things that please me. I therefore indulge her. But I have to look into my own heart to ascertain whether it is awake or sleeping. You must have seen my speech of yesterday. I do not think it will produce any effect. When a girl like . . . cannot see the importance of prayer, how can people understand what I said? God will do what He pleases. I consider it a good omen that my faith is growing every day. I hope you take good care of your health. You have still to do much work. And you must aspire to live for 150 years. How is nature cure progressing? I must do or die here. So there is no middle path.

Blessings to all.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 284-5

[1] The name has been omitted in the source.

33. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 15, 1947

. . .[1] I must admit that there are differences of opinion between the two. . . .[2] No one can have any objection to mere differences of opinion. But it is bad when personal relations become strained on account of that. I am trying to make them see this. Not that what I say will be of any avail. And though I know all this, still I have to do or die in Delhi.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 286

34. LETTER TO CHANDRANI

NEW DELHI,
November 15, 1947

CHI. CHAND,

What a girl you are! Dev[3] arrived here only today; he will leave after two or three days' stay here. Your mother must have reached there.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] & [2] Omissions as in the source
[3] Dev Prakash Nayyar

CWMG - XC

35. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 15, 1947

The more I look within the more I feel that God is with me. He does not have two hands and two feet. My God is Formless and Faultless and it is He who is giving me strength. These days the Working Committee meeting is going on and I am doing some plain speaking with them. We shall perish if we become cowards, that is, the Congress will die. I have no doubt about this.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 285-6

36. SPEECH AT A. I. C. C. MEETING

November 15, 1947

I have come in your midst today. I came to Delhi[1] not to stay for long, but since my arrival many things have happened which should not have happened. And so I have had to prolong my stay here instead of proceeding to the Punjab. This explains my presence in your midst today.

I had made a vow to do or die. When the occasion comes I shall indeed either do or die. I have seen enough to realize that though not all of us have gone mad, a sufficiently large number have lost their heads. What is responsible for this wave of insanity? Whatever the cause, it is obvious to me that if we do not cure ourselves of this insanity, we shall lose the freedom we have won. You must understand and recognize the gravity of the plight we are in. Under the shadow of this impending misfortune the A. I. C. C. has met today. You have to face very serious problems and apply your minds to them.

There is the General Body of the Congress which meets once every year, but it is more or less demonstrative in character. The real Congress is the All-India Congress Committee, in whose keeping is the honour of the Congress. It is for you to give a lead

[1] On September 9

to the Congress and to see that it functions effectively and without any disruption within its ranks. That is why I want you to be true to the basic character of the Congress and make Hindus and Muslims one, for which ideal the Congress has worked for more than sixty years. This ideal still persists. The Congress had never maintained that it worked for the interest of the Hindus only. Must we now give up what we have claimed ever since the Congress was born and sing a different tune? Congress is of Indians, of all those who inhabit this land, whether they are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs or Parsis. There have been Muslims, Christians and Parsis as Presidents of the Congress. But today we hear a different cry. Let me tell you that what we hear today is not the voice of the Congress.

You represent the vast ocean of Indian humanity. You will not allow it to be said that the Congress consists of a handful of people who rule the country. At least I will not allow it. I am an Indian to the last. Ever since I returned from South Africa I have tried to serve the Congress in every way and have done nothing else. I have tried to understand Indians from different walks of life, have lived with them, eaten with them and loved them. I have seen no difference between Harijans and other Hindus. That is how I am made.

The Congress is held responsible for whatever happens today. The situation has changed since August 15. I am leaving out of consideration what happened before that date. I do not wish to hear what part you played in the events that have happened since August 15. I have not the right to sit here. I have much work to do outside this hall. That is why I had requested that I might be allowed to have my say and then take your leave. You might ask me any questions you like at the end of my speech, though there ought to be no necessity for such questions. I wish only to show you a little of the way so that you might find it easier to carry on your deliberations.

When we were fighting for our freedom, we bore a heavy responsibility, but today when we have achieved freedom, our responsibility has grown a hundred-fold. What is happening today? Though it is not true of the whole of India, yet there are many places today where a Muslim cannot live in security. There are miscreants who will kill him or throw him out of a running train for no reason other than that he is a Muslim. There are several such instances. I will not be satisfied with your saying that there was no help for it or that you had no part in it. We cannot absolve ourselves of our responsibility for what has

happened. I have to fight against this insanity and find out a cure for it. I know and I confess that I have not yet found it.

In Calcutta I was able to achieve a measure of success. I was to go to Noakhali. Suhrawardy wanted me to go there. But I said to him, "How can I go there when there is a fire raging here?" He replied that it was beyond his capacity to control the flames, but that I could do so. I did achieve some result in Calcutta. Peace is a simple thing which has become most difficult to achieve. Today we are reduced to such a state that not even an old man or a child feels safe, if he happens to be a Muslim. Under such circumstances we have met today. I have enough experience of such misfortunes and if you allow me and have the patience to hear me, I will say what I have to say. Then if you feel like it, you may do what I suggest.

Today your President Kripalani desires to hand over the responsibility of his office to other hands. You should accede to his request and select a new President. Twice or perhaps more than twice before this Kripalani had asked to be relieved of his office. I do not wish to know the reason for his resignation, though I would wish you to know it. What he has said is true.[1] In due course fresh elections for the president[ship] will be held when the annual session of the Congress meets. It is a matter of about four months. But even if the difference was only of ten days, I would still plead with you to relieve him, since he feels that he is unable to discharge his functions effectively. It is a law of nature that when a thing is not done well, it is ill done. You would not wish to have a President in whose hands your affairs go awry. It is beyond his power to create conditions where not a single Muslim's life will be unsafe in India. Those who say that since it is a matter of four months only, why not let the *status quo* continue, do not know what the nation is facing today. If you realize the seriousness of the situation, it is your duty to relieve Kripalani. He himself confesses his inability to keep the reins of the Congress in his hands. When your pilot

[1] J. B. Kripalani, had said at the A. I. C. C. meeting: "While no one disputes the necessity of a close and harmonious co-operation between the Government and the Congress Executives, the difficulty is how to achieve it. The need for this co-operation is recognized in theory but I find it missing in practice. It may be due to the fact that all of us are not united on basic policies. Or it may be that this co-operation is lacking because I who happen to be the President of the organization do not enjoy the confidence of my colleagues in the Central Cabinet. If that is so, then I should be the last person to stand in the way of what is necessary in the interest of the nation."

reports to you that he is unable to steer your ship, will you still say to him, 'Never mind what happens, but you remain at your post'? You should therefore forget about the four months and not worry about constitutional proprieties. What would you do if an accident happened to me? Law does not recognize accidents. Think of this also as a natural calamity and be content to accept his resignation and proceed forthwith to elect a president of your choice. You should also know that according to practice the Working Committee retires with the President.

The second point I wish to talk to you about is the Hindu-Muslim relations to which I have already made a reference. I am ashamed of what is happening today; such things should never happen in India. We have to recognize that India does not belong to Hindus alone, nor does Pakistan to Muslims. I have always held that if Pakistan belongs to Muslims alone, then it is a sin which will destroy Islam. Islam has never taught this. It will never work if Hindus as Hindus claim to be a separate nation in India and Muslims in Pakistan. The Sikhs too have now and again talked of a Sikhistan. If we indulge in these claims, both India and Pakistan will be destroyed, the Congress will be destroyed and we shall all be destroyed.

I maintain that India belongs both to Hindus and Muslims. You may blame the Muslim League for what has happened and say that the two-nation theory is at the root of all this evil and that it was the Muslim League that sowed the seed of this poison; nevertheless I say that we would be betraying the Hindu religion if we did evil because others had done it. Ever since my childhood I have known that Hinduism teaches us to return good for evil. The wicked sink under the weight of their own evil. Must we also sink with them? My own experience of sixty years has confirmed what Hinduism has taught me and my study of other religions has revealed the same thing. Islam too says the same thing. It is the basic creed of the Congress that India is the home of Muslims no less than of Hindus. I also know that the Congress has had no hand in what has happened. I do not need to quote the authority of the Congress Constitution to support my claim.

It is held by some that if we perpetrate worse atrocities on Muslims here than what have been perpetrated on Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan, it will teach the Muslims in Pakistan a salutary lesson. They will indeed be taught a lesson, but what will happen to you in the mean while? You say that you will not allow Muslims to stay in India, but I hold it to be an impossibility to

drive away three-and-a-half crores of them to Pakistan. What crime have they committed? The Muslim League indeed is culpable, but not every Muslim. If you think that they are all traitors and fifth-columnists, then shoot them down by all means, but to assume that they are all criminals because they are Muslims is wrong. If you bully them, beat them, threaten them, what can they do but run away to Pakistan? After all, life is dear to them. But it is unworthy of you to treat them so. Thereby you will degrade the Congress, degrade your religion and degrade the nation.

If you realize this, then it is your duty to recall all those Muslims who have been obliged to flee to Pakistan. Of course those of them who believe in Pakistan and wish to seek their happiness there are welcome to migrate. For them there is no bar. They will not need military protection to escort them. They go of their own will and at their own expense. But those who are leaving today have to be provided with special transport and special protection. Such unnatural exodus under artificial conditions must cause us shame. You should declare that those Muslims who have been obliged to leave their homes and wish to return are welcome in your midst. You should assure them that they and their religion will be safe in India. This is your duty, this is your religion. You must be humane and civilized, irrespective of what Pakistan does. If you do what is right Pakistan will sooner or later be obliged to follow suit.

As things are we cannot hold our heads high in the world today and have to confess that we have been obliged to copy Pakistan in its misdeeds and have thereby justified its ways. How can we go on like this? What is happening is a provocation to war on both sides and must inevitably lead to it. You will then have to part company with Jawaharlal. And yet it is because of him that we are held in high esteem in the world today. He is respected outside India as one of the world's greatest statesmen. Many Europeans have told me that the world has not known such a high-minded statesman. I have known Americans who hold Jawaharlal in higher esteem than they hold President Truman. Even those who have fabulous wealth, vast armies and the atom bomb respect the moral worth of Jawaharlal's leadership. We in India ought to have due appreciation for it.

I repeat to you that it is your prime duty to treat Muslims as your brothers, whatever may happen in Pakistan. We will not return blow for blow but will meet it with silence and restraint. Restraint will add to your strength. But if you copy what happens in Pakistan, then on what moral basis will you take your

stand? What becomes of your non-violence? If you approve of what has happened, then you must change the very creed and character of the All-India Congress Committee. This is the basic issue before you. Until you have faced it, you cannot solve any of the problems that are before you. When your house is on fire you must first put out the flames before you can do anything else. That is why I have taken so much of your time. Let all Muslims who have left their homes and fled to Pakistan come back here. India is big enough to keep them as well as the Hindu and Sikh refugees who have fled from Pakistan. What I wish to emphasize to you is that if you maintain the civilized way, whatever Pakistan may do now, sooner or later, she will be obliged by the pressure of world opinion to conform. Then war will not be necessary and you will not have to empty your exchequer.

One more point. I understand that a hundred-and-fifty-thousand Muslims are about to be sent to Pakistan. You will say, they belong to the criminal tribes who are better sent to Pakistan. Why should they have to go? If there are criminal tribes in India, whose fault is it? We are to blame for not having reformed them. They were here during the British regime. Was there any talk of deporting them then? It is wrong of us to send them away because they are "criminal". Our duty should be to reform them. How shameful it is for us that we should force them to trudge three hundred miles on foot! I am against all such forced exodus.

Another problem that has arisen in the wake of the British withdrawal from India is the claim on the part of rulers of Indian States to do as they please. These rulers were kept in power by the British as henchmen of British imperialism. Some of these rulers have indeed tried to reform their ways and have adjusted their claims to the rights of their people. But the same cannot be said of all of them, though the number of the recalcitrant ones is very small. Their assertion of independence is as untenable as their claim to rule as they please is wrong. Because we are independent it does not mean that each one of us is free to do as be pleases. Such freedom means the end of all freedom. I therefore plead with these rulers to seek their good in the common good. If they do not carry the people with themselves, they will invite their own doom. I do not wish this to happen. If the Princes wish to survive, they can do so only as the servants of their people. If they wish to rule, they can do so only as trustees of their people's welfare.

I claim to be an orthodox sanatanist. I know that my religion does not advocate untouchability. The mission of the Hindu Mahasabha is to reform Hindu society, to raise the moral level of the people. How then can the Sabha advocate the compulsory evacuation of all Muslims from India, as I am told it does? I know what some people are saying. 'The Congress has surrendered its soul to the Muslims. Gandhi? Let him rave as he will. He is a wash out. Jawaharlal is no better. As regards Sardar Patel there is something in him. A portion of him is sound Hindu, but he too is after all a Congressman.' Such talk will not help us. Where is an alternative leadership? Who is there in the Hindu Mahasabha who can replace Congress leadership? Violent rowdyism will not save either Hinduism or Sikhism. Such is not the teaching of *Guru Granthsaheb*. Christianity does not teach these ways. Nor has Islam been saved by the sword. I hear many things about the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. I have heard it said that the Sangh is at the root of all this mischief. Let us not forget that public opinion is a far more potent force than a thousand swords. Hinduism cannot be saved by orgies of murder. You are now a free people. You have to preserve this freedom. You can do so if you are humane and brave and ever-vigilant, or else a day will come when you will rue the folly which made this lovely prize slip from your hands. I hope such a day will never come.

You will forgive me for taking so much of your time. There is yet another point. "Control" is a vicious thing. It is responsible for much of the corruption that is rampant today. I am receiving innumerable letters and telegrams that confirm what I say. If you do not abolish control immediately, you will one day regret it. It makes people lazy and helpless. Do away with it. But before you proceed to other business, accept your President's resignation.[1]

A. I. C. C. File No. G. 43/II, 1947-48. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

[1] The A. I. C. C. accepted the resignation of J. B. Kripalani by their resolution of November 17. Rajendra Prasad was elected President of the Congress. According to *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, after the meeting of the A. I. C. C. Gandhiji said: "I am convinced that no patchwork treatment can save the Congress. It will only prolong the agony. The best thing for the Congress would be to dissolve itself before the rot sets in further. Its voluntary liquidation will brace up and purify the political climate of the country. But I can see that I can carry nobody with me in this."

37. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 15, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I think you would naturally expect me to convey to you what I said at the A. I. C. C. meeting in the afternoon. But I do not feel like repeating what I said. As a matter of fact I had said the same thing which I have been telling you all these days. If I am sincerely regarded as the Father of the Nation, it is true only in the sense that, after my return from South Africa in 1915, I had a big hand in giving the Congress the shape it acquired later. This means that I exercised a great influence throughout the country. But today I cannot claim that. I am not worried about it; at least I should not be. Everyone should do his duty and leave the result to God. Nothing happens without the will of God. Our duty is only to make the effort. Hence, I had gone to attend the A. I. C. C. meeting with the idea that if I was allowed to address the members before the deliberations started, I would put before them what in my view is truth.

I want to tell you something about controls. Since I spoke at length at the A. I. C. C. meeting on the other current topics of great importance, I could only briefly refer to the subject of controls.

I feel that continuing the controls is criminal. The policy of controls might have been good during the War. It may be good even today for a military nation. But it is harmful for India. I am sure that there is no scarcity of food or cloth in the country. The rains have not betrayed us this year. There is enough cotton in our country and enough people to work on the spinning-wheels and the looms. Apart from these, there are mills in the country. That is why I feel that both the controls are bad. We have also control on petrol, sugar, etc. I do not see any logical reason why we should have controls on such things. Controls make people lazy and dependent. Laziness and dependence are bad for the country at any time. I receive daily complaints about the controls. I hope that the representatives of the country would come to a wise decision and would advise the Government

to remove the controls that encourage corruption, hypocrisy and black market.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 80-1

38. LETTER TO PYARELAL[1]

[After *November 15, 1947*][2]

I did receive copies of your correspondence with Nazimuddin. . . .[3] I liked the whole of it. Here are replies to your questions:[4]

As to his statement on Pakistan, in my opinion, Khwaja Saheb has overshot the mark. I can understand their objecting to propaganda in favour of reunion backed by action. But how can they ban the holding or the propagation even of views contrary to the Pakistan Government's present policy, or the cultivation of public opinion in favour of those views? You should see Khwaja Saheb personally or write to him to get the issue clarified. No one may try to coerce the Pakistan Government but surely everyone has a right to bring home to the Muslims the error of what has taken place and to convert them to one's view if possible. Send me the draft of your letter to Khwaja Saheb before posting.

You have referred to my attitude in regard to the British Empire. Let me tell you, I derived no little strength from my implicit loyalty to the British Empire in thought, word and deed. I am doing exactly the same in regard to Pakistan.

What is happening in Tripura is very wrong. It is naked coercion. But if the people of Tripura have no grit, if they are stupid or if the State administration is rotten to the core, what can one do? I do not think you can do anything in this matter. . . . Of course, you can help with advice. If by coming into personal contact with the State officials you could get them to behave as men, it would be a great thing.

[1] & [2] This was in reply to Pyarelal's letter which mentioned the probability of his going to Delhi "during the next three or four weeks". The addressee did not receive the letter at Noakhali and came to know about it only when he rejoined Gandhiji at Delhi on December 15.

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

[4] The addressee had drawn Gandhiji's attention to a statement by Khwaja Nazimuddin, Chief Minister of East Bengal, that even cultivation of public opinion in favour of a reunion with India would be treated as treason against the State. For extracts from the addressee's letter, *vide* Appendix II.

I cannot regard the Noakhali situation as 'normal' in any sense so long as the corruption is not rooted out. Death at a stroke is better than death by inches.

On the surface there is peace here. But so long as hearts are not united it is like a castle built upon sand. You are perfectly right that so long as things on the top do not come right here there will be no real improvement there.

The story about that little boy is very touching.[1] The decision about the use of the fine money was very appropriate. The action taken by the local Muslims does them credit. . . .

I have already written to you that you should come whenever the situation and your work there permit.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 530-1

39. LETTER TO CHAMPA R. MEHTA

NEW DELHI,
November 16, 1947

CHI. CHAMPA[2],

I have your letter. Whose handwriting is it? I was not convinced. I smell in the letter the old Champa. If you cannot stay in the Ashram, how can you stay in any other institution connected with it? I have written to Aryanayakum[3], too, and asked him. I am in no hurry. I don't wish to displease you. Even though you may be my daughter, I will not agree to act contrary to dharma through you.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] Some Muslim urchins in a village in Noakhali had performed a mock conversion of a Hindu boy forcing him to drink what was supposed to be cow's blood. The elder Muslims awarded to the offenders punishment by caning and a fine of five rupees each to be paid to the aggrieved party. The latter would not accept the money, saying that only genuine repentance could wipe off the insult to their religion. Later, both parties agreed to utilize the sum to provide powder milk to Muslim orphans of the locality.

[2] Wife of Ratilal Mehta

[3] E. W. Aryanayakum, Secretary, Hindustani Talimi Sangh

CWMG-XC

40. LETTER TO ABBAS

NEW DELHI,
November 16, 1947

CHI. ABBAS,

I have your letter. Has the rot entered Bhavnagar also? Whether or no, what can it do to you? Let things be as they will. You should go ahead with your own work. Your behaviour at any rate should be faultless.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

41. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

November 16, 1947

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

Regarding your letter to Sushilabehn the correct view is that for the present you should be content with as much as you can achieve with the help of the amount which you have already received. If the C. P. Government offers some money and if you feel that you needs must accept it, then Sushilabehn, Jaju[1] and the others, not I, can advise you in this regard. I think you or I could hardly have anything to say about it. As for me, I would know nothing from this long distance. I should of course like it if you have a Persian wheel instead of an engine, but the final decision must rest with Sushilabehn. Since it is a hospital establishment you are bound to need a lot of water.

I can offer no solution whatsoever in the case of Chandraprakash. I cannot even visualize a complete picture of him. Hence, if I should guide you in the matter it would be no more than a pretence. I cannot be said to have given a clear verdict. I must therefore content myself with letting things take their own course.

[1] Shrikrishnadas Jaju, Treasurer of Hindustani Talimi Sangh and Secretary of A. I. S. A.

It will be a welcome attitude if we give in to his objection, in case Aryanayakum raises one in the matter of the potter. I may not understand all his decisions. But that is a different matter. If the potter could live on his own, if he is a good person and an expert pot-maker, we ought to accommodate him, irrespective of Chandraprakash's presence or otherwise. If his is a case of leprosy we should put up with it. Moreover, I understand it is not yet in a contagious form. This simplifies the problem.

How is the problem of Champa now?

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

42. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 16, 1947

I have read your advice. Is it not a fact that though Narasinh Mehta used to sing his *bhajans* in the midst of Harijans these *bhajans* are today chanted in your temples? Hence all advice is like soap-suds. Soap does produce lather; but this lather alone does not remove the dirt. Clothes become clean only when they are rubbed with hands. Similarly, if you wish to understand the nature of my work, you should delve deeper into it; otherwise all this is like pebbles inside a dried gourd.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 290

43. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 16, 1947

Recently the Working Committee had been meeting here and I did not have time even to breathe. But it is your duty to write to me even if I don't write. Your first duty, however, is to take complete rest and recover your health. If you have now lost faith in nature cure, consult a good doctor in Bombay. If he suggests an operation, have it done. Do write if you need any help from me.

Yes, what you say is true. The political atmosphere has become vitiated. But you are forbidden to worry over it until you are fully recovered. And if the Congress has become

rotten, I have no doubt that it is bound to die. Rotten things cannot last long in the world and if a rotten thing is kept in some place it emits foul odours. I hope you know this. So repeat Gurudev's[1] words "It will not do to worry" like a *mantra* and get well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 290-1

44. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 16, 1947

One should admit one's failings. One who admits his failings progresses in life. How long will we remain rebels? I feel you should submit your resignation. I prefer a bad man who admits his failings to a good one who does not even try to see his mistakes. We have no right to see the shortcomings of others. None of us is a perfect *sthitaprajna* yet.

M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 291

45. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 16, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It is indicated in the *bhajan* sung this evening that man's highest endeavour lies in trying to find God. He cannot be found in the temples or in the places of worship created by man. Nor can He be found by observing fasts, etc. God can be found only through love and that love should be not worldly but divine. Mirabai who saw God in everything lived in such love. For her God was all in all.

The ruler of the Rampur State is a Muslim. But that does not mean that it is a Muslim State. The late Ali Brothers[2] had

[1] Rabindranath Tagore
[2] Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali

taken me there many years ago[1] and I stayed with them. I had the pleasure of meeting the then Nawab also, for he was a friend of the well-known nationalist Muslims of the day, the late Hakim Ajmal Khan[2] and the late Dr. Ansari[3]. In those days the Hindus and the Muslims used to live there more peacefully and in greater harmony than today. But the Hindu friends who came last Sunday from that place to meet me had an altogether different tale to tell. They told me that though that State had acceded to the Indian Union it was still under the insidious influence of the Muslim League. Had that been the only obstacle, it could have been easily overcome. But there is also the Hindu Mahasabha assisted by members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh who wish that all the Muslims should be driven away from the Indian Union.

The problem is how the Congressmen who are loyal to the Congress objectives can strengthen their position. Can they offer satyagraha with any hope of achieving success? They were happy to know that the A. I. C. C. is firm about the Congress objectives and is opposed to turning India into a country in which only Hindus could live as masters. The principles and objectives of the Congress are so broad-based that they include all the communities of the country. There is no room in it for narrow communalism. It is one of the oldest political organizations. Its only objective is service of the people. The Rampur Congressmen are gaining strength for their struggle by what is happening at the A. I. C. C. meeting. Even so, those people were keen to know my views in the matter. I told them that I was not well acquainted with the situation prevailing there; so I could not lay down any law and I did not have the time either to study the situation. But this much I can say with full confidence that satyagraha is the greatest force in the world, before which the opposing forces which they had mentioned cannot survive for long.

These days it is a fashion to describe any armed opposition or opposition of any kind as satyagraha. That only harms

[1] On March 6, 1919

[2] (1863-1927); Chief physician to Nawab of Rampur, 1892-1902; President of the Indian National Congress, 1921; First Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia, 1920-27

[3] Dr. M. A. Ansari (1880-1936); eminent physician and surgeon; Member, Congress Working Committee; General Secretary of Indian National Congress in 1920, 1922, 1926, 1929, 1931 and 1932; its President in 1927; Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia, 1928-36

society. Hence, if you understand the true meaning of satyagraha and realize that the living God, in the form of truth and love, is with the satyagrahi, then you would not hesitate to believe that no one can ever succeed against satyagraha. I am sorry to say what I was constrained to say about the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. I would be happy to know if I am wrong. I have met the Chief[1] of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. I had attended one of the meetings of that organization.[2] Ever since, I have been reprimanded for having attended its meeting and have received many letters of complaints about the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

Though all of us are engaged in extinguishing the fire of communalism in the country, we should not forget our fellow-beings living outside India. You are well aware that the Indian Delegation[3] to the United Nations is fighting for the rights of the Indians in South Africa with great courage and unity. All of you know Smt. Vijayalakshmi Pandit[4]. She is the leader of the Indian Delegation not because she is the sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, but because she is able and carries on her work efficiently. She is accompanied by a good team and they all speak there with one voice.[5] I was pleased most by the speeches of Zafrullah Khan[6] and Isphahani[7] which appeared in the

[1] M. S. Golwalkar, known as Guruji

[2] *Vide* Vol. LXXXIX, pp. 193-5.

[3] Which consisted of Vijayalakshmi Pandit, M. C. Setalvad, K. M. Panikkar and Maharaj Singh

[4] (b. 1900); daughter of Motilal Nehru; leader of Indian Delegation to U. N. O., 1946, 1947 and 1963; Ambassador of India in U. S. S. R., 1947-49, and the U. S. A., 1949-52; India's High Commissioner in England, 1954-61; Governor of Maharashtra, 1962-64

[5] During the debate at the United Nations Political Committee on November 15, M. C. Setalvad, protesting against the treatment of Indians in South Africa said: "Human rights and fundamental freedoms, which this Committee and Assembly are called upon to vindicate, are not only a matter of concern to the 250,000 Indians and other Asians settled in South Africa, they affect millions of human beings all over the world who look to this organization to protect them against the vicious doctrine of racial superiority and racial arrogance."

[6] Mohammad Zafrullah Khan, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Leader of the Pakistan Delegation to U. N. O., supported the Indian stand and said: "I do not know the Bible very well but I have been told that the Boers of South Africa are deeply attached to the Bible. Is the treatment of Indians in the Union in accordance with the teachings of a Christian civilization?"

[7] M. A. H. Isphahani, Pakistan's Ambassador to the U. S. A., stated during the debate: "The grievance of Indians is with regard to measures

newspapers today. At the United Nations, they said in plain words that Indians in South Africa were not given the same treatment as the whites. They are being insulted there and boycotted as if they were outcastes. It is true that the Indians in South Africa are not poor and hungry. But man cannot live by bread alone. Money has no value before human rights. And the South African Government does not give these rights to Indians there. The Hindus and the Muslims in India do not have divided views on the problems concerning the Indians living abroad. This only proves that the two-nation theory is incorrect. The lesson which I have learnt from it and which is also the lesson people should learn after my mentioning it today is that love is the highest thing. If the Hindus and the Muslims can speak unitedly outside India, they can certainly do so here as well, provided there is love in their hearts. Man is prone to commit mistakes. But he can rectify his mistakes if he wants to. This too is natural for man. It is always possible to forgive and forget. If we can do this today and can speak with one voice here as we do outside, then we would get over our present troubles. As far as South Africa is concerned, I hope their government and the whites there would profit by what is being openly said by distinguished Hindus and Muslims with one voice.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 81-4

46. HOW TO GROW MORE FOOD[1]

Are your little seedlings coming up well—are those of you, with no land, growing mustard and cress salads, and improving your health by eating them? These thoughts pass through my mind. And this big question is also always there: *How many of you are really doing the thing?* May God inspire you with energy and faith.

Here is the promised list[2] of vegetables. As it takes up a lot of space, the hot weather list will be carried over into the next issue of the *Harijan.*

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which entrench upon their own legitimate rights as nationals of the Union of South Africa and which reduce them to a position of inferiority and subservience to European settlers."

[1] This was the fourth and last of a series of articles on the subject by Mirabehn.

[2] This is not reproduced here.

Mirabehn's is an apposite question. It will be interesting to know how many are profiting by her hints. Will such please send their names to the editor of the *Harijan*, Ahmedabad?

NEW DELHI, November 17, 1947

Harijan, 30-11-1947

47. CONTROLS

It is now becoming clear to me that the controls on foodgrain, cloth, etc., are unwarranted. I keep getting letters and telegrams in support of my view.

As against this there are many who consider themselves experts on the subject. They write scholarly articles. Many of them are servants of the old foreign Government. I do not wish to disregard any of them merely for the sake of doing so. But I cannot help it if failure to be convinced by their ideas is considered as disregard for them. Would a person who is getting scorched in the sun believe a pundit who says that sunshine is not hot and his feeling scorched is merely an illusion? Such is my condition.

Experts and officials genuinely feel that we do not have sufficient foodgrain in our country. I not only hold the contrary view, but I say that the deficit of foodgrain if any can be met with a little effort by a large number of people. What can the Government do if people become lethargic or indulge in malpractices and as a result suffer death? The Government should find out ways and means to remove lethargy and take steps to eradicate malpractices. It should not procure foodgrain by fair means or foul and encourage malpractice and lethargy.

But I don't wish to write a treatise here. The people of Gujarat know how to carry on trade and there are skilled farmers there. The soil is fertile and water is available. What do they think? Is it true that lethargy and malpractice are behind this scarcity of food? If not, why should there be need for control in Bombay? Even if lethargy and malpractice are there, is it not possible to overcome them? Why cannot the farmers and businessmen of Gujarat or rather the whole of Bombay province prove that there is no scarcity of food and cloth and, even if there is, it can be removed immediately? Can they not do this much?

NEW DELHI, November 17, 1947

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 23-11-1947

48. LETTER TO LORD ISMAY

November 17, 1947

DEAR LORD ISMAY,

Will 3 p. m. on Wednesday next suit you?[1] If you would prefer any other time, please tell me.

While I shall be glad to welcome you where I am staying please be sure that I could as easily come to you. You shall decide.[2]

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 282

49. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN[3]

November 17, 1947

This[4] you can do here with me or otherwise. What that otherwise can be, I do not know. . . . I do not believe as some do that non-violence can only be offered in a civilized or partially civilized society. Non-violence admits of no such limit.[5]

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 283

[1] The addressee, Chief of the Viceroy's Personal Staff, had sought an appointment with Gandhiji.

[2] In his letter dated November 18, the addressee confirmed the appointment with Gandhiji.

[3] (b. 1891); popularly known as "Frontier Gandhi"; founder of the Red Shirt or Khudai Khidmatgar movement; Member, Congress Working Committee

Several thousand Khudai Khidmatgar workers had been arrested and convicted without trial. Khan Obeidullah Khan, son of Dr. Khan Saheb, was arrested on November 14. Their weekly paper *Pakhtoon* was banned. These reports were causing concern about the Khan Brothers' safety.

[4] Gandhiji had suggested to the addressee "openly to leave the Frontier Province and develop the non-violent technique from India".

[5] The addressee, "in reply, sent word to Gandhiji not to worry but just send him and his associates his blessings and prayers".

50. LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
November 17, 1947

CHI. PRABHUDAS,

I admit it is my failure that I could not write to you in my own hand. But these days there are a great many instances of such failure on my part. Strength is limited and work is heavy. Today is silence-day and I am therefore able to write this letter, though, to be sure, the shoulder is feeling the strain now. I am sad that you have fallen ill again. But one must pay the penalty demanded of the body. You did well in going to Calcutta again. I hope they will carry out a successful operation now. Janakibehn[1] had exactly the same trouble.

As a last resort you have Ramanama. But its success depends on one condition being fulfilled, like the success of any other experiment. Ramanama has its full effect only when it proceeds from the heart. The habit of mechanical repetition must of course be formed in any case. From the lips it may by and by sink into the heart. That is why we pray aloud. I expect another letter from you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 158

51. LETTER TO INDU PAREKH

November 17, 1947

CHI. INDU,

Your letter. I learnt just now that you had a younger brother[2]. I don't remember to have received any letter in that connection. Why need Father grieve over the event? Illness comes and goes. But while illness is bad, death is a friend. Surely,

[1] Widow of Jamnalal Bajaj
[2] Madhu Parekh

Jayanti[1] would marry some day, is it not? Would the desire for marriage spare even a communist? See me when you come.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 6259

52. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

November 17, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI[2],

I write more in English these days because it is more convenient to do so. The reason is not that my articles might reach those also who know English. I feel unhappy that I am not able to write in Gujarati. The truth is that these days I get no time to write for *Harijan*. I do as He bids. I try to write one article [every week].

The pamphlet regarding constructive work is lying in front of me. I shall finish it at the earliest opportunity.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9986. Also C. W. 6960. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

53. A LETTER

November 17, 1947

You will find in *Harijanbandhu* my recent article[3] on controls. I have no doubt in my mind that controls will mean controls over our minds too, and we shall not be able to taste the sweet fruit of freedom. Many people argue the case before me; but when I start asking questions they cannot answer them. I agree that it would be good if we could provide jobs for the staff that will be retrenched when controls are removed. I feel like laughing when these people, motivated by their self-interest for the time being, argue that a revolt would erupt in India

[1] Jayanti Parekh, addressee's brother
[2] Manager, Navajivan Press
[3] *Vide* p. 53.

if there were no controls. But at the same time I also feel depressed. I would remove controls even at the cost of a revolt. That has always been my way. I have travelled thus far through fiery ordeals. And I have limitless faith in God. Don't we have a proverb, "He who has provided the teeth will also provide the food?" There is an element of truth in it. But there must also be full effort.

I am pulling on somehow. These days we are busy with the A. I. C. C. meeting. There is great pressure of work. I hardly have time to breathe. Letters have heaped up. I am all right. Everything here is quite uncertain at the moment. But God will certainly show a way out.

I hope all of you are quite well. Blessings to all.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 295-6

54. A NOTE[1]

November 17, 1947

I find that talk of khadi and village industries does not interest people any more. Here I am sitting in the capital. Refugees are lying all round shelterless and shivering. Thousands are pouring in every day. How long will you feed them without giving them any work? I am sure everyone will remember this old man one day when it is realized that India has no alternative except to develop village industries. Any government formed by any party—Congress, Socialist or Communist—will be forced to accept this truth. We do not realize this today, but we shall realize it after we stumble in our attempts to compete with America or Russia.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 296

[1] This was addressed to a member of the All-India Village Industries' Association.

CWMG-XC

55. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 17, 1947

I feel very sad that we still write to each other in English. When both of us know Hindi quite well, why do we still write [in English] ? I will not feel that we are independent and free so long as we do not pay attention to these small little things. Why need I tell you all this? Or is it that I have become old and senile? So much for today. . . .[1] Things are getting worse here. Let us see how God guides us.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 296

56. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[2]

November 17, 1947

Yesterday I spoke about Rampur and our countrymen in South Africa. Today I feel I must deal more fully with the latter subject. I have lived in South Africa for twenty years from 1893 to 1914 with a break probably of one year. During that long and formative period of my life I came naturally in closest contact with all kinds of Indians as also with the white settlers of that sub-continent almost as big as ours. Between then and now if South Africa has risen, India has made giant strides. What seemed to be impossible only the other day has happened. We need not go into the causes. The fact is that India has come into the British Commonwealth, i.e., she has exactly the same status as the Union of South Africa. Should members of one Dominion be helots in another Dominion? An Asiatic nation enters the Commonwealth for the first time in its history with the willing consent of all the members of the Commonwealth.

[1] Omission as in the source

[2] As Gandhiji was observing silence, his written message in Hindustani was read out.

Mark now the following message that the Administrator Dr. S. P. Barnard of Orangia sent to the Natal Indian Congress of Durban five days after the entry of India in the Commonwealth:

> As you are celebrating Independence of the new Dominions which you can consider a great day in the annals of Indian history, I hope all Indians in South Africa will now emigrate voluntarily to the new Dominions to act as missionaries of the gospel they have been taught in South Africa, namely, to live in peace and order and not to fight in communal riots in which hundreds are being killed in India.

It is worthy of note that Dr. Barnard evidently doubts whether the entry was a great event. And then he treats the Natal Indian Congress with the gratuitous advice that the Indians of South Africa should emigrate to India and become "missionaries of the gospel they have been taught in South Africa, namely, to live in peace and order and not to fight in communal riots". I very much fear that this message is typical of the average white man's mind in the South African Dominion. Hence the series of disabilities on our countrymen for the crime of being Asiatics and having a coloured pigment. I appeal to the best western mind of South Africa to revise this anti-Asiatic and anti-colour prejudice. They have an overwhelming African population in their midst. They are worse treated in some respects than the Asiatics. I urge the European settlers to read the signs of the times. Either this prejudice is wrong from every point of view or the British people and their fellow-members of the great Commonwealth have made an unpardonable mistake in admitting Asiatic countries as members. Burma is about to get her independence,[1] Ceylon will presently become a member of the Commonwealth.[2] What does it mean? Membership of the Commonwealth is, I am taught, as good as independence, if not superior to it. Responsible men and women of these independent States need to ponder well as to what they will do with their independence. Is all this movement towards multiplying independent States, though proper and healthy in itself, to result in another war more deadly, if possible, than the last two, or is it to end, as it should, in the promotion of universal brotherhood?

[1] The Burma Independence Bill which was passed by the House of Commons on November 14, came into force on January 4, 1948.

[2] Under the Ceylon Independence Bill, passed by the House of Commons on November 26, Ceylon was to become a self-governing "near-Dominion" within the Commonwealth in February 1948.

"A man becomes what he thinks," says an *Upanishad mantra*[1]. Experience of wise men testifies to the truth of the aphorism. The world will thus become what its wise men think. An idle thought is no thought. It would be a serious mistake to say that it (the world) will become as the unthinking multitude act. They will not think. Like a mob they will follow.[2] Independence should mean democracy. Democracy demands that every citizen has the opportunity of receiving wisdom as distinguished from a knowledge of facts so called. South Africa has many wise men and women as it has also many able soldiers who are equally able farmers. It will be a tragedy for the world if they do not rise superior to their debilitating surroundings and give a proper lead to their country on this vexed and vexing problem of white supremacy. Is it not by this time a played-out game?

I must keep you for a moment over the much-debated question of control. Must the voice of the people be drowned by the noise of the pundits who claim to know all about the virtue of controls? Would that our ministers who are drawn from the people and are of the people listened to the voice of the people rather than of the controllers of the red-tape which, they know, did them infinite harm when they were in the wilderness! The pundits then ruled with a vengeance. Must they do so even now? Will not the people have any opportunity of committing mistakes and learning by them? Do the ministers not know that they have the power to resume control wherever necessary, if decontrol is found to have been harmful to the people, in any instance out of the samples, by no means exhaustive, that I am giving below? The list before me confounds my simple mind. There may be virtue in some of them. All I contend is that the science, if it is one of controls, requires a dispassionate examination and then education of the people in the secret of controls in general or specified controls. Without examining the merits of the list I have received I pick out a few out of the samples given to me: Control

[1] यथाकारी यथाचारी तथा भवति। साधुकारी साधुर्भवति। पापकारी पापो भवति। पुण्य: पुण्येन कर्मणा भवति पाप: पापेन। अथो खल्वाहु:। काममय एवायं पुरुष इति। स यथाकामो भवति तत्क्रतुर्भवति। यत्क्रतुर्भवति तत् कर्म कुरुते। यत्कर्म कुरुते तदभिसंपद्यते।

—*Brihadaranyakopanishad*, 4. 4.5

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, bad by bad 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.

[2] This sentence has been translated from *Prarthana Pravachan*—II.

on exchange, investment, capital issues, opening branches of banks and their investments, insurance investments, all import and export of every kind of commodity, cereals, sugar, *gur*, cane, and syrup, *vanaspati*, textile, including woollens, power, alcohols, petrol and kerosene, paper, cement, steel, mica, manganese, coal, transport, installation of plant, machinery, factories, distribution of cars in certain provinces and tea-plantation.

Harijan, 30-11-1947

57. A LETTER

November 18, 1947

CHI. . . .,[1]

Chi. Manudi took, or it would be equally true to say, I gave her, about ten minutes before writing this letter to you. She read out your letter to me and asked a question. In answer to that I gave her a long lecture. Has it not become my profession to lecture people? I would not be surprised if it only justified the ancient Sanskrit saying "wise in advising others". Because today unforeseen events are overtaking us from all sides, I am fumbling in the dark in search of a way out. Your letter is certainly inspiring; but I have to do or die here. If heart unity is not restored in Delhi, I can see flames raging all over India. And I have no strength, nor the courage to reach that far. I would much rather spend myself in Delhi.

I must admit that only the intellectuals and political leaders are responsible for the present distressing atmosphere. The poor peasants in the villages do not even know that India has become free. Hence I have not the least hesitation in saying that we are grossly abusing the intelligence and energy which God has bestowed upon us. Now you will understand what it is I am trying to put across or what pain fills my heart. My prayer today is "one step enough for me"[2]. I am keeping well in spite of all that is happening and I hope you are also well. The fact that one can keep fit physically and mentally, whatever the circumstances be, is a sign of one's nearness to God. My Rama is not a man with two hands and two feet. But if I am perfectly fit it is due to Rama's grace. Chi. Manudi is well trained. But after all she is only a girl, in the playful age of

[1] The name is omitted in the source.

[2] From "Lead Kindly Light" by Cardinal Newman

16 or 17—she is almost a child. When I discuss with her or dictate to her such spiritual subjects, it occurs to me how dense I was at the age of 18. As compared to that, this girl has developed quite well. At the same time I am also conscious that I may be putting too heavy a burden on her tender mind with my discussions or dictations of such highly pedantic matters. But she is always very happy and keeps cheerful. Only she does not take care of herself, because of which I have to scold her often. These days she has been making notes and summaries of my interviews with visitors, and she has been doing it quite well. Of course she shows me all she writes down. While she is growing in other directions, her physical growth has been stunted. There is such a rush of visitors and so much writing work to be done that I am unable to talk to her however much I may wish to.

Well, today I have dictated a very very long letter. And now my eyes are also closing. Chi. Manudi will certainly write about other matters. When I get up after a little rest Rajendra Babu[1] and others will arrive. I hope you are all well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 304-5

58. TALK WITH RAJENDRA PRASAD

November 18, 1947

I realize that just when you started devoting yourself to agriculture you have to give it up.[2] But there is no alternative. Either this institution [Congress] has to be disbanded or if it has to be kept alive we will need a man of dynamic personality. You should tour the whole country and if possible go to the villages also. The people are agitated but nobody is there to listen to their grievances. We have given innumerable promises in our

[1] Rajendra Prasad (1884-1963); joined Gandhiji in 1917 during the satyagraha in Champaran; President of Indian National Congress, 1934 and 1947; Member for Food and Agriculture in the Interim Government; President, Constituent Assembly; Union Minister for Food and Agriculture; President of India, 1950-62

[2] Rajendra Prasad had resigned as Minister for Food and Agriculture on his election as President of the Congress, the office of which he took over on December 22.

speeches that we shall ensure the welfare of the people. It is enough that we humbly admit that we are unable to fulfil our promises, and give them a sympathetic hearing. . . .[1]

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 305-6

59. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 18, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You must have read the resolutions[2] passed by the All-India Congress Committee. Some of those resolutions are useful in our life—in a good part of our life. It may as well be said that they are useful in the life of every man. They are not the resolutions merely to be implemented by the Government. For instance, the resolution on controls is the one which has to be implemented by Jawaharlal, Rajendra Prasad—now Rajendra Prasad is out—and also by others. They have to implement the policy of control on food, cloth and every other thing. We too have to do the same thing. If we resort to cheating and do not abide by the law, the result would be disastrous. When we can do with one yard of cloth, why should we buy ten yards and try to convince ourselves that no harm will be done if it is bought and tucked away in the house? If we develop such an attitude, become self-centred and not think of India we will turn into rogues.

The resolutions of the All-India Congress Committee are so important that I wanted to explain them to you one by one. I am still here, and I shall say something about the resolutions if I get a chance. But let me at least tell you the substance today. There is a resolution about bringing back the people who have left their homes in panic and this resolution applies to everybody. All of us, from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, belong to India. What if India has been divided? All of us have to shoulder the responsibility because we are all brothers. If only one individual goes on stuffing his belly and does not care for the poor—if he eats for pleasure—he is stealing and commits a crime against India. What if India does not possess all the foodgrain she requires? The poor also should get foodgrain.

[1] Omission as in the source

[2] *Vide* Appendix I.

If the rich get just a few *chhataks*[1] and are able to manage with the same I would consider that the rich and the poor have become equal. Apart from anyone else, let me talk about the rich person in whose house I am living. If you ask me whether Shri Ghanshyamdas manages with his legitimate quota, I would say he does not. I have got to tell the truth after all. Because he is a man of means, he is able to procure everything. I do not know if all those who come here are able to have milk. I get milk. I do not know how and from where that milk comes. His idea is to somehow get milk for me, whether he has to keep one goat or two; and to get the best quality of wheat, because I am, after all, a Mahatma. He provides for me greens or fruits, whatever I want. I do not ask him from where he gets those things. Something must be offered to the members of the Working Committee when they come to visit me. So, they are given fruit juice. He owns property worth crores of rupees. That is the case with the wealthy people. Millionaires can get all those things. But something can happen only when they deprive themselves a little. How else can the poor get things for themselves? Let the rich and the businessmen not indulge in profiteering. Let them become honest. They may make profit but just enough to satisfy their hunger. How wonderful if all of them would follow the same system about profits! Why should there be control on food? There is no need at all for it. It would be good indeed if everyone became like this.

The most important thing is that we cannot rest in peace till all the refugees go back to their homes. It is madness to kill the Muslims or drive away those who have run away from Pakistan in panic leaving their property there. Now the All-India Congress Committee has issued orders that people have to be kept wherever they are, and in comfort, and those who wish to return to their homes have to be sent back. Thousands of millionaires managed to come away even leaving their beautiful houses, but the poor are still left behind. I do not intend speaking about every point today. But the resolution shows where our duty lies. And that is the most important thing. If we take it for granted that the Muslims are a worthless lot, it is a grave sin. It is the supreme duty of all of us not to drive away anyone. People have seen the Working Committee resolution three or four days ago and they have also seen the indications in the Press. In spite of that the Muslims

[1] One-sixteenth of a seer

are running away. People say that the A. I. C. C. accepted this resolution because of my insistence. They say that the Muslims should go away, otherwise they would be killed. People ask me if I would be a witness to the slaughter of Muslims. I have already said what I would do—I would 'do or die'. When I am ready to die, the Muslims too should be ready to die if the need arises. We have become so heartless that we want them to walk 300 miles in this cold winter. It is said that there are not too many deaths in the camps—some ten or twenty die every day. Now, out of five, ten or fifty thousand if so many people die, has anyone tried to estimate how many people would die in India at this rate? Should it not be our concern as to how they die? Some of them do not get food, some have cholera, some get dysentery, or something else happens to them. But does anyone bother to know why these people die? We are worried about the availability of food and all the other things we need. We are always on the look-out for settling the Hindus and the Sikhs in the houses of Muslim evacuees. Of course, the situation is not the same everywhere. But it is certainly so in many places. This has pained me very much and I have conveyed my feelings to you many times. Now even the A. I. C. C. has said that what has happened is highly deplorable. This thing has to be conveyed to the millions and it cannot be done in one day. There are great men in the Government—Jawahar, the Sardar, Rajendra Babu (but Rajendra Babu is not there now)—and how could [other members] displease them? That is why they agreed to it. I have heard that now there are even some Congressmen who think that the Muslims should not live here. They think that only then can Hinduism prosper. But they do not know that Hinduism is degenerating day by day. It would be dangerous if they did not change their attitude. All the members of the A. I. C. C. are the representatives of India as a whole. If they are all one at heart, as they should be, then the entire face of India would change. It is their duty not to allow anything else to happen. Their primary task is to find out how they can bring back all those who have fled from here. We would be restless till we brought back all the Muslims who have gone away from India. We have to create the necessary climate and that is not difficult. It is a great thing that there are still 350 million Muslims in India. Nobody knows how many have gone away and how many are going to come. Supposing all those who have gone away came back, it would mean no expenditure for us, for they would be living in their own houses, since they have their

houses here. Our job is only to return their houses to them. But are all those houses vacant? Refugees have occupied those houses by force. But they would have to be accommodated in spite of that. If we act without proper thought and if our hearts are not clean, outsiders would wonder if the representatives of India were hypocrites. I think they are not. Those days are over when we used to be angry with the Muslims and wanted them to go away. Today we consider them as our brethren.

I would like to believe that the people of Delhi and Gurgaon have become good. When I had been to Panipat recently, I saw people living in amity. But now I hear that the refugees have occupied the houses of the Muslims and the Muslims want to go away to Pakistan. The Muslims might say that they did not want to go to Pakistan willingly as neither any delicacies nor good clothes would be available there. And how could things be otherwise? The people there are in the same condition as we are here. After all, it is not as if there were more provisions for them there while they had nothing here. Those who have gone away write back that it would have been much better if they had remained in India. Having left their hearth and home, they are now living in camps and are in great distress. It is bound to be so. Then, why do the Muslims of Panipat want to go to Pakistan? If that is so, Panipat is a test for me and I too may have to go there. Panipat is about 50 miles from here. It cannot be called a distant place. It is just like Delhi. Now, even if a single Muslim is forced to go to Pakistan, it would hurt me and it would hurt you. Of course, when they stay here, they must get food and clothes from the money they receive. They are industrious, they earn and subsist on it. How will they live if they earn money but cannot have food? If the craftsmen, who have been like brothers, have to leave just because refugees from the Punjab have come, nothing could be worse than that. I would tell all the refugees at Panipat that they should give up the houses of the Muslims and the Muslims too should say that they would stay there. They should say that they do not need police for protection and they would live in amity. The police should only see to the distribution of food and clothes. They need do nothing more. Then I would say that the A. I. C. C. has done a good thing and we are all with it. We may not be four-anna members of the Congress, but we respect the organization. Let us today also support and follow what this organization, which has served the country all these days, is with full deliberation

saying in these adverse circumstances. That is all I would like to say for the day.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 88-93

60. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

NEW DELHI,
November 19, 1947

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I had your letter. You may wind up the construction work with the consent of all, but certainly not before receiving such consent. The difficulties which you notice are psychological and bespeak a subtle form of egoism. Financial arrangements have already been made for the construction work. But in any case how does it concern you? You have nothing to do with that. You will have done your part when you complete the task assigned to you.

Decide about where to stay only after Kanchan[1] returns. The decision will have to be approved by her. You should do nothing against her wishes.

I am surprised that you can think of leaving Sevagram. For some, Sevagram is their very body. That means that leaving Sevagram is committing suicide. And suicide is forbidden in all circumstances. If you yourself are good others at Sevagram will also be good. Sevagram is not something apart from you. People are afraid of you and, therefore, avoid asking you to do anything. If you become steady in your mind, it will be easier for others to ask for your help. I ask you to do things because both Kanchan and you put trust in me. That trust must not be forced. If that trust is lost, you would have no justification for writing to me and I for offering you any advice. May all three of you keep well and live a good life.

I suppose you understand that such a wish can be expressed for a child.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 7224. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

[1] Addressee's wife

61. LETTER TO KANCHAN M. SHAH

NEW DELHI,
November 19, 1947

CHI. KANCHAN,

I have your letter. I see that you have still not learnt to write letters. My cart is jogging along, but it seems to have got stuck here just now. I don't see any chance of my going over to that side in the immediate future.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 6976. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

62. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 19, 1947

Don't you know that these days I have stopped sending messages? I have only one preoccupation: 'Do or Die'. I shall think of other activities only when I have accomplished either of the two. The situation here is getting worse every day. It is not a question of Hindu-Muslim riots only. The rancour within has now come out in the open, and it would not be wrong to say that the present delicate situation is a reflection of it.

I have digressed to other matters. But you may take it that my blessings go with any good work. So think of God and get on with the work.

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 311

63. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 19, 1947

We should be agreed on some matters at least, or should we not? Even as regards language we have raised such a storm that one might think a rebellion had broken out. The matter is simple. Our language should be that which the millions of villagers in India can understand and read with ease. If I had my way, I would give the same place to language as has been given to khadi in the Congress Constitution. I would allow only those who knew Hindustani to become members of the Congress. We should now have no resolutions in English. How many persons understand English in a mass meeting? But mine is like a pipe of carrot[1] and I continue to blow it whether or not it produces any sound.

The problem of States will be solved easily in most cases. Among the Kathiawar States, the attitude of Bhavnagar appears very sound, although there have been no negotiations directly with the Raja yet. I believe that his response will be good. Many of his men come here for discussion.

I am keeping well by God's grace. I have no doubt that we shall suffer if we neglect khadi. The Congress will not survive in a democracy if it abandons any one of the constructive activities. No party which does so will survive. The reason is that when you are there at the helm of affairs, you have been entrusted with power by the people in the hope that you will strive to relieve their misery. If we do not make such efforts and neglect those which have already been initiated, what fate will be in store for us? In the end, may God grant good sense to all.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 311-2

[1] A Gujarati saying

64. LETTER TO M. A. HUNAR

[*November 19, 1947*][1]

CHI. HUNAR,

I have your letter. Now there is no need to go to Ahmedabad. I understand what you say about language. The question of staying at Patna also does not arise now. I would therefore like you to go to Sundarlal[2] rather than elsewhere. I have discussed the matter with him. He will arrange for your maintenance. Consult him and do what he suggests.

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

65. LETTER TO RATANDEVI

[*November 19, 1947*][3]

CHI. RATAN,

I got your beautiful letter. Have I not written at length on the subject of blessings?[4]

I do have a keen desire to visit Vanasthali. But does not its fulfilment depend only on God?

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

[1] In the source the letter is placed among those of this date.

[2] (1886-1981); nationalist leader and a prolific writer; member of the Congress Working Committee, 1930-31; started a number of magazines including *Karmayogi*; wrote *Bharatmen Angrezi Raj* and a comparative study of the *Gita* and the Koran; President of the All India Peace Council; Founder-President of the India-China Friendship Association

[3] In the source the letter is placed among those of this date.

[4] *Vide* p. 1.

CWMG - XC

66. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 19, 1947

Truth and ahimsa had been the weapons for achieving swaraj. Today we have forgotten both. Actually it was my fault that I believed that people had truth and ahimsa in them. But I was mistaken. Anyway I consider it my good luck that God has at last opened my eyes. And I regard it as God's grace that even if I can do nothing else at least I shall now be able to do or die. I do not wish now to live for 125 years. I would either like to die bravely taking the name of God or, if Hindus and Muslims became sincere friends, would tour the whole of India and then go to Pakistan.

How are you? How is Behn? Write about everything. The boarding-house must be functioning well. Tell all your students that I would very much like to go and stay amongst students because I am myself a student. Most of our problems are solved automatically if one remains a student or a humble person throughout one's life. But today I am confined here. Let all the students be united and forget that they are Hindus, Muslims, Banias or Brahmins. I think that if they realize that they are all Indians, my presence there will not make much difference.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 312-3

67. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 19, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Last evening I referred to the main Resolution on Hindu-Muslim relations passed by the A. I. C. C. But unfortunately today itself I have to cite an instance to show how that Resolution is being rendered futile in Delhi. I had never imagined that on the very evening when I was expressing my doubt about the behaviour of the public, that doubt would be proved right in the heart of old Delhi. I was told last night that a large crowd of Hindus and Sikhs had gathered in front of a

Muslim's shop in Chandni Chowk. Though the shop belonged to a Muslim, the owner had abandoned it and gone away. The shop had been given to a refugee on condition that he would give it up when the owner returned. Fortunately, the owner of the shop has returned. He did not want to give up his business for good. The officer in charge of the allotment came to the refugee and asked him to vacate the shop. The refugee hesitated at first, but then agreed to vacate it when the owner came to take possession in the evening. When the officer went again in the evening he found that instead of vacating the shop the occupant had informed his friends who had collected there to overawe whoever [forced them] to vacate it. The few constables at Chandni Chowk could not control the crowd, and they sent for more help. The police or, may be, military arrived and fired in the air. The crowd dispersed in panic, but a pedestrian was stabbed in the bargain. Fortunately the wound did not prove to be fatal. But this demonstration of the trouble-makers had a strange result. That shop was not vacated. I do not know if the order of that officer was defied or the shop has ultimately been vacated. Nevertheless, I do hope that the Government will not fail to punish the culprit if it has to retain its true authority under our precious freedom. Otherwise, the Government will have no authority at all. I am told that the crowd of Hindus and Sikhs was not less than two thousand.

I have understated the news that was given to me. If there is room for correction and if it is brought to my notice I will gladly let you know about it.

This is not the only thing. In other parts of Delhi, too, attempts are being made to drive the Muslims out of their houses, so that the Hindu and the Sikh refugees could be accommodated there. The Sikhs go about brandishing their swords and threaten the Muslims with dire consequences if they refuse to give up their houses. I am also told that the Sikhs drink liquor, the consequences of which can be well imagined. They dance about with their naked swords and scare away the pedestrians. I am also informed that according to custom Muslims do not sell *kababs*[1] and other meat preparations in Chandni Chowk and nearby areas. But the Sikhs and perhaps other refugees, too, freely sell these forbidden things there. This hurts the feelings of the Hindus in that locality. The nuisance has grown to such an extent that people cannot easily pass

[1] Meat cutlets

through the crowded Chandni Chowk. They are afraid of being insulted. I appeal to my refugee friends that they should not indulge in such things for their own sake and for the sake of the country.

As for the *kirpans*, the Sikhs have been forbidden by law to carry *kirpans* larger than the prescribed size. While this law is in force, many Sikh friends come to me with a request that I should try to have this restriction withdrawn. They told me about the judgement passed by the Privy Council several years ago which permitted the Sikhs to carry *kirpans* of any size. I have not read that judgement. I think the judges have interpreted *kirpan* to mean sword of any size. The then Punjab Government, in order to carry out the Privy Council's decision, declared that everyone was free to keep a sword. That is why in the Punjab men carry swords of any size they choose.

I have no sympathy with the Punjab Government or the Sikhs in this matter. Some Sikh friends have brought to my notice certain portions from the *Granthsaheb* which support my view that the *kirpan* is not a weapon to be used to attack the innocent. Only the Sikhs abiding by the tenets of the *Granthsaheb* can use the *kirpan* for the protection of innocent women, children and old and helpless people. That is the reason why one Sikh is regarded equal to one-and-a-quarter lakh opponents. That is why any Sikh who takes intoxicants, who gambles, or is prey to other vices, has no right to keep a *kirpan* which is a symbol of purity and restraint and which is to be used only on particular occasions in a prescribed manner.

In my view, it is not only futile but also harmful to seek the help of the now defunct judgement of the Privy Council to justify the indiscriminate use of the *kirpan*. We have just freed ourselves from foreign rule. It is highly improper to do away with all necessary restrictions in our state of freedom, because, without those restrictions, society cannot make progress. Hence, I would tell my Sikh friends that they should not bring the great Sikh religion into disrepute by using the *kirpan* for doubtful purposes. Let them not destroy a religion which has been shaped by a number of martyrs in whose martyrdom the world takes great pride.

I wish to draw your attention to another thing. I have been informed about a refugee camp where the army has been accused of rude behaviour. The entire life of the camp should be a model from the point of view of inner and outer cleanliness. To preserve such cleanliness [the police and the army] should vie

with each other. Hence I hope that the information I have received does not apply to these protectors of law and order, and that it is only an exception. The army and the police should be the first to experience the glow and excitement of freedom. Let not the people get a chance to say that good behaviour can be expected of them only under strict discipline imposed on them from above. They have to establish through correct behaviour that they too can become good and ideal citizens of India. If these protectors of law disregard law itself, it would be difficult to carry on administration at all. And it would be all the more difficult to implement the Resolutions of the All-India Congress Committee.

After presenting the gloomy side of the picture, I would now like to present the bright side also. I have just heard an eye-witness account of great valour which I am going to narrate to you.

Mir Maqbool Sherwani was a young brave leader of the National Conference at Baramula. He had just entered his thirtieth year. On learning that he was an important leader of the National Conference the invaders tied him to two poles near the Nishat Talkies. They first beat him up and then told him that he should give up the National Conference and its leader Sheikh Abdullah, the lion of Kashmir. They told Sherwani that he should swear loyalty to the Provisional Government of Azad Kashmir which had its headquarters at Palundry.

Sherwani refused to give up the National Conference under pressure. He made it clear to the assailants that the Sheikh was the head of the Kashmir Government, that the Indian army had already reached Kashmir and, before long, would repel the assailants.

On hearing this, the assailants were enraged and were in panic. They riddled his body with fourteen bullets. They cut his nose and disfigured his face and pasted a notice on his body: "This man is a traitor. His name is Sherwani. All traitors would be treated in the same way."

But within 48 hours of this ruthless murder and bloodshed, Sherwani's prophecy came true. The invaders fled from Baramula in panic and the Indian army chased them away.

Anybody, whether Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or anyone else, would be proud of such martyrdom.

A friend of mine has related an instance of a proud moment whose lustre would not fade even in the most painful situation and an instance of friendship which proves its worth in

the moment of greatest trial. It is the story of Narayan Singh, a Sikh ex-officer. He has lost enormous property in West Punjab. Now he is in Delhi. He has nothing left, which means that he would be compelled to beg or to let death claim him. He met an old friend who he did not want to suffer on his account because he was not bothered by his own misfortune. The Sikh officer was very happy to meet Ali Shah, his old friend and colleague. Ali Shah too has lost his entire property, but not because of communal frenzy but because of some other misfortune. He too is a courageous man like Narayan Singh and both of them are proud of their friendship. When they met after a separation of twenty-five years, they were so happy that they forgot their misfortune.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 93-8

68. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 20, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I have received two notes from the same person. In one note he says that he has given up his job and wishes to work under me. In the second note he expresses his desire to sing a *bhajan* at the prayer. As for his first wish, I can't help saying that it was a mistake to have given up his job. It is true that during the British days I had exhorted people to give up their jobs and non-co-operate with the Government. But that is not the case now. Anyone who wishes to serve his country can do so while carrying on with his job. If every wage-earner does his job honestly and without indulging in any kind of violence, he is no doubt serving the country. The writer of the note should realize that I have no work to offer him. If he wants to render service, he must do something for the goshala about which I am going to talk presently.

As for singing *bhajan* at the prayer, it is not that everyone can be allowed to sing. Only people known to be servants of God can do so with prior permission.

I was happy to find the camp[1] admirably clean. There are dharmashalas at various places for the pilgrims who come there

[1] The Okhla camp which Gandhiji had visited in the afternoon along with Sucheta Kripalani and others

during the fairs. These fairs are organized there periodically. At present these dharmashalas are being used for the refugees. There is some difficulty about water supply, which the officials are trying to remedy. I have no doubt that if water supply can be guaranteed, many more refugees can be accommodated there.

Now that I am talking about the refugees, I shall speak about their shortcomings to which my attention has been drawn. I am told that the refugees are indulging in black market among themselves. The officers who are in charge of looking after the refugees are themselves, I am told, at fault. I learn that it is impossible to find a place in the camps without bribing the officers who are in charge of the camps. As regards other things also, their behaviour is not above reproach. True, all officers cannot be guilty, but the entire ship can sink because of one sinner.

Then I am told that the refugees also indulge in petty thieving. I expect from them honest and straightforward behaviour. I am told that some of the quilts provided to the refugees to protect them against cold are torn up, the cotton thrown away and the chintz cover is used for making shirts, etc. I have been told of many such things, but I do not wish to waste your time by narrating all the misdeeds of the refugees. I wish promptly to come to the topic of the evening.

In a locality called Kishanganj in Delhi a goshala is having its annual function. Acharya Kripalani is going to preside over that function tomorrow and I am being pressed to attend the function at least for ten minutes. I felt that I should not attend any function just for show. I cannot do or see anything in ten minutes. Moreover, I am so much involved in these communal problems that I have no time to attend to other things. Hence, I expressed my helplessness and, realizing my difficulty, the organizers excused me. They told me that they would be satisfied if I would say something about *goseva*—especially about goshalas, during the prayer meeting. I readily agreed to do so. I have stated in plain words that the task of preservation and increasing the cattle wealth of India and taking proper care of the cow and calf is much more difficult than attaining political freedom.[1] I claim that I am working with faith and devotion in this field. I also claim that I have true knowledge of how the cow can be saved. However, I do admit that so far I have not exercised any influence on the public which

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXXIX, pp. 73-4.

may lead them to give to the problem the attention it deserves. Those who manage the goshalas know how to spend money or collect funds for the purpose. But they have no knowledge at all about rearing the cattle scientifically. They do not know how to rear the cow so that it may yield more milk. They do not know how to rear the oxen or improve their breed.

That is why, throughout India, goshalas, instead of being the institutions where one could learn the art of rearing the cattle, where there would be ideal dairies providing the best quality of milk and the best breed of cows and oxen, are places where the cattle are herded together in a pitiable condition. The result is that India, instead of being a prominent country where the best breed of cattle and the best quality of milk should be available at the cheapest rate, is the lowest in the world in this regard. The people managing the goshalas do not even know that the dung and urine of the cattle can be used most profitably. Nor do they know how best to utilize the dead cattle. The result is that because of their ignorance crores of rupees are being lost. An expert has stated that our cattle wealth is only a burden on the country and deserves to be destroyed. I do not agree with this view. But, if the general ignorance in this matter persists for some time more, I will not be surprised if our cattle become a burden on the country. That is why I hope that the management of this goshala would do its best to make it an ideal institution from every point of view.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 98-101

69. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 21, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

While I am making my speech before you, the goshala is probably celebrating its annual function about which I told you yesterday. I would like to mention one thing. In the course of my speech yesterday I did not mention about the dairies conducted for the soldiers all over India. Dr. Rajendra Prasad told me that these dairies are still in operation. Many years ago I had visited[1] the Central Dairy at Bangalore. It used to

[1] On June 12, 1927; *vide* Vol. XXXIII, p. 476.

function under the supervision of Col. Smith. I had seen some beautiful cattle there. One of them was a prize cow. It was believed that she was the best cow in the whole of Asia. I do not quite remember if she used to give a daily yield of 75 lbs. of milk or whether she really yielded so much milk at one time. That cow used to roam about without any restriction anywhere she chose. Fodder used to be kept for her at various places, which she could eat any time she chose. This is the bright side of the picture. I have not seen the other side of it. But I am authentically told that a large number of male calves are killed, because all of them cannot be turned into bullocks that can carry heavy weight. These dairies are spread over hundreds of acres of land if not more. They are meant specially for European soldiers, and crores of rupees have been spent on them. Now that we no longer have the British soldiers in India, I do not deem them necessary. I am sure that if the Indian soldiers know that such expensive dairies are being run for their sake, they will feel ashamed. I am also certain that the Indian soldiers will not demand what ordinary citizens cannot claim as a matter of right.

The most authentic and perhaps complete information about the cow and the buffalo can be found in a voluminous treatise[1] written by Shri Satis Chandra Das Gupta of the Khadi Pratishthan. It is not filled with extracts from other books but is based on his personal experience and written during one of his imprisonments. The book has been translated into Bengali and Hindustani. Those who read it carefully would find it extremely useful in improving the cattle breed and increasing the yield of milk. There is a comparative study of the cow and the buffalo also in the book.[2]

These are all relevant questions. I am no great scholar of history. I do not even claim to be a learned man. But I have read in an authoritative book on Hinduism that the word "Hindu" does not occur in the Vedas. When Alexander the Great invaded India, the people living in the region east of the river Sindhu, which is called the Indus by the English-speaking Indians, were described as the Hindus. The letter 'S' of the Sindhu became 'H' in Greek. The religion of the people living

[1] *Cow in India*, published in two volumes. For Gandhiji's preface to it, *vide* Vol. LXXX, pp. 149-50.

[2] Gandhiji then referred to a question from the audience, "What is meant by 'Hindu'? What is the origin of that word? Is there anything called Hinduism?"

in this region came to be known as Hinduism which, as you are well aware, is the most tolerant of all religions. It gave shelter to the Christians who had escaped from the harassment of the people of other religions. Besides, it also gave shelter to the Jews known as Beni-Israel and also to the Parsis. I feel proud to belong to Hinduism which embraces all religions and is very tolerant. The Aryan scholars followed the Vedic religion and India was first known as Aryavarta. I do not wish that once again the country should be known as Aryavarta. The Hinduism of my conception is complete in itself. Of course, it includes the Vedas, but it also includes many other things. I do not think it is improper to say that I can proclaim the same faith in the greatness of Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Judaism without in any way impairing the greatness of Hinduism. Such Hinduism would live so long as the sun shines in the sky. Tulsidas has expressed this idea in his couplet:

> Compassion is the root of religion, pride the root of sin. Do not give up compassion, says Tulsi, so long as there is life in you.

The sister[1] who accompanied me during my visit to the Okhla camp was upset because she wondered if the misconduct in some of the refugee camps I had mentioned was related to the Okhla camp. I paid a very hurried visit to the Okhla camp, and so it is impossible to mention any such thing about it. In my speech I have mentioned the misconduct in the refugee camps in general.

I cannot help mentioning the fact that according to the information received by me 137 mosques have been almost destroyed in Delhi during the riots. Some of them have been converted into temples. There is one such mosque near Connaught Place which can never remain unnoticed by anyone. Today there is a tri-colour flag flying over it. It has been changed into a temple by installing an idol in it. Desecrating the mosques in this manner is a blot on Hinduism and Sikhism. It is gross *adharma* in my view. The blot which I have mentioned cannot be wiped out by saying that even the Muslims in Pakistan have desecrated the Hindu temples or changed them into mosques. In my view, any such act can only destroy religion, whether it is Hinduism, Sikhism or Islam.[2]

[1] Sucheta Kripalani, *vide* p. 75.

[2] Gandhiji then read out the A. I. C. C. resolution on this subject, *vide* Appendix I.

Even at the risk of having to stay longer than usual at the prayer meeting I would like to say one thing in the end as a matter of duty. I am told that the Roman Catholics are being harassed near Gurgaon. This has happened in a village called Kanhai which is 25 miles away from Delhi. An Indian Roman Catholic priest and a Christian missionary came to meet me. They showed me a letter which gave the description of the harassment of the Roman Catholics at the hands of the Hindus. Surprisingly, the letter was written in Urdu. I think the Hindus, the Sikhs and others living in that area can speak only Hindustani and write only in the Urdu script. The persons who brought the information told me that the Roman Catholics were threatened, that they would have to suffer if they did not leave the village. I hope this threat is unfounded and that the Christian men and women would be allowed to follow their religion and carry on their work without any hindrance. Now that we have freed ourselves from political bondage, they, too, are entitled to the same freedom to follow their religion and occupations as they had under the British. The freedom we have achieved does not imply the rule of Hindus in the Indian Union or that of Muslims in Pakistan. I have already told you in one of my speeches[1] that when the anger of the Hindus and the Sikhs against the Muslims abated it was likely to be directed against one another. But I did not expect my prophecy would come true so soon. The anger against the Muslims has not yet completely calmed down. As far as I know, these Christians are absolutely innocent. It has been pointed out to me that their only fault is that they are Christians. Their greater fault is that they eat beef and pork. When out of curiosity I asked the priest if there was any truth in it, he said that those Roman Catholics had on their own given up eating beef some time ago. If such childish prejudice persists, the future of India is bound to be dark. When the priest was at Rewari, he was deprived of his bicycle, and he narrowly escaped death. Would this misery end only with the extinction of all non-Hindus and non-Sikhs?

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 101-5

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXXIX, p. 380.

70. *RAYS OF HOPE*

Although there is from all sides so much debris of hope, now and then one sees a few rays of hope penetrating through this debris. The reflection is due to a study of my correspondence file for the *Harijan* which has been carefully kept for reading during moments of leisure.

One such letter is from Shri Shivabhai Patel of Bochasan Residential School. He has sent me a few unvarnished facts and figures of the work done during the annual celebrations. He is ably assisted by Gangabehn[1] of the late Satyagraha Ashram of Sabarmati, now known as the Harijan Ashram and the ever indefatigable Ravishankar Maharaj[2], with his two sons who have not deserted him. A speciality of the recent celebration was that instead of the usual mechanical contrivance for carding, they resorted exclusively to the *tunai* process. This time the management was induced to begin a boarding-house for the children of those who, in that part of India, are considered to be a backward race. The beginning has been made with only ten inmates. After seven years of suspension, they have recommenced the day school for boys who have finished four years' course in ordinary schools. They expect to have a further six years, bringing the boys up to the matriculation standard minus English and plus a good grounding in khadi work, carpentry or agriculture. Unlike past years, during the year under observation, the parents have become interested in the upright conduct of their children. The result is that during the four months preceding the celebration of October last, the boys who were given to hard smoking and drinking strong tanning tea, have shed the habit which was ruining them. The earnestness of the boys has affected their parents who have also given up these evil habits that make chimneys of their mouths and ruin their digestive apparatus. When the boys were admitted, they could not sit still or hold their tongues for five minutes. They have now learnt to enjoy hand-spinning in perfect silence for

[1] Gangabehn Vaidya

[2] Ravishankar Vyas, who devoted his life to the uplift of the Baraia tribe in Gujarat

one hour. Gangabehn who is in complete charge of the dairy of the institution takes good care to provide pure cow's milk.

During the celebration days the students' recitations consisted of useful dialogues which were largely attended. They had also an unpretentious exhibition of all the processes that cotton undergoes before it comes out as khadi. Twenty-three students took part in a competition—for neat calligraphy, a subject about which there is so much indifference as if neatness of handwriting was no part of good training.

NEW DELHI, November 22, 1947

Harijan, 30-11-1947

71. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 22, 1947

I am thinking of going to Panipat and staying there. I do not wish to take many workers with me. Manu will of course be there. If . . .[1] wants to go with me he may. But I think it would be better if he went to Rajkot or stayed with . . .[2] for the present. Because it is a matter of "do or die" with us. And there is no knowing when this *yajna* will end. Jawahar does not like the idea. I am trying to bring him round. If he is persuaded and consents willingly, I may leave for Panipat at the earliest.

You must not be anxious in the least. Rama is the Protector of us all. As long as I have this faith, everything is right with me. God knows what will happen to me the day I lose this faith. That is the reason why I remain so cheerful in spite of being surrounded by this raging fire. I am at peace. I get sound sleep. I keep well.

My blessings to you all. I hope everyone is keeping well. If you find the time, make a copy of this letter and read it to the Ashram inmates.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 333

[1] & [2] The names are omitted in the source.

72. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 22, 1947

Now we are daily growing more and more barbarous. Yesterday I had some Christian visitors. I did not talk about them at length in the prayers, but they too are being harassed a lot. That is why I am praying within, 'O Rama, now take me away soon.'

I have to admit that the intellectuals and the leaders are more responsible for these disturbances than the common people.

Look at what happened in Sind. All the leaders managed to come away and the innocent people are being killed. Can we turn so sinful and deceitful? It makes me shudder.

This is the situation today. Let us see what God ordains ultimately.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 332

73. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 22, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I have received information about some instances of similar harassment[1] to the Christians at Sonepat also. I am told that the Christians were first requested to allow use of their buildings for the refugees. They readily agreed, for which they were also thanked. But that gratitude turned into a curse, for their other buildings were also forcibly occupied for accommodating the refugees. They were then told that they should leave Sonepat if they did not wish to subject themselves to misery. If my information is correct, it is clear that the disease is spreading and no one can say where it would lead India.

While discussing the subject with friends I was told that so long as the atrocities in Pakistan do not abate, not much improvement can be expected in the Indian Union. In support of

[1] *Vide* p. 80.

CWMG-XC

this argument I was shown Press reports about what is happening in Lahore. I personally do not accept Press reports to be absolutely correct. I would also warn the newspaper readers not to be easily carried away by the newspaper reports. Even the best of newspapers are not above giving exaggerated reports and embellishing them. But supposing what you read in the newspapers is all correct, still we should never imitate bad examples.

Imagine a square frame to which no slate is fixed. If you mishandle that frame its right angles would become acute and obtuse angles. But if the frame is once again held properly at one end, the remaining three angles would automatically become right angles.

Similarly, if the people and the Government of the Indian Union behave well, I have no doubt at all that Pakistan would also give proper response and the whole of India would once again come to her senses. This harassment of the Christians who have, in my view, committed no crime, should be an indication that it is not proper to let this madness spread. And, if India has to keep its prestige before the world, this madness should be combated sternly and at once.

There are doctors, lawyers, students, teachers, nurses, etc., among the refugees. If they segregate themselves from the poor refugees, they would not be able to learn anything from their own misfortune. I feel that all professional and non-professional, rich and poor refugees should live together and build ideal cities just as the rich people of Lahore made Lahore an ideal city which the Hindus and the Sikhs had perforce to give up. Such cities would relieve the burden of overcrowded cities like Delhi and this would lead to better health and progress of the people living there. If over two lakh refugees at the Kurukshetra camp become ideal in the matter of inner and outer cleanliness, and if the professional and the rich people live with the poor on terms of equality and live a life of contentment in these colonies of tents, and if they do their own work, beginning with sanitation, etc., and engage themselves in some useful work throughout the day, they would cease to be a burden on the Government treasury. And the people in the city, in their turn, would not stop at merely admiring the simplicity and co-operation of the refugees, but would feel ashamed of their own lives, and follow the good example of the refugees. Then the present bitterness and mutual jealousies would vanish in no time. And the refugees, no matter how large their number may be, would

no longer be a matter of worry for the Union and local Governments. The world would admire the ideal life of these millions of refugees.

In the end, I would talk about removing controls, especially the controls on food and cloth. The Government hesitates to remove controls because it feels that there is a real scarcity of food and cloth in the country, and the prices of these commodities will shoot up if the controls are removed and the poorer sections will have to suffer a great deal. The Government thinks that the poor can be saved from starvation by continuing the controls and that they can be provided sufficient clothes. The Government is suspicious about the traders, cultivators and the middlemen. It fears that these people are waiting like hawks for the removal of controls, so that they could fill their pockets with tainted money at the cost of the poor. The Government has to make a choice between the two evils. It thinks that continuing rather than removing the controls is the lesser evil.

That is why I appeal to the traders, middlemen and cultivators that they should dispel these doubts about them and assure the Government that the prices will not rise when the controls are removed. It may not be possible to root out black market and underhand dealings by removing the controls but the poor would have a much easier time than now.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 106-8

74. LINGUISTIC REDISTRIBUTION

Acharya Shriman Narayan Agrawal writes to me a letter published in the columns of the *Harijan Sevak*. Its purport is that new universities should not be established before the proposed linguistic redistribution of Provinces. The following is the rendering of his argument[1]:

I entirely endorse the suggestion underlying the foregoing letter, viz., that what is proper to be done should not be delayed without just cause, and that what is improper should not be conceded under any circumstances whatsoever. There can be no compromise with evil and since linguistic redistribution is

[1] Which is not reproduced here

desirable from almost every point of view, all delay in carrying out the project should be avoided.

But the reluctance to enforce linguistic redistribution is perhaps justifiable in the present depressing atmosphere. The exclusive spirit is ever uppermost. Everyone thinks of himself and his family. No one thinks of the whole of India. The centripetal force is undoubtedly there, but it is not vocal, never boisterous; whereas the centrifugal is on the surface, and in its very nature makes the loudest noise, demanding the attention of all. It manifests itself most in matters communal. This has given rise to fear in other fields. The history of the quarrel between Orissa and Andhra, Orissa and Bihar and Orissa and Bengal is fresh in our minds. The whole of it has not died out even now. This is but an illustration of an almost accomplished fact. The other provinces were never redistributed in law though they were in 1920 when the Congress had a brand new constitution[1] enabling it to put up a life-and-death struggle with perhaps the greatest empire that has ever been. How will Madras, though divided by the Congress divide itself into four provinces, and Bombay do likewise in law? Many other claimants have come to the fore. They are not recognized by the Congress, but they are not less vocal or less insistent. The Congress does not command the prestige and authority it found itself in possession of in 1920. Despair has given place to hope. Now, when we have freedom, we seem not to know what to do with it. It is almost mistaken for suicidal anarchy. Even zealous reformers would postpone controversial issues to a more hopeful time when, in the interest of the country, the virtue of 'give and take' would be freely recognized and all sectional interests would be subordinate to the one interest of the good of India, which will include the good of all. Therefore, those who, like me, want constructive suggestions to come into play at this very moment, have to work to bring about a healthy atmosphere, promoting concord in the place of discord, peace in the place of strife, progress in the place of retrogression and life in the place of death. That happy day will be most manifest when the communal strife has died out. Meanwhile, will the Southern linguistic groups settle their disputes and boundaries, will Bombay produce an agreed scheme of redistribution according to language, and will the new candidates withdraw their claims at least for the time being? Then linguistic redistribution

[1] *Vide* Vol. XIX, p. 191.

can come into being today without the slightest difficulty or fuss.

Let there be no undue strain upon the Congress, whose foundations have been shaken to their roots. It is ill-equipped today either for arbitrating between rival claimants or imposing its will upon recalcitrants.

NEW DELHI, November 23, 1947
Harijan, 30-11-1947

75. UNBELIEVABLE

A correspondent writes:

> Those who advocate the policy of undivided Bengal shall be punishable with death is the Gazetted Order of the East Bengal Government.

I should like to see the text of the Order before I can believe it. I feel sure that even if there is any Order to some such effect, the exact wording would bear a different meaning. I can understand the criminality of such action. There are very few Hindus and certainly not many Muslims who believe in the advisability or justice of the step. But only a mad man would advocate any forcible measure to upset the settled fact. The partition can be undone only by the willing consent of both the parties. But even that consent will be impossible, if no one is allowed to convert public opinion to the side of unity.

NEW DELHI, November 23, 1947
Harijan, 30-11-1947

76. DEATH—COURAGEOUS OR COWARDLY

A Bengali friend writes a long letter in Bengali on the exodus from East Pakistan. Its purport is that though workers like him understand and appreciate my argument and distinction between death—courageous and cowardly—the common man detects in my statement a not-too-hidden advice in favour of migration. He says: "If death is to be the lot in any case, courage becomes of no count; for man lives but to escape death."

This argument seems to beg the question. Man does not live but to escape death. If he does so, he is advised not to

do so. He is advised to learn to love death as well as life, if not more so. A hard saying, harder to act up to, one may say. Every worthy act is difficult. Ascent is always difficult. Descent is easy and often slippery. Life becomes livable only to the extent that death is treated as a friend, never as an enemy. To conquer life's temptations, summon death to your aid. In order to postpone death a coward surrenders honour, wife, daughter and all. A courageous man prefers death to the surrender of self-respect. When the time comes, as it conceivably can, I would not leave my advice to be inferred, but it will be given in precise language. That today my advice might be followed only by one or none does not detract from its value. A beginning is always made by a few, even one.

NEW DELHI, November 23, 1947
Harijan, 30-11-1947

77. NATIONAL GUARDS

A correspondent from East Bengal asks:

> The Pakistan Government are sure to raise a volunteer army called National Guards or by some other name. What are the Hindus to do, if they are asked to join? What are they to do, if the army is confined only to the Muslims?

This is a difficult question to answer in the present state of things. Almost every Muslim is a suspect in the Union and every Hindu or Sikh likewise in Pakistan, West or East. If there is a hearty invitation, I would advise joining the body, assuming of course that the terms are equal and there is no interference with one's religion. If there is no such invitation, I should, for the time being, submit to the exclusion without harbouring any resentment.

NEW DELHI, November 23, 1947
Harijan, 30-11-1947

CWMG - XC

78. IN PRAISE OF DECONTROL

The following extracts[1] are taken from a very long thesis sent by a correspondent in favour of decontrol at least so far as food is concerned.

> By reducing rations from 1¼ lbs. to ¾ lb. the Government has . . . created a bigger vicious circle. The . . . agriculturist. . . knows that the lesser the ration the greater is the demand of the black market. . . . He will hoard secretly. . . . The lower production figures will cause . . . further reduction in the ration. . . .
>
> If we think over what we import and what is being spoiled and thrown away at storage places, it will be realized that our wastage is greater than the imports! Hence we must not import. We must reduce wastage.
>
> Why have our leaders kept themselves entangled in the net created for us for specific reasons by their predecessors, the British? How is it that things do not become clear to them? Why are they guided by the figures put before them by the officers which in some cases are neither complete nor accurate? . . .
>
> Food crop production is not less today than what it was six years back. . . . During the war period a large quantity was supplied to the military with certain unavoidable wastages. Foodgrain were also supplied to the Middle East. These conditions do not obtain today. The public was then given 1¼ lbs. daily ration. Thus . . . more stock was then available . . . than today. Six years back . . . grain was stored according to old customs in underground stores. Every merchant . . . had big stocks of grain. . . . There were heaps of foodgrain . . . . Today, neither the consumer nor the businessman nor the Government has any stock. . . . The Congress, which is in power, is not able, owing to defects in the present procedure, to give to the public what as a matter of fact is really available in the country and the public is displeased and interested parties are taking advantage of this situation to make the Congress unpopular. It is only the Congress which can maintain peace in the country and if it once loses its hold over the public, which may happen if the situation does not show signs of improvement, and is allowed to deteriorate from day to day as it is doing, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for it to avoid the storm that may come.

Harijan, 23-11-1947

[1] Only excerpts from which are reproduced here

79. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 23, 1947

Since I had no letter from you recently, I was beginning to be afraid lest you had fallen sick. You must regularly take sun-bath and apply mud-packs. Take complete rest and repeat Ramanama with eyes closed till you fall asleep. Give up all anxiety regarding your sons or other things. Don't start taking milk yet. Take whey, as much hot water as you can and some honey. Among fruits, avoid heavy ones like bananas. You can take *mosambi*, orange or lemon; also raw vegetables. Stop all walking and reading. Get someone to read to you. Strictly avoid newspapers, because they publish all sorts of true and false reports about the country and about me, which make you anxious. Listen to newspaper reports only if you are a *sthitaprajna*. Listen to *Ramayana*, *Bhagawat*, the Bible, etc. If you carry out these instructions, you will recover soon and be in a position to share my work.

Babo must be going to school. Let them all do their own work with their own hands. That will make them self-reliant. I am keeping well. The burden of work is heavy. Manu will be writing about all other things. I am instructing Manu to write to you every week even if I am not able to do so.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 340-1

80. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 23, 1947

Just now I have written an article[1] on Shrimanji's letter. Do read it. Why do we find the linguistic [problem] so difficult? But these days instead of settling our problems we think it is brave and clever to fight over everything. Or this is considered some sort of a fashion nowadays.

Things are not all right here. People's hearts are filled with poison. I am thinking what my duty is in these circumstances. I also feel that the leaders are no longer honest.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 341

[1] *Vide* pp. 85-7.

81. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

November 23, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Gandhiji apologized to the radio men for his occasional breach of the rule that his speech should not exceed twenty minutes, not even fifteen, if possible. He said that he could not always observe the rule for his main purpose was to reach the hearts of the audience that was physically before him. The radio came next. He did not know whether there was any arrangement whereby the radio could record longer speeches. He was not in the habit of speaking without purpose or for the sake of hearing his own voice.[2]

A gentleman writes to ask me whether one should take to violence if one's rights are not granted. We cannot secure our rights through violence. I would even say that we can secure nothing through violence. Apparently, it seems we can get our things that way. But how? Supposing a child is having a rupee. If I slap him twice and take away that rupee, I may have the satisfaction of having got the rupee, but how much would I have lost in the bargain? What could the poor child do? But it would prick me that I snatched away the rupee from the poor child by beating him. Of course there are any number of such rogues in the world. But I cannot do such a thing. I have no right to deprive anyone like that. Snatching away something would have a bad result. That is why I say that we cannot demand rights with violence. There is only one way of securing our rights which I have already explained.[3] Everybody approved of it. I have stated my view about the rights of the people and how they can be achieved. I would say that there is nothing like a right. For the one who has no duties there are no rights either. In other words, all rights emanate from duties—if there is no duty, there is no right either. When I do my duty, it brings some result and that is my right. For instance, I eat because it is my duty to do so. If I eat for

[1] Gandhiji exhorted the audience to observe silence which was being disturbed by the murmur among women who were present in a large number. Complete silence was then restored.

[2] This paragraph is from *Harijan*.

[3] *Vide* Vol. LXXXVIII, pp. 230-2 and 236-8.

pleasure, I fall victim to some disease or other. If I eat because it is my duty to eat, if I pray to God, if I serve the world, that itself is my right. What is my right? It is the right to serve. You would ask me how that can be called a right. But you would understand this if you thought over it a little. I would say that that itself becomes the right. Suppose I work for the whole day and earn eight annas—I get those eight annas as my right. How did I have that right? Because I worked. If I do not work and take eight annas, I appropriate that amount, I do not have it as my right. I can have a right only when I fulfil my promise to work and that too sincerely in thought, word and deed. But if I do not work with my heart in it, if I exploit the employer and deceive him because he is not noticing it, then it is a sin. When I know that everybody is getting a rupee I too want to have a rupee for myself. But when can I have it? Only when I have the employer's permission. I would ask him why, when everybody is getting one rupee, I should work for eight annas only, and would ask for at least fifteen annas. He may say that I should work for eight annas or leave. What should I do in that case? Should I burn his property? Obstruct his work? Do picketing? Go on fast? If I say that I would resign but not work for eight annas, then I would be acting like a gentleman. I would say that whatever you do, you must do in a decent way. Decency means following one's religion, doing one's duty and earning one's rights non-violently by performing one's duty. Let us not try to get anything through violence—that is the only way to sustain the world. Otherwise things go wrong in the world.

I have already talked to you about the Christians. Today I will tell you about the Harijans. It is a matter of shame for us that there are Harijans in Rohtak, or, say, in Rohtak district—they were there everywhere before and are still there. There are the Jats and perhaps Ahirs too. They felt that the Harijans were their slaves and they could get any work done by them. Once again the question of their rights came and they felt that the Harijans were born slaves. They may be given water and food but they can get nothing by right. I regard this as arrogance. This was prevalent during the days of the British and now it is all the more there. These poor Harijans are timid, so they came to me and asked me what they should do in the face of harassment. Should they remain slaves or die or leave Rohtak? It is quite understandable that they cannot leave the place. If they leave Rohtak, other people

would suffer, because their work would be affected. But this means that Harijans have to remain slaves forever. And so, those poor people came. Some of them study in schools, some are studying further and some lag behind; some even learn crafts, but what can they tell those who are harassing them? We have now reached a stage when we do not stop to think where we are going. During the British days we used to be afraid of being beaten or killed. Now that the alien rule has ended we think that no one can do us any harm. We feel that we can even intimidate a judge if we are brought before him. We think that the judge can do nothing to us. We have become so arrogant. The result is that the Harijans are ruined. So, I suggested to them that they should go to Thakkar Bapa[1]. He was born just to serve the Harijans and the tribals. He does everything for the Harijans. So those people went to him and came back to tell me that he was not doing anything for them. I knew what they wanted. They are seated right here. I told them that they should go to Dr. Gopichand[2]. What if he has become the Premier now? He used to attend to every work of the Harijan Sevak Sangh at one time. I decided to meet him since he was coming here today, and I met him. But what can be done when the people there have become such tyrants, resort to coercion and refuse to listen? The British rule is no longer there, and the people cannot behave like that. Then what should the Harijans do? So, I thought that today I should talk about the sad plight of the Harijans. Can we not do even this much? What is our duty today? So far we have acted against dharma in regarding the Harijans as untouchables and slaves. We committed that mistake, that sin, and the Harijan Sevak Sangh came into being[3] by way of expiation. The Sangh has done considerable work. But not all Hindus have taken the same stand. Millions of Hindus have not even accepted the Sangh. If all Hindus had accepted it, where was the need for me to narrate

[1] A. V. Thakkar (1869-1951); joined the Servants of India Society in 1914; established the Bhil Seva Sadan in 1922; General Secretary, Harijan Sevak Sangh; President, Gujarat Antyaja Seva Mandal; Secretary, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, 1944-51; established the Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh

[2] Gopichand Bhargava (1889-1966); President, Harijan Sevak Sangh in the Punjab; Chief Minister of the Punjab, 1947-51

[3] On October 26, 1932, initially under the name of Anti-Untouchability League, with G. D. Birla as President and A. V. Thakkar as General Secretary

this sad tale? During the days of the British we used to abuse them and say that we would become good if the British did not rule us. Now the British have gone. But have we become good or bad? I would say that there is more degeneration now than before. We used to commit excesses and are committing them even now. First we oppressed the Muslims. This too was a sin. Forget that Pakistan has come into being, don't think of it. If one man commits a sin should we also do the same? You will realize that it is bad if you think over it. One wrong leads to another. We have killed a large number of people. We have acquired false courage and we are determined to kill the Christians, and then we want to have Jatistan, Ahiristan and so many separate states. But no one is keen about building up India. We must accept the Harijans. They too are Hindus like us. They are not the fifth caste. Hinduism has no fifth *varna*; there are only four, and these four *varnas* are not graded as high or low. Among these four *varnas* the first teaches religion, the second protects people, the third practises trade—to collect millions of rupees, not for personal use but for the welfare of the people—and the fourth serves the society. But people belonging to the four *varnas* can mingle with one another. It is not as though a Shudra, if he became a barrister, could not practise law. He can serve even after becoming a barrister. One who teaches religion serves, so does the one who practises trade and is in employment and also the one who sweeps. All these four are fields of service. The one who teaches religion has to learn more. But that does not mean that he commits a sin by giving up his profession and going in for another. It is not that he cannot do that. Similarly, we created so many castes and now are creating the fifth *varna*. This is wrong, it is an act of wickedness. Everything will be all right if each follows his religion. Now, when we are having the reins of power in our hands, it seems to me that things would be all right if the Hindus and the Sikhs followed their respective religions. I have finished for the day and the meeting is also over.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 109-12

82. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

November 24, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI,

I am sending you plenty of material today. I have not been able to enclose the translations. Please, therefore, wait for the post tomorrow also. Can you make really good arrangements for translation there? Rajaji[1] is sitting by my side just now—though, of course, I am observing silence. I will not, therefore, write more.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9987. Also C. W. 6961. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

83. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 24, 1947

Today I observe silence; and also write for *Harijan*. The articles I can somehow manage, but the letters pile up. I try to reply to them with due care, but rarely succeed in the effort. Should I not consider this as my shortcoming? I get up at 3.30 in the morning and devote all the time after prayers to writing. I snatch some time to doze a little. Then I go for a walk. From this moment right up to the time I retire at night, I am so hard pressed for time that I do not get a moment's respite. But I have to listen to people in connection with the work for which I am camping here. That is how the cart jogs along.

Once again since last night communal riots have flared up in Delhi. Who knows what scenes God intends to show me! My faith goes on increasing each day and the mind is tranquil. The body gets tired when I am required to speak a lot. Then I make some quick changes in my diet.

[1] C. Rajagopalachari, Governor of Bengal, who was officiating as the Acting Governor-General from November 10 to November 26, when Lord Mountbatten was away in England to attend the marriage of Princess Elizabeth with Prince Philip Mountbatten.

CWMG-XC

All of us are, however, playthings in the hands of Rama. We have to dance to His tune. I hope you are all well. How are the conditions there? It seems that the controls are now on the way out. . . .[1]

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 347-8

84. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 24, 1947

The situation is becoming quite delicate here. There is too much rancour among the Sikhs. Only yesterday some Sikhs went inside a Muslim house in Chandni Chowk and beat up the inmates.[2] What has become of us?

Today only this much. I have been awake since 3 in the morning. I am tired because I have written quite a lot. Just now I wish to lie down for some rest and Rajendra Babu will be here shortly.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 348

85. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[3]

November 24, 1947

You are good enough, when I enter the prayer-ground, to make ample room for me and my daughters to allow us to pass through. I would urge you to observe the same orderliness when after the prayer I go out. There is an unseemly rush to touch me as I pass. The crowd press in upon me. I know and value your affection. I want it to take the shape not of effusiveness but of some constructive service of the country such as I have pointed out on many an occasion and in my numerous writings. The first and foremost today is communal harmony. Formerly the discord was of a negative character.

[1] Omission as in the source

[2] *Vide* also the following item.

[3] As Gandhiji was observing silence, his written message in Hindustani was read out.

CWMG - XC

Today it is of a most virulent type. The Hindus and the Sikhs on the one hand and the Muslims on the other have become enemies of each other with the shameful results which we have already seen.

Those who attend the prayer should not only be free from rancour against one another, but should actively assist in re-establishing the communal harmony which was our pride during the Khilafat days. Have I not attended the huge friendly gatherings of those days? They had gladdened my heart when I witnessed them. Will those days never return?

Take the latest tragedy that took place in the heart of the capital city yesterday. Some Hindu and Sikh refugees are reported to have gone out to an empty Muslim house and unlawfully attempted to occupy it. A scuffle ensued and some were injured, though none fatally. This incident, bad as it was, was exaggerated out of all proportion. The first report was that four Sikhs were murdered. The sequel was to be expected. Retribution followed and several stabbings took place. A new technique seems to have been established now. The Sikhs with drawn swords, which seem to have taken the place of little *kirpans*, with or without the Hindus, visit Muslim houses and demand evacuation. This is a monstrous state of things in this, the capital city, if the report is true. If it is untrue, it may be dismissed. If it is true, it demands urgent attention not only from the authorities but the public as well. The former will be impotent, if the public is not behind them.

I am not sure what my duty is in this case. Things are evidently going from bad to worse. The full moon day of *Kartik* will soon be upon us. All kinds of rumours have been pouring in. I hope that they are all untrue, as they proved to be for the Dussehra and the Bakr-Id.

One lesson to be learnt from these rumours is that we are living a disturbed life, which is not good for any State or nation. Every servant of the nation has to consider seriously the part he has to play towards the abatement of this corroding nuisance.

It is well to consider at this stage a long letter from Sardar Sant Singh of Lyallpur, former M. L. A. (Central). He has put up a forcible defence for the Sikhs. He has read into my prayer speech[1] of last Wednesday a meaning which the words do not bear and certainly never meant by me. Perhaps the good Sardar does know of my intimate connection with the Sikhs ever

[1] *Vide* pp. 71-5.

since my return from South Africa in 1915. There was a time when my word was law to them as to the Hindus and the Muslims. Manners have changed with the times. But I know that I have not. The Sardar, perhaps, does not view the present tendency among the Sikhs as I, their avowed, dispassionate friend without any axe of my own to grind, can and do. I speak freely and frankly because I am their true friend. I make bold to say that many a time the Sikh situation was saved because the Sikhs in general chose to follow my advice. I need, therefore, no reminder that I should be cautious about what I say about the Sikhs or any other community. Let the Sardar and every Sikh, who wishes well by them and is not carried away by the prevailing current, help in ridding the great and brave community of madness, drunkenness and all the vices that flow from it. Let them sheathe the sword which they have flourished loudly and used badly. Let them not be fooled by the Privy Council judgement if it means that the *kirpan* is a sword of any length. A *kirpan* ceases to be sacred when it goes into the hands of an unprincipled drunkard or when it is used anyhow. A sacred thing has to be used on sacred and lawful occasions. A *kirpan* is undoubtedly a symbol of strength, which adorns the possessor only if he exercises amazing restraint over himself and uses it against enormous odds against himself.

The Sardar will pardon me when I say that I have fairly studied the history of the Sikhs and drunk deep of the essence of the *Granthsaheb*. Tested by the tenets of that scripture, what is said to have been done by the Sikhs is indefensible and suicidal. The Sikh bravery and integrity must not be frittered away on any account. It can be an asset to the whole of India. In my opinion, it is a menace which it should not be.

Of course, it is nonsense to suggest that the Sikhs are enemy No. 1 of Islam. Have I not been described as such? Is the honour to be divided between them and me? I have never desired the honour. My whole life is a standing testimony against the charge. Can the same be said of the Sikhs? Let them learn the lesson from the Sikhs who stand behind the Sher-e-Kashmir[1]. Let them repent of the follies committed in their name.

I know the vicious suggestion that the Hindus would be all right if they would sacrifice the Sikhs who would never be tolerated in Pakistan. I can never be a party to any such

[1] Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah; literally "the Lion of Kashmir"

fratricidal bargain. There can be no rest for this unhappy land unless every Hindu and Sikh returns with honour and in safety to West Punjab and every Muslim refugee to the Union, barring of course those who do not choose to do so for reasons of their own. The sin of mass exchange of population must be washed out if we are to live as peaceful and helpful neighbours.

I must not be asked to recount the evil deeds of Pakistan. The recounting won't help either the Hindu or the Sikh sufferers. Pakistan has to bear the burden of its sins, which I know are terrible enough. It should be enough for everybody to know my opinion (in so far as it has any value) that the beginning was made by the Muslim League long before the 15th of August. Nor am I able to say that they turned over a new leaf on the 15th of August last. This statement of my opinion can't help you. What is of moment is that we of the Union copied the sins and thus became fellow-sinners. Odds became even. Shall we now awake from the trance, repent and change or must we fall?

Harijan, 7-12-1947

86. LETTER TO CHAMPA R. MEHTA

NEW DELHI,
November 25, 1947

CHI. CHAMPA,

I have your letter. It does not satisfy me in the least. I see the old Champa in it. Once one has begun to entertain a doubt about a person, the latter cannot guide one. Please, therefore, excuse me and leave me out of this.

It is of course true that Bhansali's attitude in this matter is different from mine.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

87. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

November 25, 1947

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I am enclosing herewith Ashadevi's letter. Accordingly pay her Rs. 35,000. You certainly can manage the amount. You already have deposits with Bachchharaj Company. Moreover Brijmohan came yesterday and told me that he would deposit another Rs. 15,000 with the firm.

Sushila says that Babu[1] has reached there but she is very ill. I shall now enquire and know the details. She should have patience and stay on in Nagpur where she has been.

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

88. LETTER TO HIRAGAURI

November 25, 1947

CHI. HIRAGAURI,

I have your cheque. I am glad to learn about the family's well-being. Chi. Manu is now firmly settled there. Hence, there is no reason to worry.

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

89. LETTER TO CHUNIBHAI

NEW DELHI,
November 25, 1947

BHAI CHUNIBHAI,

I got your letter only today. I don't know who Subbayya is and it was just today that I came to know of the incident you write about. I have always had respect for Rishi Aurobindo[2].

[1] Sharda, addressee's daughter, married to Gordhandas Chokhawala

[2] Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950); studied in England from 1880 to 1893; taught in Baroda and Calcutta; organized revolutionary activities and was sentenced for a year in May 1908; established an ashram in Pondicherry; author of *Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, *The Human Cycle*, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *Essays on the Gita*, *Savitri* and other works

I also do not know what the Government here has to say. Please rest assured concerning me.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

90. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 25, 1947

I think it would be good if institutions like the Nayee Talim[1], Ashram, etc., get integrated. There will be substantial savings also. The atmosphere will definitely undergo a sea-change. But all these aspects have to be considered by the Ashram inmates themselves. I see no early prospect of my going there. God will either save me or consume me here. Whatever the result I am patiently waiting for either of the two. And I look upon this as God's grace.

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 355

91. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 25, 1947

Lying down I am dictating this to Chi. Manudi. My hands become numb from cold. Chi. Manudi is even more delicate, although she is much younger. Such is the plight of our girls. Let me now come to the point.

In my view, the Junagadh problem remains unsolved. If the Nawab had not run away and if he had handed over all power voluntarily, that would have constituted real victory. He ran away because he was afraid of you. I do not consider this a glorious achievement. What I wanted was that the Nawab should have stayed and done the will of his subjects. He could not become a servant of the people. This is possible only in a non-violent struggle. A mighty power like England was subdued by a struggle based on truth and non-violence and it transferred all power with its own hands. We have this illustration before us, and yet you could not win over

[1] Hindustani Talimi Sangh

the poor little ruler of Junagadh through love. I am not prepared to give credit to Shamaldas for any success or bravery. He is my own nephew. No one else knows him as well as I do. But what is the use of stretching the point? It is enough for me if I can die with Rama's name on my lips and truth and non-violence in my heart.

Chi. Manudi often gives me news about Kathiawar. Men from Kathiawar, like Balwantrai, Anantrai Pattani and Dhebar, come and see me from time to time. I cannot listen to them all. Manu has shaped well and can understand and discuss the problems.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 355-6

92. LETTER TO PRABHAKAR

NEW DELHI,
November 25, 1947

CHI. PRABHAKAR,

I have your letter. To me April is very far off. When the time comes I shall let you know who should accompany me. I think you will have to come. It is good that you met Mataji. I understand what you say about Zohra[1]. She should get well now.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9041. Also C. W. 9165. Courtesy: Prabhakar

93. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

November 25, 1947

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

I have your letter. You did well in writing about the weaving department. I have seen a part of it and the rest I shall see whenever I find time.

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

[1] Wife of Akbar Chavda

CWMG - XC

94. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 25, 1947

. . .[1] I thought you were an innocent girl. One cannot think of marriage in this *yajna*. Yes, if your mother and father are keen you can get married but I cannot have the marriage here. Today I am burning in this fire-pit. Let us see what path God shows us in the end. You must complete your nursing course.

I have heard many other things also about the Ashram. Don't you think it is your duty to write to me about all this? If you cannot abide by the rules of the Ashram, you should leave it.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 355

95. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 25, 1947

I am sorry that I did not answer your letter till today. I beg your forgiveness. Today we are steadily going down and God knows to what depth. Khwaja Saheb met me yesterday.[2] He may come today also. I am considering what my duty is when there is a threat to the lives of Khwaja Saheb and women like Sophiabehn[3]. I realize what a blunder we have committed in partitioning the country and we continue to make more and more blunders. It is possible that I am mistaken. Let us see what path God shows us.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 356

[1] Omission as in the source

[2] After hearing from Khwaja Abdul Majid, President, All-India Muslim Majlis, about his experiences Gandhiji had remarked: "Had they killed you, I would have danced (with joy). And by dying you would have rendered service both to Muslims and Hindus."

[3] A Congress Seva Dal worker, who had come to see Gandhiji on November 23

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96. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
November 25, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today I want to tell you something about the refugees from Pakistan. But the difficulty is whether they should be called refugees. Some persons met me yesterday and asked me why I was referring to them as refugees. In a way they are right because those who seek shelter are known as *sharanarthi*—refugees. They said they had been driven here by their troubles, but why should they seek anybody's protection here, especially since they have come to India and India belongs to everyone? I think of Pakistan as also included in India. But if it is not part of India today and India is divided into two parts, the Indian Union belongs and should belong to everybody. So, when they come over here, they do so as a matter of right. From this point of view those persons' remark appeared right to me. When a person is facing hardships in a place and escapes from that place and comes and takes shelter on the lap of his mother, shall we call him a refugee or a person who has come as a matter of right? I told them that they must admit that I had no ill feeling in my heart which would make me use harsh words. In fact, we have been such slaves of the English language that we cannot free ourselves from that slavish mentality. Hence the word refugee, and it could mean only one thing, as popularized by the Press, namely, *sharanarthi* or *nirashrit*. Then those people remarked that there were many other words in English. Why should they not be called 'sufferers'. I know English sufficiently well. So, how could I call them sufferers? Then, what should I call them? I thought they may be called *dukhi* because they are disconsolate. But in a way, we are all full of sorrow in this life. As a matter of fact those who have come here in millions leaving their homes and property are in great misery. I would therefore like to talk about them today.

Three types of people came to see me today. One type I would leave out altogether. The person had a big joint family in Lahore. He used to run some hotels, etc., and all his houses and property were left behind and he came here with his wife and children. He did not bring all the family members here. He

narrated everything to me and requested me to find some accommodation for him. I told him that I had no authority, and even if I had, I would not fix any accommodation for him. As it was, there was housing shortage in Delhi and the local people themselves were in great trouble; the Government requisitioned their houses. When an officer or a diplomat arrived, he could not be put up in a tent. Hence, the Government acquired some houses and made the allotment for the purpose. If the original occupants protested and asked where they could go, they were asked to go anywhere. The Government, of course, did not go to that extent, but it could go, and many people would have received notices to vacate their houses. Under these conditions, how could these millions of suffering people be provided accommodation? He told me that he had come here after losing seventeen members [of his family]. I told him that at least he had seventeen members in his family. There were some families where there was no one apart from a man and a woman. I told him that if he believed that he belonged to the whole of India, even after the loss of the seventeen members who were dead and gone, the rest of India was there for him. Well, this is just philosophizing, so let us leave it here. Then I told him that he should go and live in the camps. All types of people were living there and there was nothing wrong about it. He said that he was no beggar to live on charity. I assured him he certainly was not one and if I were in charge of the refugee camps, I would not give food on charity. I would tell them that they were able-bodied and should work and maintain themselves and weave their own cloth. I would of course tell them to cover themselves during the night and protect themselves against the dew. But they needed no covering during the day. The sky was clear and they should take warmth from the heat of the sun. I did not stay inside during the day. I enjoyed the sun outside. But he said that he could not do that. He had young children with him and he needed a house to live in. I asked him if he was the only person having children. I found in every camp I visited mothers with their children. Some women were pregnant and gave birth to their children right there in the camps. What was his objection then to living in a refugee camp? I said he should eat what other refugees were eating and work as others did; he was strong and sturdy and might as well run a hotel or something. Why then should he not do something which might bring relief to others?

He asked me: "Why should the Muslims living here not vacate their houses and go away? Why are they still here?" I was deeply

pained to hear this. In the first place the Muslims are already running away in panic and even from among those who have stayed back some are being slaughtered daily. Everyone goes and tells them: "Go away, we want to live in your houses." If everybody exercises authority, who will be the subjects and to whom would the country belong? Everybody cannot wield authority. Nowhere in the world things happen like this. Of course, it is said that among the savages there is no leader. But even bandits have a leader. In the case of Ali Baba and the forty thieves there was at least one leader. Thus there is no place in the world where all would be leaders or there would be no leader at all. We, however, do not know how to wield power and how to rule ourselves. That is the reason why we are in trouble today. It is deplorable that you should have designs on the houses of the Muslims who have fled in panic or have been killed or arrested by the police. It does not befit you. If at all, you can say that to me because the house in which I stay is like a palace. You can ask me to leave this place and go and live in a camp. You can say that it would make no difference to me, for I have no wife, no sons, no daughters, that I have gathered these girls from somewhere and call them my daughters, that I should go to the camps and regard all the girls there as my daughters. I would listen to you if you said that to me. I would certainly feel amused, for, even if I ran away, would you stay here? This house belongs to someone else. It is not mine. Of course the owner of this house has made me the owner and insisted that I should keep or prevent anyone from staying here as I please. How can the Muslims leave their houses? Only Gandhi is in a position to do that. If he is removed from here and dumped somewhere no one is going to leave him unattended. Somebody would give him milk, fruits, dates and somehow his things would be managed. He is not going to remain unclothed. For even clothes would be provided for him. When I talked like this to that gentleman he felt ashamed.

Then some Sikh gentlemen came to me. They said they were not like the Sikhs here. The surprising thing was that they did not carry *kirpans*. I did not ask them the reason. However, they did wear metal wristlets on their wrists and I think they also had beards. They told me they were in great distress. They belonged to the Hazara district where they owned and tilled land. They were ready to live by farming if they were provided land and implements. I was touched by what they said and felt they were right. I asked them why they did not go to East Punjab. They

informed me that the East Punjab Government could accommodate only people coming from West Punjab. They were told that the Government could not accommodate people coming from every place. Since they belonged to the Frontier Province they were asked to approach the Union Government.

Even though the Central Government does not have land, it would be nice if it could get land for these people. The Government should arrange to get for them oxen, ploughs, seeds, etc. I do not know if there is sufficient land in the province of Delhi. But those who want to use the plough should be settled somewhere. Had I been in charge of the Government, I would have set up a separate camp for them, where they could produce their own requirements of food. If that is not possible, let the Government give them loan to meet the expenses of these things. These people say that they do not have any money now, but they are industrious and if they could get facilities they would produce everything and would not sit idle. It seems to me that the country is losing much because such farmers are just sitting idle in so many places. They are our brothers and we must do something for them. I do not know whom I should approach in the Government. But through you I want to make it known to the Government that it is our duty to help such people. They ask me where they could go and stay and how they could eat. I would say that there should be a separate camp for them. But till that is arranged they should live and manage their things in the camps that are already there. If they cannot be given any place here, any vacant place anywhere in India is as good. They do not insist on being accommodated only here. They do not even say that they should be allotted any Muslim house. They say that they do not want to make others pass through the hardships they have known. They say they are poor people. They are strong enough but their strength is not for intimidating others. They want to live in whatever way they can with fear of God in their hearts. I told them that their trouble was only a passing phase. They wondered how that could be—just as somebody here wonders—how it could happen that the people who have come from Pakistan would go back there and the Muslims who have run away to Pakistan would return here, as I have been saying. I told them that it would happen, if not today, then tomorrow. But the condition is that we on our side should become good. Let us convince ourselves that there is none who is our enemy. Even the Muslims are not our enemies. Some people say that even here the Muslims are fifth-columnists. How could the poor things

be fifth columnists? Nobody can harass us here and if anyone dares to do so, God will see to him or our Government will put him down. If we come to our senses here today, everything will be well tomorrow; I too will be free. Today I am very much disturbed. My life has become a burden to me. I wonder why I am still here. I could become strong if Delhi were restored to sanity, and then I would rush to West Punjab and tell the Muslims who have gone away from here that I have prepared the ground for them and they could come back any time they wanted and live wherever they chose. Such an occasion is bound to come some time, for how long can crores remain enemies of each other? It is not possible to kill or drive away 350 to 400 million Muslims who are here in India. One cannot even dream of it and I do not want to entertain any such dream. But today I have become a sort of burden. There was a time when my word was law. But it is no longer so. Should I run away in that case? Whether I live or die, those who are living in misery will certainly return to their homes with honour and respect, not in order to pick up a fight with anyone but to meet their own brethren. Similarly, the Muslims should come back here. That is the only thing that can keep us alive and in no other way can we survive.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 117-22

97. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

November 26, 1947

CHI. LILI,

Your letter has arrived very promptly. Take care of your health and devote yourself entirely to your studies. Ponder over what you read and digest it; then everything will become easy. My blessings are ever with you. Your studies must be your first concern. Don't be scared by anything you hear about me. If you want to honour my wishes your paramount task is to pass your examinations. I am already being well looked after. You will be rendering enough service if I do not have to worry about you.

You can have the Rs. 100 from me. Do you need the money urgently? If you do, shall I give you a note to someone or shall I send the sum by money order?

After you left I remember to have taken clove and sugar only once.

It was good you came—even if you had to pay first-class fare. You are now about to become a doctor, so occasionally you must travel first-class.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

98. LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI

November 26, 1947

CHI. PRABHUDAS[1],

I have your letter. Stay calm. I have written you a long letter, which you should get by now. If I have a copy it will be enclosed with this. Go to Noakhali only after you have completely recovered.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

99. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 26, 1947

The Hyderabad problem has erupted in a more unpleasant manner.[2] Kashmir is in the cauldron. I was not in favour of partition of India because I could foresee these developments. Hence I am not surprised at this crisis we are facing today. Those brothers and sisters who joined the Congress or courted imprisonment are scrambling for power and fame, as if they had done me a

[1] Son of Chhaganlal Gandhi

[2] The Nizam of Hyderabad had sent a second delegation to Delhi adopting the line that Hyderabad would prefer to remain an independent sovereign State "in close association with the two Dominions".

On November 29 a standstill agreement for one year was signed between the Nizam and the Government of India, under which "all agreements and administrative arrangements as to matters of common concern, including External Affairs, Defence and Communications, which were existing between the Crown and the Nizam before August 15, 1947, shall . . . continue as between the Dominion of India and the Nizam." *Vide* also pp. 8-9.

favour in doing what they did. I receive heaps of letters on this subject every day. They evoke not anger but pity in my mind at the mentality of our patriots. May God grant good sense to all.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 361-2

100. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 26, 1947

You must have got well by now. Your present duty is to study. You will gain nothing by giving up studies and coming to me. I will consider, and so should you, that you are serving me if you prosecute your studies and render service appropriate to your education. It is not as if one could serve me only by massaging my feet or making a couple of *khakhras*[1] for me. On the contrary, those who render to the poor some useful service of my liking render real service. But your foremost duty is to recover.

Chi. Manudi is well. She takes down copious notes. She feels the cold a lot. There is, in fact, a Gujarati proverb which says "The goat nibbles away the cold of a child." But here it is the reverse. The old man's cold has been nibbled away by the goat!

I have written enough today—haven't I ? Do the duty that falls to your lot with a steady mind.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 362

101. LETTER TO S. M. QASIM RIZVI

November 26, 1947

BHAI SYED SAHEB[2],

I am glad that we met. What you said amazed me. It was difficult to believe it. I had asked you if I could send you

[1] Crisp, thin, paper-like *chapatis*

[2] Leader of Ittehad-ul-Mussalmeen, an organization which was terrorizing the Hindus of the State, opposed accession of the State to India and wanted independence for the Nizam.

The addressee had persuaded the Nizam to dissolve the first delegation and to appoint another to resume negotiations with the Government of India. *Vide* also footnote 2, p. 109.

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copies of some documents in my possession. I have many other complaints besides these about you and the Muslims of Hyderabad but I think these three samples are sufficient.

SYED MOHAMMED RIZVI
DARUSSALAAM
HYDERABAD

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

102. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 26, 1947

I know that translations that appear in the newspapers are sometimes wrong and that is why I myself translate into English. God knows how it happened in spite of this.

Incidentally only yesterday Khwaja Saheb had come. He also told me the same. I was very much surprised to hear all this. How nice it would have been if somebody had killed him! And he is a man who would have died bravely taking the name of God.

I wish to go and stay in a Muslim locality. Nothing has been decided as yet. Let us see. The Hyderabad issue is a difficult one, Junagadh's has become a sort of a farce. I don't think it was a great achievement on our part. After all, didn't we have the support of the Indian army?

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 362-3

103. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 26, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

A gentleman has written a letter to me. It is accompanied with a cutting from a Bombay newspaper. It is stated in that cutting that Gandhi is only carrying on propaganda for the Congress, but people are not interested in hearing it. If the Congress uses the radio, etc., like this for its own propaganda, it is bound to bring about dictatorship in the end. It is absolutely incorrect to say that I sing praises of the Congress I do not sing anybody's

praises and, if I do, I sing the praises of the whole world. The cutting also says that the talk of non-violence is just for show, the real purpose being self-glorification by the Government. But I would say that no government which indulges in self-glorification can survive. And I only want to serve dharma. I speak to you only about things related to dharma. Maybe, some people are not interested in hearing what I say. But there are others who write to tell me that they feel greatly encouraged by what I say. Nobody forces people to listen to me against their wishes. If your mind is somewhere else, you are free to leave this place without listening to what I say. If you leave me alone, I would neither have the prayer here, nor deliver the speeches. I am not particular about speaking on the radio. I do not like it. Even here I do not come with a prepared speech.

Many of our women are in Pakistan. They are being molested. Those unfortunate women are made to feel ashamed. In my view, they have no reason to feel ashamed. It would be gross injustice if any woman is considered worthless by society and abandoned by her brothers, parents, and husband because she had been abducted by the Muslims. It is my belief that any woman who has the purity of Sita cannot be touched by anyone. But where can we find women like Sita these days? And not all women can be like Sita. Should we show contempt for the woman who had been forcibly abducted and tyrannized? She is not a woman of loose character. My daughter or wife too could be abducted and raped. But I would not hate her for that reason. Many such women had approached me in Noakhali. Many Muslim women also came. We have all become goondas. I consoled those women. It is the men who commit rape that should feel ashamed, not these poor women.

A gentleman[1] remarks that supposing controls are removed and people start producing food for themselves in the villages and villagers start helping in harvesting the crops, etc., the prices will come down, but the prices will still rise if the farmers have to hire paid labour. It was customary at one time for one farmer to invite other farmers to help in harvesting and threshing and thus take the grains to the house. That practice is now forgotten, but should be revived. Nothing can be accomplished single-handed. That friend also suggests that at least one of the Ministers should be a peasant. Unfortunately, none of our Ministers is a peasant. The Sardar is a peasant by birth and has some knowledge

[1] Secretary of a Provincial Congress Committee, who was a farmer

of agriculture, but he is a barrister by profession. Jawaharlal is a scholar and a great writer, but what does he know about farming? More than 80 per cent of our population are peasants. In a true democracy, there should be the rule of peasants in our country. They need not become barristers. They should know how to be good farmers, how to increase their produce and keep the soil fertile. If we had such peasants, I would ask Jawaharlal to be their secretary. Our peasant ministers would stay not in a palace but in a mud-house, and would toil on the land throughout the day. Then alone can there be a true peasant rule.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 123-4

104. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

November 27, 1947

CHI. KAKA,

I have your letter. I shall have a talk with Jawaharlal about the two points you mention. Only if he wants can something be done about it. I was not aware that Beg was to be replaced.

He must also appreciate what you write about the port. Let us see how far I can reach. Just now my mind is engaged in a single task. If I don't succeed in it there is nothing but darkness before me.

The four associations, viz., the Talimi Sangh, the Hindustani Prachar Sabha, the A. I. S. A. and the Village Industries Association, are meeting here by the 12th of December. You will have to come for that; we shall do what we can then.

Will Christmas have the same importance now or even a long holiday for it? However, let the time come and let things take their own course.

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

105. LETTER TO SURENDRA MEDH

NEW DELHI,
November 27, 1947

CHI. MEDH,

I could read your letter only today. It reached here on the 22nd instant. May you have success in your resolve; take it as my blessing. You do remember your resolve, don't you, never to lose temper, to preserve your health in order to render service and to be fearless. The news you convey from there[1] is startling, yet not quite so. I know our people there too well to be startled by the news. And I am alarmed that we have not yet learnt the true lesson. Are we ever going to learn it? How can I guide you from this distance? And where do I have the energy for that? Weigh everything on the scales of truth and non-violence and follow the resultant verdict. And don't be afraid. It should never turn out that you had gone there to exploit and instead were yourself exploited. The best way is not to bother about what any 'ism' says but to associate yourself with any action after considering its merit. Dr. Dadoo[2] has made a favourable impression on everybody here. Our Government here consults me on its various actions.

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

106. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 27, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You would have perhaps seen [the report] or you would see, for you could not have yet seen, that I had called on the Governor-General[3]. Any time now it will be in the newspapers. Subsequently I called on Liaquat Ali also. I got an opportunity to visit both of them. We talked at length and they are working on something. I found that Liaquat Ali was not only ill but also confined to bed. He was having pain in the chest and palpitations.

[1] South Africa
[2] Dr. Y. M. Dadoo
[3] Who had resumed office on November 27 on his return from England

He is better now, but has gone very weak. He is staying at the Viceregal Lodge, hence I went and looked him up. He is the Prime Minister of Pakistan as Jawaharlal is the Prime Minister of India. Thus he and the Finance Minister[1] of Pakistan, whose name I have forgotten, Sardar Patel and two others met and they have arrived at some decision. I cannot give the full report. If it is carried out it is possible that we might to some extent come out of our present confusion and hardships. But what happens or does not happen is in the hands of God. Man, after all, can only try.

You must have read in the papers that Sheikh Abdullah has also come here. The Kashmiris refer to him as Sher-e-Kashmir. And so he is. He has done a lot of work; but the remarkable thing is that he has won over all the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. There Muslims are in a majority, and the Hindus and the Sikhs are just a handful. None the less, he carries them all with him. He does nothing that would keep them discontented. Then we saw that while coming here he also went to Jammu. There have been considerable excesses by the Hindus there. This has not been fully reported in the newspapers. The Maharaja and his new Premier[2] also went there. I asked Sheikh Abdullah jokingly if there were two Premiers. He said he also was not aware of it but this much he could say, that he was looking after the affairs of the Government there, whether there were one or two Prime Ministers. So he too went to Jammu. I do not know if what happened in Jammu was at the instance of the Maharaja or his new Premier. But those things happened there and it is a matter of great shame for us. Still Sheikh Abdullah did not lose his balance and the Hindus in Jammu fully supported him. Where then was the need to tell him anything? But he has still to convince Kashmir and the entire India that the only way for Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs is to live together in amity and to trust one another. Then alone can Kashmir and India live together. His attempts are no doubt in that direction, but there is one obstruction. It is a mountain region which is at a height of 10,000 if not 14,000 feet. It snows heavily there. That is why movement from one place to another is not very easy. The movement would be easy only through Pakistan. But who could say that Pakistan would allow the movement? Apart from that, fighting is already going on with the Afridi invaders who may

[1] Ghulam Mohammed

[2] Mehrchand Mahajan, Judge of the Punjab High Court, was appointed Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in November

well be said to belong to Pakistan. Under these circumstances, how can the Kashmiris come *via* Pakistan? The Government of the Indian Union has already sent help to them and they can have a straight road only through India. There is not much of trade in Kashmir, but the people of Kashmir are industrious and skilled in handicrafts. Kashmir is a huge fruit garden. But who would bring all those things from there and how? Everything cannot be brought by air. And how can those vendors travel by air ? That is not possible. So, the only way is through Pathankot in East Punjab. It is a small road but at least there is one. But the Hindus of East Punjab have become so bad that no Muslim can cross that road. The Sheikh says that that is the greatest danger. He is a very big man but he says that even for him it is difficult to pass through that way. Not only the police guards but even ordinary people try to enquire from anyone passing that way who he is and would like to lift his turban to see if he wears a tuft and do similar things. If he happens to be a Hindu, or a Sikh, well and good, but if he is a Muslim then he is doomed. Such is the situation prevailing there.

So the Governor-General and these four have met. It would be well if they are able to do something. And they have done some little bit. But what is the use of their doing anything? If the people themselves are caught in a frenzy, then nothing can be done. I would tell the people of East Punjab that enough damage had been done, and now let us forget everything. Or, would things always be like this? I would say that that road should be absolutely clear. The Government also should fully carry out its responsibility. If the Government is not able to do this, what is the use of our having sent the army by air? Will it help in carrying on trade in Kashmir? If not, is the Indian Union going to feed the Kashmiris? That is not possible. If today our Government has come to possess millions of rupees, would it go on squandering that money? I hear that every officer in the Government is going to have a secretary. I just do not know what he would do or what monthly salary he would get. If we go on squandering money at this rate, we will perish in no time. Ours is not a land of millionaires. It is a poor country where people earn even a few copper coins with great difficulty. There are only a handful of millionaires or businessmen. And how much money do even these people have? If it is squandered like this, it will all be spent in no time. Then there is the whole country to be looked after. We cannot waste money like that. So the Government will have to see how that road can be made safe so that anybody can pass

on safely. Kashmiris make beautiful clothes which can be brought by that road. Shawls and other handicrafts can also be brought. So also the Kashmir dry fruits. Today you can get a Kashmir apple with great difficulty. Kashmir has acceded to the Indian Union, but how long can it remain with India in this way? If Kashmir does not find a safe thoroughfare, I do not know what would happen. Now, after mentioning the third point, I will wind up for the day.

I have just received copies of the *Dawn* and the *Pakistan Times*. Both these are prominent dailies of Pakistan. When something appears in the *Dawn* or the *Pakistan Times* we cannot dismiss it. That way the people of Pakistan can dismiss the reports in *The Hindustan Times* or *The Bombay Chronicle*, can't they? So this is a useless argument. I think the *Dawn* and the *Pakistan Times* are also good papers which are read by Muslims and run by leading Muslims. They write about the Muslims of Kathiawar in their papers. When the Sardar went to Junagadh I was happy to see that even the Muslims had welcomed him there. They said it was good he went there because they were in great trouble. When the Princes and the people of Kathiawar are all on one side, how long could Junagadh remain apart? Hence, I was happy that the whole problem was solved without any violence. They did not remain strictly non-violent, but whatever violence they used was after great thought and consideration. I was very happy to know all that. But now I hear and even the *Dawn* expresses the view that the Muslims in Kathiawar cannot live in peace. I have received a telegram from a Muslim at the right moment. Kathiawar is a region where the Muslims used to live in peace and nobody ever disturbed them. There were good Muslims there and also rebellious Muslims. They did not quarrel with one another, but struggled for livelihood. Now, in that same Kathiawar such a situation has developed that they wonder if they can live there at all. In such a situation, should all Muslims in Kathiawar run away or should the Hindus slaughter them all? They are terribly harassed, and for me, this is unbearable because I was born in Kathiawar, and I know all the Princes and thousands of people there. Shamaldas Gandhi, who is like a son to me, has become all in all there. He has also formed a Provisional Government there. What is the use of that Provisional Government if, in spite of it, innocent Muslims are killed? When people thus take the law into their own hands, how can the Muslims feel safe there? I cannot say what will happen if this state of affairs spreads to all other places. I do not know if all those things

actually happened there, but I have read the report in the *Dawn* and have also received some telegrams. Later I asked some Hindus about it, and they said that there had been some cases of arson and loot, but they could not say if there were any cases of murder or abduction of Muslim women. But the *Dawn* reports that all the four things happened and that too on a wide scale. I had received several telegrams but only one telegram was shown to me and by mistake the others were not shown. Perhaps some fifty telegrams would have come to me from Muslims at different places. And they have a right to tell me that my son has become all-powerful there. But how can I take the responsibility for everything that my son may do? At the same time, how can I convince the world or the Muslims that way? What they write is true. But when could I have conveyed my feelings to my son? I read about it only today. Hence, through you I wish to convey not only to my son but to the whole of Kathiawar that if the Hindus have become so bad — they can be only Hindus because there are no Sikhs living there except perhaps some who might have settled there to earn their livelihood —then Kathiawar cannot remain undivided. We have taken Junagadh, no doubt, but we have done it in such a way that we are going to lose it—just as we won our freedom but to lose it. Then they remind me of what the Sardar had said in Junagadh. He had said that nobody would touch even a Muslim child provided he was loyal to Kathiawar, that is, the whole of India. He said he would see how anyone could even touch a young Muslim girl. He could say that because he is at once the Sardar and the Home Minister of India. He had a right to say that. But after his saying it, what has happened? It pains me to see that such things could happen in Kathiawar and people could become so mad. We have lost our dharma, our ability to work, and in this way we are going to lose our country. It was my duty to put all these things before you. These things are not reported in our newspapers. But I get all the news. It was of course my duty to make inquiries, but where do I have time for it? Hence, I have told you what I have heard. Even when I met Liaquat Ali I told him that I would like to ask him a question if he permitted. He agreed. Then I asked him if he was aware of what was happening in Kathiawar. He said he knew everything—that such things had happened and all the four things had taken place—but he could not say on what scale. He is the Prime Minister of Pakistan. That is why he openly told me everything, whereas I was talking with great restraint. Then I

thought I would convey to you this evening how pained I am by all this.

Kathiawar is my home. When that very home is on fire, what chance do I have to say anything? What can I say to the residents of Delhi? Something or the other is always happening everywhere around me. How can I remain unmoved in such a situation? No sensible human being can remain unmoved in such an atmosphere. This is my sad tale, rather, the sad tale of the whole of India, that I have placed before you.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 125-31

107. NO COMPARISON POSSIBLE

A friend asked me the other day whether I shared the opinion often expressed that as between nationalism and religion, the former was superior to the latter. I said that the two were dissimilars and that there could be no comparison between dissimilars. Each was equal to the other in its own place. No man who values his religion as also his nationalism can barter away the one for the other. Both are equally dear to him. He renders unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's and unto God that which is God's. And if Cæsar, forgetting his limits, oversteps them, a man of God does not transfer his loyalty to another Cæsar, but knows how to deal with the usurpation. A rehearsal of this difficulty gave rise to satyagraha.

Take a homely illustration. Suppose I have mother, wife and daughter. All the three must be equally dear to me in their own places. It is a vulgar error to think that a man is entitled to forsake his mother and his daughter for the sake of his wife. He dare not do the converse. And if any of the three oversteps her limits, the law of satyagraha comes to his assistance for the restoration of the equilibrium of the three forces.

NEW DELHI, November 28, 1947

Harijan, 7-12-1947

CWMG-XC

108. LETTER TO P. KODANDA RAO

November 28, 1947

MY DEAR KODANDA RAO,

I have your letter. I knew nothing about Mr. Satchell's case before receiving your letter. Nothing remains to be done by me about the case, though I am not quite clear about it from your letter. I suppose Mr. Satchell is free to be in India as long as he likes. If he ever comes to Delhi, where I am fixed for the time being, I shall be delighted to meet him, who, from the account you give me, is a brave man.

I never knew that Father Lash had become Bishop of Bombay. Is it a matter for condolence or congratulation?

I hope Mary[1] is all the better for the little relaxation she had in America, if it was relaxation.

I am told that things are not quite so bad there as they are here. I do not need to go farther from here to make the acquaintance of hell.

With love to you two,

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI P. KODANDA RAO
SERVANTS OF INDIA SOCIETY
NAGPUR, C. P.

From a photostat: G. N. 6281

109. LETTER TO MANKUMAR NAG

NEW DELHI,
November 28, 1947

DEAR MANKUMAR,

Pyarelal had written to me about your difficulty. Now your letter. I am powerless to do anything. You should approach some monied man.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] Addressee's wife

110. LETTER TO MANIBEHN

November 28, 1947

CHI. MANIBEHN,

I have your letter. I can understand your inability to come over after the receipt of the two resignations. It is your clear duty to bury yourself in your present work. I can understand the resignation by Vithaldas[1]. I was, however, not prepared for the one by Kakubhai[2]. Who can know a man's nature? If his views on non-violence undergo a change, all that will remain will be trading in khadi which can be of no interest to him. I would certainly wish that with the change of his views he does not go over to the other extreme. I am returning both the letters.

Please let both the brothers read my letter. We are all put to test to prove whether the metal we are made of is brass or gold.

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

111. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 28, 1947

It is my misfortune that Kasturba is not alive today.[3] Had she been alive, she would have actually demonstrated the kind of bravery that is expected from women in the present circumstances. And whatever place our women have achieved today is due to Kasturba's courage, purity and steadfast faith. She might have been a totally uneducated woman, but she possessed all the virtues which a woman should have. On the strength of these virtues, India and I have risen high. I do not hesitate to say that the country or any of her citizens can hardly repay the debt.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 380

[1] V. V. Jerajani

[2] Purushottam K. Jerajani

[3] The addressee had written: "Unfortunately Kasturba is not alive today. Had she been alive and had she been abducted, you would have understood our feelings."

112. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 28, 1947

I know that khadi and all allied activities have slackened because we have achieved swaraj. I am caught in the flames at the moment. If I succeed in this work, the other activities will take care of themselves. But in the present climate, what can one hope for all these activities? Finally, of course, India will get what is ordained for her. What can we do?

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 380

113. SPEECH AT GURU NANAK BIRTHDAY FUNCTION

November 28, 1947

I fear that I might not be able to say all that I want to. I had also hoped that you, having gone through the military machine, would observe perfect silence. But the discipline has not reached the sisters and, therefore, they are not able to observe the laws of public meetings. I had the same experience when, some years ago, I was in Amritsar. You will admit that the fault lies with the men. As I entered the meeting place I saw the remains of bananas and oranges thrown about anyhow. These have not only made the place dirty, but dangerous to walk. We should learn to keep the roads and footpaths as clean as the floors in our houses. In the absence of proper receptacles I have noticed disciplined people putting these in a piece of paper and then temporarily in their pockets until they are cast in their places. It is the duty of men, if they have learnt the rules of social conduct, to teach them to the womenfolk.

Today Baba Bachittar Singh came to me in the morning and insisted that I should attend the Guru Nanak birthday celebrations. He told me that probably over a lakh of men and women had assembled there, and that most of them would be sufferers from West Pakistan. I hesitated because I felt that many Sikhs had been displeased with me. The Baba nevertheless insisted and said that I should say my say before the meeting.

I yielded and felt that even as a mother often gives bitter pills to her children, I would take the liberty of saying things, which might appear to be bitter. In reality and in effect they are meant for your good. My mother often used to administer bitter drugs, but I could not feel elsewhere the comfort that her lap provided for me. Whatever I have said to you up to now, I do not regret. I have said those things as your sincere friend and servant. I have with me Sardar Datar Singh's daughter. You perhaps know him. He has lost his all in the Punjab. He was the owner of large tracts of land and several hundred fine cattle. He has lost many relatives and dear friends in Montgomery, but I am glad to be able to tell you that he has not shed a single tear over the misfortune, nor has he felt any bitterness towards the Muslims. I would like you to follow his example. Sikh friends have told me that one Sikh is considered equal to 1,25,000 men. Where is that bravery today? Have things come to such a pass that a minority of Muslims cannot live in your midst in perfect safety?

I am free to admit that the mischief commenced in Pakistan, but the Hindus and the Sikhs of East Punjab and the neighbouring districts have not been behindhand in copying the mischief. The difference is that the Hindus have not the courage of the Sikhs, who know how to use the sword.

You see Sheikh Abdullah with me. I was disinclined to bring him with me, for I know there is a great gulf between the Hindus and the Sikhs on the one side and the Muslims on the other. But the Sheikh, known as the Lion of Kashmir, although a pucka Muslim, has won the hearts of both by making them forget that there is any difference between the three. He had not been embittered. Even though in Jammu recently the Muslims were killed by the Hindus and the Sikhs, he went to Jammu and invited the evil-doers to forget the past and repent over the evil they had done. The Hindus and the Sikhs of Jammu listened to him. Now the Muslims and the Hindus and the Sikhs of Kashmir and Jammu are fighting together to defend the beautiful valley of Kashmir. I am glad, therefore, that you are receiving the two of us with cordiality.

Let this auspicious day mark the beginning of a new chapter in your life. Let the disgrace of driving out the Muslims from Delhi cease from today. I found to my shame that as our motor-car was passing through Chandni Chowk, which used to be filled with Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, I did not notice a single Muslim passer-by. Surely we have not come to such a pass as to be

afraid of the minority of the Muslims scattered throughout the Indian Union. If there are any traitors in their midst, our Government is strong enough to deal with them. We must be ashamed of hurting children, women or old men. Every man must be considered innocent before he is found guilty by a properly constituted court of law.

I fervently hope that such misdeeds will become now a thing of the past. The *kirpan* is a symbol of sanctity to be exhibited and spent in defence of the helpless and the innocent. The tenth and the last Guru[1] undoubtedly wielded the sword, but never, so far as I know, at the expense of the weak. He had imposed many restraints upon himself. He had many reputed Muslim disciples. So had the other Gurus beginning with Nanak Saheb. Your bravery will be testified when all those who belong to different faiths including Muslims become your sincere friends.

Intoxicating drinks, drugs, dancing, debauchery and the vices to which many of us become addicted are not for the followers of the Gurus and the *Granthsaheb*. With the *Granthsaheb* as my witness, I ask you to make the resolution that you will keep your hearts clean and you will find that all other communities will follow you.

Harijan, 7-12-1947

114. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 28, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You know that today is Guru Nanak's birthday. Someone had sent an invitation to me also but at that time I had told him that I should be excused. But today Baba Bachittar Singh came to me and insisted that I should go. He came to me at 10 o'clock and we had to go in an hour's time. I then decided that I should go. Although I have done nothing from my side, my Sikh friends are angry with me today. Of course I have tried to push a bitter pill down their throat. But that is how things go on in the world. The Baba insisted on my going there all the same. He said there must be thousands of Sikh men and women—and some of them must be really in distress—who are eager to hear me. I agreed and told him

[1] Guru Govind Singh

that he should take me with him at 11 o'clock. He came at 11 a.m. with Sheikh Abdullah. He was also to be taken there. I asked him how Sheikh Abdullah could come there since the Sikhs and the Muslims could not bear to look at one another. But he said that Sheikh Abdullah had done one great thing. He had kept the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims united in Kashmir and created a situation in which they would wish to live and die together. So I thought that Sheikh Abdullah too should go with us, and we took him along. I was very glad about it. There were thousands of Sikh men and women. I spoke but little; but Sheikh Abdullah spoke fairly at length, and people heard him with attention. There was no trace of disapproval even in their eyes, then where was the question of their creating noise? After all, we had been invited there. And then the Sikhs are a brave community, so it all turned out well. I felt I should pass on this little information to you.

I have received a letter from Bengal. It is from the Muslim Chamber of Commerce. I cannot reply to that letter; but I have thought about it and also enquired from Ghanshyamdas if he knew anything about it. He told me that the Muslim Chamber of Commerce wants to have dealings with the Government and wants to correspond with it. But the Government belongs to everyone, whether he be Hindu, Muslim or Parsi. Then, how can the Muslims, Hindus, Parsis and the Englishmen have separate Chambers of Commerce? Hence the Government has refused to recognize it. That gentleman says in his letter that it is indeed strange that while the Marwari and the European Chambers of Commerce are allowed to exist, only the Muslim Chamber is not being granted the permission. I could appreciate his point and it pained me. If the Government does not wish to have any dealings with the Muslim Chamber of Commerce, it cannot have anything to do with the Marwari Chamber of Commerce and should not have anything to do with the European Chamber of Commerce, either. All these existed till now and the European Chamber of Commerce came into being because Europeans were in power and since we were being ruled by them the Viceroy used to be its President. And since he had to go to Calcutta during Christmas, he used to deliver long speeches there. But now that practice cannot be continued. How can the Europeans, Muslims and Marwaris have separate Chambers of Commerce? There can be only one Indian Chamber of Commerce. If the Hindus, Muslims and Parsis start having their separate Chambers of Commerce, what is the use of India's

independence? Especially the Europeans should yield now. They should not do anything by remaining in isolation. They should refuse to have any special privileges, and insist on having the same rights as others. That would become a great hallmark of India's independence. The European Chamber of Commerce used to invite the Viceroy every year. But, in my view, they cannot invite our Prime Minister or Deputy Prime Minister or even Lord Mountbatten. Lord Mountbatten can certainly go and meet them as a European. But the Chamber as such cannot invite him. I am a small man, but I have no doubt about my opinion. Similarly, the Marwari Chamber of Commerce cannot invite anybody from the Government. It can invite anyone as a Marwari, but not on behalf of the Chamber. They all exist because India exists. Even the Muslims cannot live here as a separate community. Let them live here as Indians. In the same manner, all Sikhs, Hindus and Europeans can live here only as Indians. They can all stay here as loyal citizens of India, and in no other capacity. Hence I thought that I should convey to them this important point. It is better that they hear my voice before they receive what I write from here. If the Muslims insist on having a separate existence politically and otherwise, then that wish cannot be granted. The Europeans can live here as Christians and practise the wonderful things in Christianity. This, after all, is their social or religious sphere. But as far as administration and politics are concerned, they must all be treated on an equal basis. Similarly, trade also belongs to everybody. If the Marwaris, Gujaratis, Punjabis want to have their exclusive shares, what would remain for India? We cannot carry on our work in this manner.

I forgot to mention one thing, which I should not have forgotten. I had mentioned it at the meeting of the Sikhs. But here too there are Sikhs and also Hindus. And what applies to one also applies to the other. Then I would say that we must regard today as the New Year day for the Sikhs. Hence, from today, the Sikhs have a duty to consider all the rest as their brethren. Guru Nanak taught no other thing. He even went to Mecca and has written quite a lot [about communal harmony]. There are many such references in the *Guru Granthsaheb*. What did Guru Govind do ? Many Muslims were his disciples and he even killed some people to accommodate them and protect them. He never killed anyone just for the sake of saving a Sikh. He did wield the sword, but he had accepted certain restrictions for its use. Thus, the Muslims may have done

anything, but we do not have to imitate them. Let us all remain good and do our duty. When I went to address the meeting of the Sikhs today, I was pained that I did not find a single Muslim on the road. What would be more shameful for us than the fact that not a single Muslim could be found in Chandni Chowk? I found the area crowded with men and unending rows of cars. But there was no Muslim among them. The only Muslim, Sheikh Abdullah, was seated next to me. How can we succeed in these circumstances?

A gentleman writes to me about the renovation of the Somnath temple[1]. This needs money and the Provisional Government at Junagadh, formed by Shamaldas Gandhi, has sanctioned Rs. 50,000 for it. One lakh is promised from Jamnagar. When the Sardar came here I asked him whether even though he was in the Government, he would acquiesce in its giving as much money as it liked for Hinduism from its treasury. After all, we have formed the Government for all. It is a 'secular' government, that is, it is not a theocratic government, rather, it does not belong to any particular religion. Hence it cannot spend money on the basis of communities. For it, the only thing that matters is that all are Indians. Individuals can follow their own religions. I have my religion and you have yours to follow.

Another gentleman has written well in a note. He says that it would be gross *adharma* if either the Junagadh Government or the Union Government gives money for the renovation of the Somnath temple. I think he has made an absolutely correct point. I then asked the Sardar if that was true. He said that that was not possible so long as he was alive. He said not a single pie could be taken out from the treasury of Junagadh for the renovation of the Somnath temple. If he was not going to do it, he said, what could poor Shamaldas do alone? There were enough number of Hindus who could donate money for the Somnath temple. If they became miserly and did not part with money, let the temple remain in its present state. There were already a lakh and a half rupees and Jamsaheb had already given a lakh. They would be able to manage for more.

I have learnt one thing more. You must have known that the Muslims in Pakistan have abducted our young girls. Attempts are being made and must be made to rescue them. Let us try to get back every abducted girl who is still alive there. If

[1] Which was desecrated and destroyed by Mahmood Gazni during his invasion in 1025 A. D.

these girls have been raped, have they lost everything by it? At least, I do not think so. I had even talked about it yesterday. Coercion cannot make one change his religion. But I hear that there is some talk of making some payment to reclaim these girls. Some hoodlums come forward to bring back the girls if they are paid Rs. 1,000 per girl. Has this thing become a business then? If somebody kidnapped one of these three girls with me and then demanded at least a hundred if not a thousand rupees, I would tell him that he had better kill the girl. My daughter would return if God wished to save her. Why should he bargain with me for her? Not only did he abduct the girl but he also indulged in bullying. Having abandoned his own religion he had come to bully me because she was my daughter. I would refuse to give him even a cowrie. Similarly no parent should make such bargains for his daughter. They must think that their daughters are with God and God is everywhere. If a girl loses her husband, where would she go? It is of course a different matter if the girl wants to come over from there and we give her the fare if she does not have it. But if a hoodlum comes and demands ransom money, his demand just cannot be accepted. I give such instances from there and also from here, because on our side too we have done such things and abducted Muslim girls. Would our Government indulge in such meanness? Should the East Punjab Government or the Union Government ask Jinnah Saheb to pay one lakh rupees for the return of Muslim girls in its custody? I would not give a single cowrie to the Government. How could it demand money as a reward for such abominable deeds? The Government should admit its mistake, make a solemn promise never to repeat it and return the girl along with a compensation. We are not going to achieve anything if we ourselves do not become pure and brave.

I had discussed Kathiawar yesterday. I told you whatever I had read in the Pakistani newspapers and subsequently heard from some Hindus. But today I consulted the Sardar when he came to me. I told him that when he went there he had made big speeches assuring that no one would touch a single Muslim boy or girl there, but then I heard that Muslims were being looted and beaten up, their property was burnt and their young girls kidnapped. He said that as far as he was aware, certainly not a single Muslim was killed nor a single Muslim house looted or burnt. All these things happened there in the chaos prevailing before he visited the place. There were some cases of looting and probably one house was burnt. But as for killing and

abducting, these two things did not take place there even then. An agent of the central Government or some Commissioner was always present there. He had been ordered to see that such things were not allowed. He had been instructed to have perfect bandobast so that nobody even touched any Muslim, let alone robbing or killing. Subsequently, no such thing happened. I asked the Sardar if I could mention the thing in the prayer meeting in the evening. He said I could certainly do so. He said that if something had happened there, he would have pursued the matter. He also said that the Hindu Congressmen there at great risk to their lives saved the Muslims and their property. No hooliganism could persist there. The Sardar said that as long as he was there and was in charge of the Home Department, he would not allow such a thing to happen. I was very happy to hear all that and asked his permission to refer to it in public. He said that I could gladly do so and also mention his name. I was so happy that yesterday I had talked about it and today itself I got this information.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 131-8

115. LETTER TO YVONNE PRIVAT[1]

BIRLA HOUSE,
NEW DELHI,
November 29, 1947

DEAR BHAKTI[2],

I was so glad to receive your argued letter of 27th August. I see that you have grasped the fundamental difference between passive resistance and non-violent resistance. Resistance both forms are, but you have to pay a very heavy price when your resistance is passive, in the sense of the weakness of the resister. Europe mistook the bold and brave resistance full of wisdom by Jesus of Nazareth for passive resistance, as if it was of the weak. As I read the New Testament for the first time I detected no passivity, no weakness about Jesus as depicted in the four gospels and the meaning became clearer to me when I read Tolstoy's *Harmony of the Gospels* and his other kindred writings. Has not the

[1] Extracts from this and the addressee's letter to Gandhiji appeared in *Harijan*, 7-12-1947, under the title "Do Not Lose Heart".

[2] The name given by Gandhiji to the addressee

West paid heavily in regarding Jesus as a passive resister? Christendom has been responsible for the wars which put to shame even those described in the Old Testament and other records, historical or semi-historical. I know that I speak under correction for I can but claim very superficial knowledge of history—modern or ancient.

Coming to my own personal experience, whilst we undoubtedly got through passive resistance our political freedom, over which lovers of peace like you and your good husband[1] of the West are enthusiastic, we are daily paying the heavy price for the unconscious mistake we made or, better still, I made in mistaking passive resistance for non-violent resistance. Had I not made the mistake, we would have been spared the humiliating spectacle of a weak brother killing his weak brother thoughtlessly and inhumanly.

I am only hoping and praying and I want all the friends here and in other parts of the world to hope and pray with me that this blood-bath will soon end and out of that, perhaps, inevitable butchery, will rise a new and robust India—not warlike, basely imitating the West in all its hideousness, but a new India learning the best that the West has to give and becoming the hope not only of Asia and Africa, but of the whole of the aching world.

I must confess that this is hoping against hope, for we are today swearing by the military and all that naked physical force implies. Our statesmen have for over two generations declaimed against the heavy expenditure on armaments under the British regime, but now that freedom from political serfdom has come, our military expenditure has increased and still threatens to increase and of this we are proud! There is not a voice raised against it in our legislative chambers. In spite, however, of the madness and the vain imitation of the tinsel of the West, the hope lingers in me and many others that India shall survive this death dance and occupy the moral height that should belong to her after the training, however imperfect, in non-violence, for an unbroken period of 32 years since 1915.

As to the last paragraph of your letter, I must confess my ignorance of psycho-analysis. Richard Gregg of U. S. A. has put the problem in a more concrete form than you have. You must have seen his letter and my reply[2] in the columns of *Harijan*.

I hope this will find you both in the same vigour in which you used to be during those happy days that you passed with me

[1] Edmond Privat, whom Gandhiji addressed as "Anand"

[2] *Vide* pp. 1-3.

in India. I wonder if you will ever again come to India and see it, not in her madness, but wisdom, inspiring every department of life.

Love to you both.

BAPU

MADAME EDMOND PRIVAT
1 AVENUE DE LA GARE
NEUCHATEL, SWITZERLAND

From a photostat: G. N. 2342

116. LETTER TO ANASUYA SARABHAI

NEW DELHI,
November 29, 1947

CHI. ANASUYABEHN[1],

You have asked for a message for the "Majoor Din"[2]. My life is my message. If the workers have assimilated the teaching of ahimsa, there should be no division of Hindus and Muslims among them and no trace of untouchability among the Hindu workers. Why should there be any divisions among workers? If the worker wants equality with the owner, he should look upon the mill as his own property and protect it. The Ahmedabad workers have already learnt how to fight injustice. But they have many more lessons to learn before they can hope to become partners with the original owners of the mills. Do they know this? Let them remember it and march forward.

Blessings to all the labourers
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 7-12-1947. Also from a facsimile in *Majoor Sandesh*, 5-12-1973

117. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 29, 1947

I don't know how long I shall have to stay here. Perhaps I may have to stay here for ever. Every day the situation seems to be getting out of control.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 389

[1] Sister of Ambalal Sarabhai; President, Majoor Mahajan, a union of mill workers in Ahmedabad

[2] Labour Day, which was to be observed on December 4

118. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
November 29, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I told you yesterday that it was a day of momentous importance for the Sikhs. It should hold the same importance for us too. If they have truly started a new life and desire to follow the principles laid down by Guru Nanak for all of us, then Delhi should not be in the grip of the things that it is in at present.

I have read in the newspapers and also heard otherwise that a large number of people in Delhi are given to drinking. We already know the things people can do under the influence of alcohol. Now I am told that drinking has become a difficult problem and has spread over the entire city, so much so that it has become extremely difficult to control it. If a new chapter has started from yesterday liquor consumption should become even less than before. Alcohol can only make us mad. Why then be a slave to it? How can I tell you everything? All kinds of things are brought to my notice.

This is one thing. As for the other, I am told that the mosques which we had damaged are still in that state, and the mosques which were turned into temples are closed since the police or the military guards them. But even this hurts me. For how can such a thing be allowed if we have opened a new chapter from yesterday? The Sikhs could not have converted the mosques into temples. The Sikhs are a great community, and, if they decide to remain pure from today and do only pure deeds I have no doubt that it is bound to influence the Hindus. Then the Sikhs would become propagators of truth and justice. This would become their profession, i. e., to stand for peace and nothing but peace everywhere. If this happens, the very face of the country would change. Hence, those who have converted the mosques into temples should promptly remove the idols from there, and restore the mosques. In that event, what need would there be for the police or the military guarding those places? When all people become good, there need be no police.

The third thing is that a large number of our girls have been carried away to Pakistan. We do not know where they have been taken. I had said yesterday that we should not give even a cowrie to get back the abducted girls. Those who have committed the crime of abducting our girls should restore them to us, and also do penance at the same time. It would not do to give any money to claim the girls back. But there is a very alarming report. It is reported that in the East Punjab we are ill-treating the Muslim girls, whom we have forcibly kept. I just cannot understand how we could have stooped so low. I must admit that I cannot bear to see this. We should regard those girls as our mothers or daughters. Those Muslim girls are like my own daughters. How can I indulge in pleasures, be alive and eat and drink while somebody ill-treats my daughters? I have a feeling that there is some exaggeration in this report. But on that ground it should not be disregarded. And, if there is some exaggeration it is only for good, because it would then make us think how low a man could stoop. This is something which we would shudder to think. We have opened a new chapter from yesterday, for, if the Sikhs have done so, the Hindus and the Muslims have done it too. Let us forget about the Muslims as we have made them helpless in the Indian Union. But the Hindus and the Sikhs are not helpless. And so, they must think what they should do. True, we are not indulging in such acts here. But when someone commits a crime anywhere I feel I am the culprit. You too should feel the same. If I were to commit any crime you should also think that you too were guilty of it. Let us all merge in each other like drops of ocean. If the drops of ocean remain apart they would dry up. But when they mingle together in the ocean they can carry huge ships across their expanse. As with the ocean so with us. After all we also are an ocean of human beings. If one person commits a crime, it amounts to all of us committing it. Then it ceases to be a crime. We must all become alert. That is why I talked about these things. But now I would like to come to the subject of controls.

Control on sugar has been removed. I hope and wish that controls on cloth and food would also be removed. But how would those controls go and what would be our duty after that? Since control on sugar has been removed, I would first talk about it. Now there are big sugar factories. But the owners of the factories should not consider themselves free to squeeze as much money from the people as they fancy. If they raise the price of sugar, people would be reduced to poverty. Fortunately the entire

population of India does not consume sugar. People should consume *gur*[1] for there is no control on it. The villagers can easily make *gur* in their own homes, but they cannot make sugar. There are huge factories in India where millionaires employ workers to produce sugar. But *gur* can be produced wherever sugar-cane is grown. Moreover, *gur* is a very healthy thing to eat if it is clean. When I was a child my father used to take me or I used to go with his attendants to the villages where sugar-cane was grown. People of those villages used to give us fresh and clean *gur* to eat. *Gur* is a sort of food which sugar can never be. So, the poor people should only eat *gur*. But today, some of them have started taking tea and in their tea they put sugar rather than *gur*. I would like to tell them that they should put *gur* in their tea; but would they listen to me? And when the price of sugar goes up, they think it would be better to have control on sugar so that they could have it cheaper. Under these circumstances, it is the supreme duty of the sugar merchants and factory-owners to have a mutual arrangement so that the entire country knows that with the freedom we have won we would earn only clean money. We would not cheat or deceive people and would root out all unclean and corrupt practices. If that does not happen, I would be blamed because I have worked quite a bit for the removal of controls, and am still working for it. If the sugar merchants and factory-owners increase their margin of profit, the price of sugar is bound to rise. If they take five per cent profit, it can be called honest earning. But it cannot be called honest earning if they pocket 10 or 20 per cent profit. Five per cent is more than sufficient and they should not take more than that. And, then, other controls would automatically go. Let not the Government get a chance to say that controls were removed because we wanted them to be removed and ask how the poor are now going to survive when they do not get sugar at all. That should not be the case. The factory-owners should become honest and form a committee to fix a uniform price of sugar. No factory-owner should charge more than that price. At the same time, the farmers who grow sugar-cane should not get less than their due. If the price rises because the cultivators are given more, then it becomes a matter of honest earning. They should maintain proper accounts and make a public announcement of what they pay to the farmers now as against what they were paid earlier, that the amount goes straight into the pockets

[1] Jaggery

of the cultivators and no middleman could swallow it and that as against the ten or twenty per cent they used to take, they are not taking even five and a quarter per cent now. Supposing the factory-owners do not take more than five per cent but if the middlemen charge higher prices, consumers of sugar will be really doomed. In that case, the factory-owners should sell sugar directly to the consumers. I have no doubt that things would run smoothly under such an arrangement.

A gentleman writes to say that the train fares for third-class travellers have been increased, though the increase is less compared to that of the first and second classes, but he asks, and rightly, why the third-class fares had to be raised even by this much. Granted that our aims of progress are high and we require more funds to achieve them. Then, if need be, we can increase the levy on tobacco and many other imported as well as indigenously produced non-essential items. It may serve our purpose to some extent. The men in power in the Government ought to consider and examine the feasibility of this proposition. But the point certainly needs to be understood, and the Government should also know that I have got people who give such useful suggestions. They are not unintelligent people. Rather, they are very sensible. If today we have millions of rupees with us, it does not mean that we should squander away everything. We should spend even small amounts, out of those millions, after careful consideration. And it is enough for me if these small amounts thus spent benefit the poor villagers of India. Out of the crores of rupees drawn from our villages, how much are we able to return to them? A true *Panchayati Raj* or democracy has got to draw its resources from the people but, in return, they should benefit the people tenfold. For instance, if I take money from the people for education, I should give such education to their children and have such an estimate of expenditure that they should get back their money tenfold. For example, if I start sanitation work in the villages and build roads for the village people, they would know that the money they give is being used for their own benefit. As a result, we would not be as crazy about our military as we are now. Then we would decide to spend as little as possible on the army and as much as possible on the general public. In such a situation, people themselves become the army and start acquiring knowledge of military affairs. When they are thus able to defend themselves and their neighbours, the defence of India is automatically ensured. As it is no one can have designs on India.

But right now, even though the British have gone, the atmosphere of the British rule has not yet gone. Let us change that atmosphere. The British used to spend extravagantly and the people did not get any return from such expenditure. But now the people should get back everything they give. Then it would be well for the country. This is all I would like to say today.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 138-43

119. ITS WISE USE

This letter[1] is from a correspondent who knows everything about this tragedy. I have not the least doubt that this tragedy can be turned to good account by the correct behaviour of the sufferers, as also that of the people amongst whom their lot is cast for the time being. In this consummation, I have no doubt that all specially qualified men and women such as doctors, lawyers, *vaids*, *hakims*, nurses, traders and bankers should make common cause with the others and lead a co-ordinated camp life in perfect co-operation, feeling not like helpless dependents on charity, but resourceful, independent men and women making light of their sufferings and looking forward to a life enriched by their sufferings, a life full of promise for the future and worthy of imitation by the people amongst whom the camp life is lived.

Then when the professional people have been inured to corporate unselfish life and when they can be spared from these camps, they would branch out into villages or otherwise, shedding the fragrance of their presence wherever they may happen to be.

New Delhi, November 30, 1947

Harijan, 7-12-1947

[1] The letter is not reproduced here. The correspondent, a refugee belonging to the medical profession, had suggested that "all members of the medical and teaching professions" should be absorbed in Government service to help the Provincial Governments "to carry out their rural uplift programmes".

120. LETTER TO KISHORELAL G. MASHRUWALA

NEW DELHI,
November 30, 1947

CHI. KISHORELAL,

I preserved your letters for such a long time. Now I see that I cannot cope with the work. So I have to give up the idea of writing on certain things. I include in this your views[1] also. I am forced to discuss Hindustani and the two scripts repeatedly.

I am all right.

Blessings to both of you
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 10733. Courtesy: Gomatibehn Mashruwala

121. LETTER TO SATISH D. KALELKAR

[*November 30, 1947*][2]

CHI. SATISH[3],

I have your English letter. I know nothing about Valji's letter. I have not read it. Anyway we may not stretch the point. Nobody is going to learn anything from it. Such articles would seldom appear in *Harijan*.

I understand what you say about [your] initials. I did not know how the 'D' came in. If [the blame] is put on Kaka he will not grow small. He is what he is and will always be.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXXIX, p. 257.
[2] The letter is placed in the source among those of this date.
[3] Son of D. B. Kalelkar

122. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 30, 1947

I can understand the plight of those who have been uprooted from their homes. But we have to find a way out of this situation. It is truly a boon if one can find happiness in adversity. I have not the slightest doubt that, if those who live in groups behave properly, everyone's interest will be served. If the doctors, *vaidyas*, nurses, teachers, traders, jewellers, and people of other professions among the refugees help one another it cannot but have pleasing results. Camp life presents its own opportunities. If we could only co-operate with one another and regulate our lives properly no one would find himself in distress. We could then show the world that though we had lost our all, we were still fully prepared to face any calamity.

. . .[1] I am sure that if only women displayed a little courage and freed themselves from narrow religious ideas they could render a unique service to the nation. I am convinced that no country where women are slaves can ever make any progress. I am amazed that while such barbarities are being perpetrated on women, men who call themselves brave merely look on. Look at the plight of the Punjab. Is that sort of thing enjoined in the Shastras? I fear that if we and our leaders do not wake up betimes it will be difficult to recover the girls that have been carried away to Pakistan.

After the girls are brought back it is necessary to resettle them properly. Girls forcibly abducted are not to be treated as defiled. And does defilement only apply to women and not to men? How long must I go on writing? What can I write? My heart is crying. What can my shedding tears avail? I have had long talks with Maulana Saheb but I have no hopes that anything will be achieved.

You all should take care of yourselves. I am well. Manu will write the rest. She is still weak, for in the midst of work she does not think of her health. I do, and therefore I keep fit.

Blessings to all from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 393-4

[1] Omission as in the source

123. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

November 30, 1947

DAUGHTER RAIHANA[1],

I have your letter. There is no need to publish an English version. I understand your point. The [publication] will benefit neither the Hindus nor the Muslims. If we meet some time and I have some leisure we shall have a talk and a good laugh. I shall learn the Urdu script better. You are in the midst of it all and so you hold one opinion, and since I am at a distance I hold a different one.[2] We are both right in our respective views. Or we might both be in the wrong. We should do all we can. Today the situation is very different. It is a matter of life and death.

To you both,

Blessings from
BAPU

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

124. LETTER TO MUSLIM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,
November 30, 1947

BHAI SALAJI,

Why do you write in English ? From your name you appear to be a Gujarati. It is possible that you belong to north India. Anyway you could have written to me in Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi or Bengali. But let this be.

Now I wish to come to your letter. I feel that if the Government has relations with any other Chamber of Commerce there is no reason why they should have none with yours. But in my opinion after independence and the partition of India there should not be any communal associations of trade, etc. I have said something in this respect during my speech the day before yesterday.[3]

[1] Daughter of Abbas Tyabji; a devotee of Lord Krishna
[2] *Vide* Vol. LXXXIX, pp. 446-9.
[3] *Vide* pp. 125-6.

I hope you will wind up your Chamber of Commerce. If Bengal does not have a unitary Chamber of Commerce, you will help in setting up one and work hard towards this end.

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

125. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 30, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Yesterday I wanted to mention one point; but since I had to talk about many other things, it was left out. You must have seen that the girls sit on the floor and they feel cold. I had told them that we have plenty of papers and newspapers which we have read already and these could be used for sitting on. But it is good that a friend has spread a sheet today. In a way it is good to be unconcerned. Why should we be so delicate that we feel cold by sitting on the floor? Even if we have to sit on grass, if we can have a piece of paper and if it does not get wet, then we would not feel cold. If this does not serve the purpose, then we have our age-old custom of carrying our own *asana*[1] wherever we go and spreading it whenever we have to sit. Today we have forgotten that practice and given ourselves to comfortable living. I suggest that we should forget about a piece of paper or newspaper, take one if you want and if it is thick, but the best thing would be an *asana* of wool or jute or even cloth or hay. All you have to do is to spread it wherever you want to sit and tuck it under your arm when you have to go. Since I am feeling cold, everybody must be feeling the same. Moreover, doctors also say that we should not sit on wet ground or where it is cold. If men wearing *dhotis* and women wearing *salwars* or skirts use thick cloth as undergarments, they can serve as *asans*. But the women too have become very delicate and so their clothes must be soft. How can they wear thick clothes? Their undergarments have to be soft. Hence, they cannot protect them against this cold.

I have received many telegrams from Kathiawar. I have already told you[2] about what I heard and what subsequently appeared in the Pakistani newspapers. Those papers are read by thousands of people there. May be some ten thousand or so. I do

[1] A small mat

[2] *Vide* pp. 117-9 and 128-9.

not know how many people must be reading them. But nothing would be achieved if I started thinking whether those things had really happened. Hence it was good that I placed before you what I had read in those newspapers. I do not know if all those things are true. If they are true, they are a matter of great shame for Kathiawar. And if they are not true, it is a matter of shame for the newspapers. Thus it is a matter of shame for either side. I have also told you what the Sardar has to comment on the matter. He came today also and told me that whatever reports came from there were not worth mentioning. They were highly exaggerated.

But the telegram I have received from Rajkot is worth noting. It is a fairly long telegram and I would like to mention it to you in brief. After all, I know the Muslims of Kathiawar. I do not know them individually, but I know the Khojas, Meenas, Vaghers and some Kumbis among the peasants, and Mahers. After all, I was born there and lived there for almost 17 years. In fact I lived there for full 17 years, because I did not go out to study anywhere. My father never sent me anywhere. I completed my studies there and attended college for a few months, and that too at Bhavnagar. Even for the examination I could not go beyond Ahmedabad. That was my condition. I saw everything that happened there and, later too, kept contact with the people by visiting them. So, the sender of that telegram says that I am greatly worried on their account, and, in turn, my worry has become their worry. He says it is true that some Hindus in Kathiawar had lost their balance, but is there any place where this has not happened. They resorted to violence and even harmed some Muslims. They destroyed their houses and even burnt them down. But, he says, the Congressmen did not let the situation go far. They were under the leadership of Dhebarbhai. I know him very well. He went forward to protect the Muslims and succeeded to a great extent. Not all Hindus were involved in those acts of loot and arson. Had that been the case, all Muslim houses in Rajkot would have been set ablaze, there would have been large-scale violence and some people would have been killed. But things did not reach that point. The Congressmen and others took every precaution. Dhebarbhai was abused and manhandled. Even though he is a big man and also a lawyer, when the mob gets excited all considerations of big and small are forgotten. They harassed him because he was trying to protect the Muslims. Some people who accompanied Dhebarbhai write, that, though some injury

was caused, Dhebarbhai was saved by other people. The telegram also mentions help from the Thakore Saheb and the police. In that case, who are left to be suspected of creating the trouble? They say "the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh—these organizations have certainly done some mischief—their aim was to drive out the Muslims at least from Rajkot. However they could not do so. But now we have nothing more to worry and there is no danger to the Muslims. So you also should not worry. We are watching the situation elsewhere too and we would send you another telegram."

I have received a telegram from a Muslim gentleman from the same place. He expresses his extreme gratitude to the Congressmen and others who tried their best to save the life and property of the Muslims. But there is yet another telegram from Bombay also sent by a Muslim gentleman. He states that what I had said earlier about Kathiawar was correct but what I have been told later about it is not correct. That lots of things have happened there and are still happening.

I do not know whether I should believe the telegram from Bombay or the one from the other Muslim gentleman. But I doubt the truth about the telegram from Bombay because it has been sent from Bombay, while the other one has been sent by those who are right in Kathiawar. Moreover, the people of Kathiawar cannot deceive me. Where would they escape after deceiving me? Hence I feel that the telegram from Bombay gives an exaggerated version. The actual situation would be known to me in due course. For the present, let me at least put all this before you.

There is also a telegram from Bhavnagar. It is from the Maharaja of Bhavnagar. I know him too, because I have lived there for three or four months. So he felt concerned about me and wondered why I was so much worried. He has said in the telegram that I need not worry. He says that they are all vigilant. The Hindus also are vigilant. They would not let any harm come to the Muslims and I should have no doubt at all about it.

But there is a telegram from Junagadh sent by some Muslims. They say that I am being deceived, and I should set up a commission and inquire whether the Muslims are being harassed or not. Similar telegrams have also been sent to Jawaharlal, the Sardar and others. I would like to say that it is not possible to appoint a commission for anything and everything. Setting up a commission is no joke. Where is the need for having a commission even though some harm might have been done? As for Kathiawar, I am like a commission myself. If anything comes to

my notice, I can check it. I can handle the Princes as well as the people of Kathiawar. I do not claim to succeed in everything I undertake or that they abide by everything I say. But is not Kathiawar the same as Bihar? If someone wants me to set up a commission in Bihar, do you think I would oblige? I am at their disposal myself. People there love me and listen to me. And so, it would not be proper to set up any commission there.

I have also received several letters from the Muslims in Rajkot. Many of them are friendly with the Hindus and also happy with the Congress. Then, who belongs to the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh? I can have no enmity towards them. They think theirs is the only way of saving Hinduism. But I believe that Hinduism will not be saved in that manner. They believe in violent opposition to those who commit an evil act. But I would ask how fighting an evil by another evil will help. We have got our own Government. Take it to task and demand an explanation as to why such things are happening. Moreover, our Government is vigilant and it is trying its best. And so I would like to tell the Hindu Mahasabha and also the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh—both are Hindu organizations and many influential and educated people are associated with them as in other organizations—that they cannot save Hinduism in this manner. Is it true that they have harassed the Muslims? If not, who has? The Congress has not harassed them, nor has either of the Governments done it. Who then are the other Hindus who did it? Today all the Hindus and Sikhs are to be blamed for this just as in Pakistan all the Muslims are to be blamed, and rightly so. That is why I would suggest that those who are innocent and yet are accused, should clear their names. The Muslims in Junagadh can get justice if they want. Why then should we set up a commission?

Having talked about the situation there, let me also talk about the situation here. The Sardar has made some arrangements and he is going to protect all the mosques we have here. You must have read the notice sent by him in the newspapers that the occupied premises of the mosques should be vacated in a week's time, otherwise they will be vacated with the help of the police. But I ask you what will he gain by sending the police? If some Hindus have installed an idol in some mosque—the idol may be of gold or silver or brass or earth or stone—but it is said, and I also believe, that so long as it has not been sanctified and not worshipped by pure hands, in my view it is not an idol but a mere piece of stone or gold. Such idols have been

installed in the mosque at the corner of Connaught Place. In my view, there is no Hanuman in those idols. To me it is a mere piece of stone which has been shaped like Hanuman and to which some *sindoor*[1] has also been applied. In my view it is not worthy of worship. It can be worshipped only if it is legitimately installed and sanctified. But all this was not done. Hence it is the duty of those who have installed the idols to remove them from there at daybreak and then keep them wherever they choose. By thus installing idols in the mosques they are desecrating the mosques and also insulting the idols. As followers of Hinduism we are idol-worshippers, but worshipping any idol in this manner is not religion but the opposite of it. So, why should the Sardar send the police there? Those who are Hindus among you should become watchmen and remove the idols so installed. We should offer to repair the mosques which have been damaged. But the Sardar says that the Government would bear the expenses of the repairs of those mosques. Why should the Government do it? Is it not because we are not doing it ourselves? The Government has to protect everybody. But it would be a matter of shame for us all—Sikhs and Hindus today. Of course I have not heard about any Sikh having installed the idols, for the Sikhs have only one idol or, say, the holy treatise, that is, the *Granthsaheb*. I have not known of any Sikh having kept the *Granthsaheb* in any mosque. Even if any of them has done so he has insulted the *Granthsaheb*. The *Granthsaheb* can be kept only in a *gurudwara*. Only the holy Sikhs keep it on a high pedestal after nicely decorating it. Somebody like me would wrap it in a nice khadi cloth. But today, even though people do not think in terms of swadeshi or foreign things we do manufacture beautiful woollens and silks by hand. If we spread such silk cloth and keep the *Granthsaheb* on it, it would be worthy of worship. And if any Sikh goes and keeps it in a mosque, he insults the *Granthsaheb* and then it cannot be worthy of worship.

A Muslim gentleman came to see me today. I could not make out what he wanted to say. But he was holding a copy of the Koran which was half burnt. Even that was sacred for him and so he had wrapped it in a very clean cloth. He opened the cloth and showed the burnt Koran to me. He did not say anything but looked at me with tearful eyes and then went away. He talked a few things with Brajkishan, since I was busy with my work. Similarly, if any Muslim comes here and instals the

[1] Vermilion

Koran here and beats you and me up, I would say that he is insulting the Koran. The Koran does not ordain that people should be compelled to accept it.

That is why I very respectfully wish to tell the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and others who wish to listen to me and also the Sikhs, that the Sikhs are great and if they turn good and become true followers of Guru Nanak, the Hindus would then automatically become good. I have great respect for the Sikhs in my heart but today, everybody, whether Hindu or Sikh, is going astray and India is being destroyed. Are we going to drag India into dust after raising her high? Are we going to destroy our religion, our achievements and our country? May God save us from all this.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 144-50

126. LETTER TO PYARELAL[1]

December 1, 1947

I see my battle has to be fought and won in Delhi itself. There is a lot for me to do here. . . .The six resolutions[2] of the All-India Congress Committee this time were practically mine. . . . It now remains to be seen how they are implemented.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 519-20

127. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

December 1, 1947

CHI. NARANDAS,

Read the accompanying wire and let me know how much truth it contains. Show it to Dhebarbhai and others. If you know the sender let me know who he is. The more information you can give the better.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–9: Shri Narandas Gandhine, Part II, p. 319. Also C. W. 8647. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] The addressee along with other workers was working in Noakhali to establish cordial relations between Hindus and Muslims.

[2] *Vide* Appendix I.

128. LETTER TO NARANDAS NALIERWALA

NEW DELHI,
December 1, 1947

BHAI NARANDAS,

I don't understand why all of you have English letter-heads. I get your letters from time to time.

Certainly you shouldn't believe that those who are called 'my people' are also votaries of the non-violence to which I am devoted.

I have sent the letter to Vaikunthbhai[1].

Blessings from
BAPU

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

129. LETTER TO HEMPRABHA DAS GUPTA

NEW DELHI,
December 1, 1947

CHI. HEMPRABHA,

I have your letter. Forget Ratilal. If he returns, do not have him back. You did what you could. He is of that type. He would beg anywhere.

The condition of Didimoni[2] is pitiable. It should not be. I would still advise that she should stay at Khadi Pratishthan[3] and her daughters too should live and be brought up there. I realize that it is difficult for her but I cannot think of any other course. I am glad that Babua is well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1716

[1] Vaikunthbhai Lallubhai Mehta

[2] Taralika, addressee's daughter, who had lost her husband

[3] At Sodepur, established by the addressee's husband, Satis Chandra Das Gupta

CWMG - XC

130. NOTE TO LT.-GEN. K. M. CARIAPPA

December 1, 1947[1]

You know something of my having written in my paper[2] about your statement on non-violence in London last month.[3]

When we meet again . . . I would like further to discuss this subject with you.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 523-4

131. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[4]

NEW DELHI,
December 1, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Many friends resent my using 'if's in my statements. They think I should first of all make sure whether something is true or not. I feel that whenever I have made a tentative statement I have lost nothing thereby. It has only done good to the work I then had in hand.

The talk just now is about Kathiawar. Friends say that I gave currency to false allegations of atrocities on the Kathiawar Muslims. Most of the allegations were entirely unfounded. What little mischief might have occurred had been quickly brought under control. But if I have repeated those allegations with the conditional 'if' no harm has been done to truth. The

[1] From *Dilhiman Gandhiji—I*

[2] *Vide* Vol. LXXXIX pp. 492-3.

[3] The addressee said that he felt greatly honoured that Gandhiji should have taken the trouble to notice at length the views of a person like him whom he had never met. He further said: "We soldiers are a very much maligned community, . . . the one community which dislikes wars is the soldier community. It is . . . because of the knowledge we have of the utter futility of wars to settle international disputes. We feel one war merely leads to another. History has taught us this. . . . In a democratic country soldiers do not initiate wars. . . .We merely carry out the orders of the Government and therefore . . . of the people. . . .Why blame us?"

Gandhiji signalled to him to return the slip of paper he had given him and added the following.

[4] As Gandhiji was observing silence, his written speech was read out at the prayer meeting.

Congress and the administrators of Kathiawar will gain to the extent that they take their stand on truth. Friends assert that though truth comes out in the end the harm is already done, for people who have no scruples about truth or falsehood dishonestly use my statements for their own purposes. I should therefore guard myself against untruth being propagated. But whenever people have resorted to such tactics they have failed and they were exposed as dishonest and false. If I mention the allegations subject to 'if's it should not perturb anyone. The only thing required is that those against whom the allegations are levelled should be wholly innocent.

Let us consider the other side of the matter. Take Kathiawar again for example. If I had not paid attention to the allegations contained in some major newspapers of Pakistan which even the Prime Minister of Pakistan had declared were true in substance, the Muslims would have taken them as gospel truth. But now the Muslims have come to doubt their veracity.

I would like friends in Kathiawar and elsewhere to learn from this the lesson that we will not let any trouble occur in our own house; we will welcome criticism even if that criticism should be bitter; we will become truthful and we will rectify any error we discover in ourselves. We must not delude ourselves with the belief that we can never make a mistake. Our bitterest critic is one who has some grudge, fancied or real, against us. We shall correct him if we are patient with him and, whenever the occasion arises, show him his error, or correct our own when we are found to be in error. By doing so we shall never go wrong. No doubt a balance must be preserved. Discrimination is always required. One must never take notice of statements of a mischievous nature. I feel that after long experience I have learnt the art of discrimination.

Today the atmosphere is poisoned. Allegations are being hurled at each other by parties. To imagine in such a situation that we can make no mistakes would be folly. We have not the good fortune today to be able to make such a claim. It will be enough if with necessary effort we succeed in eradicating the mischief and root it out. We can do so only if our eyes and ears are open to see and hear about our own shortcomings. Nature has so made us that we cannot see our own shortcomings. We can see only those of others. Wisdom requires that we should benefit from others seeing our shortcomings.

Yesterday, I was not able to deal fully with the long telegram from Junagadh, which I had received as I was about to

leave for the prayer meeting, for I had only cursorily glanced through it. Today I have studied it fully. Those who had sent the wire state that the allegations to which I had referred the other day were founded in truth. If this is so it is very bad for Kathiawar. If attempts have been made to exaggerate the allegations that our workers have admitted as true and which I have published, then those behind this wire have done harm to Pakistan. They invite me to go to Kathiawar and see things for myself. They ought to know that today I am not in a position to do that. They demand an inquiry commission but before that they must prepare their case. I grant that their purpose is not to bring a bad name to Junagadh or Kathiawar. They want the truth to be brought out and they want security for the life and property and honour of the minority community. They know, as everyone knows, that newspaper propaganda especially when it is not wholly based on truth can protect neither life nor property nor honour. To protect all these three things those sending the wire should adhere to truth and they should go and meet their Hindu friends. They know their friends amongst Hindus. They know also that though I am at some distance away from Kathiawar I am doing their work even from here. I have said this after full deliberation and now I am collecting all the facts. I have seen Sardar Patel. He says that to the extent that it lies within his power no communal riot will be permitted and anyone misbehaving with our Muslim brothers and sisters will be severely punished. The Kathiawar workers, who are quite impartial, are trying to find out the truth for themselves and trying to alleviate the sufferings of the Kathiawar Muslims. They love Muslims as much as they love their own selves. Will the Muslims help them?

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 151-3

132. LETTER TO BAPSY PAVRY[1]

NEW DELHI,
December 2, 1947

DEAR SISTER,

All that you have told me about Lalkaka[2] is interesting. But there is nothing for me to write about it.

[1] Daughter of Khurshedji Erachji Pavry, High Priest of Parsis in India. She later became Premier Marchioness of Winchester, England.

[2] An artist who painted portraits

Let me answer your three questions :

(1) When a portrait of someone has to be painted, the person should be shown as he is. Therefore, neither I nor anyone else can select the colours.

The ground of Kasturba's *sari* always used to be white. Occasionally it had lines or dots in colour. The hem and the borders used to be coloured. There was no particular choice in the colours.

(2) Whether the pose should be a sitting or standing one is for the artist to decide. It should be a pose in which the subject was most often seen.

(3) I have no photograph. The Naoroji sisters can give you full information in this respect. Among them, Gosibehn Captain will be in a position to give the maximum information.

I hope the portrait of your father will come out well.

Blessings from
M. K. GANDHI

MISS BAPSY PAVRY
TAJ MAHAL HOTEL
BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 10227. Courtesy: Bapsy Pavry

133. LETTER TO GHULAM RASOOL QURESHI

December 2, 1947

CHI. QURESHI,

I appreciate your compassion. But I don't think we can really satisfy our sentiment by having the dogs castrated. We must learn the art of keeping dogs. And we should kill stray dogs in the least painful manner. I don't mean to say that it involves no violence, but I would claim that this is the least violent method.

The question of Hindu-Muslim relations has reached a critical stage. It is for everybody to see how best it can be tackled.

Can you say that Amina[1] is perfectly all right?

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

[1] Addressee's wife and daughter of Abdul Kadir Bawazeer

134. LETTER TO DILKHUSH DIWANJI

December 2, 1947

CHI. DILKHUSH,

I have your letter of the 22nd [ultimo].

I received the khadi woven by the weavers out of their own hand-spun yarn. My thanks to them.

Were these friends initially weavers? If they were, please let me know what difference they found in the weaving of mill-yarn and their own hand-spun yarn. Compared to that of others, is their weaving superior or inferior? How many such weavers have been trained? How many new weavers as well as spinners have been trained? Has there been any improvement in their performance?

I had all the letters from Khar. Bisen had acknowledged receipt of them. How is it you did not get his letter?

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

135. LETTER TO JAYASHANKAR PANDYA

December 2, 1947

BHAI JAYASHANKAR PANDYA,

Herewith a wire I received from Junagadh.[1] Let me know the truth about it. Also tell me who the signatories are. Please also write to me what Bhai Moosa who had come with you has to say. I have with me two varying reports; I am therefore rather confused.

JAYASHANKAR PANDYA
HEAD OF THE JUNAGADH STATE RAILWAY

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

[1] *Vide* pp. 148-9.

CWMG-XC

136. LETTER TO JAMNA GANDHI

December 2, 1947

CHI. JAMNA[1],

Your letter. I am keeping well. I have heaps of work. Kanu[2] can come over whenever he wishes; so also Abha[3]. I do not have to order them. Don't worry at all. One should give up one's desire to be looked after and served by one's children after having given them away for social service.

Why does the asthma persist? Won't it go?

Blessings from
BAPU

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

137. LETTER TO SATYEN

December 2, 1947

CHI. SATYEN,

How did you bring up [the matter] of Manohar Diwan[4]?

It is quite right that the work you are doing at Nalwadi will be under the supervision of Vinoba, but if any such venture is to be undertaken at Sevagram you should have permission from Aryanayakum and Ashadevi. It would therefore be better to give up the idea.

It will serve no purpose for a Harijan to call himself a Brahmin but quite a lot is accomplished by a Brahmin becoming a Bhangi.

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

[1] Wife of Narandas Gandhi

[2]&[3] Addressee's son and daughter-in-law

[4] Who was running the Kushtha Ashram, an institution for leprosy patients, at Dattapur

138. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

NEW DELHI,
December 2, 1947

DAUGHTER RAIHANA,

I have your long letter. How can I argue with you? You must have received my last letter.[1]

I shall follow your suggestion when I am convinced. In the meanwhile let us bear with our differences.

Did you consult Nanavati regarding Urdu script? He has done quite a lot in this connection.

The social question has significance in its own place. The people of Europe who inter-dine have fought with one another. Muslims fought with Muslims at Karbala[2]; and what about the friction between the Shias and the Sunnis?

We cannot promote unity by retaining only the Urdu script. We have to have reforms in all directions.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

139. TALK WITH MUSLIMS[3]

PANIPAT,
December 2, 1947

You want to go to Pakistan of your own free will, don't you? When your leaders came to me and pleaded that I should visit Panipat, they told me that people were leaving for Pakistan against their will. But now from what you say I gather that you yourselves want to go to Pakistan. All the same I must tell you that this is your home. You should stay here. Your safety is the responsibility of Dr. Gopichand Bhargava—your

[1] *Vide* p. 139.

[2] The scene of battle in Iraq where Imam Hussain, the Shia leader and his followers were killed by the Sunnis in 680 A. D.

[3] Gandhiji reached Panipat at about 11.30 a.m. and met the Muslim refugees who desired to go to Pakistan.

Chief Minister—and he will fulfil that responsibility. Nevertheless all men have to die one day. There are 28,000 refugees here. If all of you are cut down to the last man at the hands of your brethren, you will have shown true bravery. It will have brought glory to your religion. You should say, 'Remove the military from here. The Hindus will protect us.' I am sure if you show such trust the Hindus will certainly protect you.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 6

140. TALK WITH MUSLIM DELEGATION[1]

PANIPAT,
December 2, 1947

So far I have been patiently listening. I have not said a word. But now the discussion is becoming heated and at last I have been invited to offer advice. I must then tell you that if you have the courage to die at the hands of the refugees or the Hindus, should they want to kill you, you will have rendered a great service to Islam.

What happens in Pakistan is a matter for God to see. But I shall never advise you to go away from here. If, of course, you want to go of your own will, no one can stop you. But you will never hear Gandhi utter the words that you should leave India. Gandhi can only tell you that you should stay, for India is your home. And if your brethren should kill you, you should bravely meet death. That is the way I am made. That is the way I would have people behave.

In Pakistan many Hindu girls have been forcibly converted and subjected to extreme barbarities. Hindus too have done similar things. But I am telling you how you should behave like true Muslims. You should seek help from the Pakistan Government and persuade your brethren there to console the young women who have been abducted. You should tell them : 'Sisters, you have been cruelly treated. We forgot that we were human. From now on you are our mothers, our sisters, our daughters.' If you work in this spirit you can make Pakistan really *pak*—really pure. Of the three things—human dignity, life and property—you should make it your business to safeguard one and

[1] Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, Swaran Singh, Hifzur Rehman, Deshbandhu Gupta and the Deputy Commissioner were also present.

devote yourselves wholly to service. Then, I assure you, Hindus will worship you and you will be able to serve not only Pakistan but also the Muslims living in India. Geographically you are separated but no one in the world can separate the hearts. Where can you run away from friends and relatives? Someone among you said that Gurubachan Singh had behaved treacherously. I tell you that if a man himself is honest it can do him no harm if the other party is treacherous. I say this from personal experience. I am not preaching like a Christian. Deception and lies can never succeed. Otherwise truth would be at a discount in the world; anyone could get away with lies.

The Ministers have assured you that they will protect you even at the risk of their own lives. Still if you are resolved to go and do not place any trust in their word there is nothing further I can say to you. What can I do to reassure you? If I should die tomorrow you would again have to flee. Therefore you cannot go by what others say. You have to decide for yourselves after considering what your duty is towards the country, towards your brothers, towards the land that gave you birth, where you grew up. This will not be because Gandhi says it. There was a time when I wished to live a hundred and twenty-five years. Today I do not have that wish any more. I do not consider our present freedom as freedom. I consider it as the undoing of the country. You are destroying the independence that we have gained without shedding a drop of blood. You are cutting off your own feet. Today Punja Saheb cannot be visited by any Sikh pilgrim. What a sorry pass we have come to after we became free. If even now you take up the work of service without asking where and by whom the present tide of violence was started, you can still taste the nectar of freedom. Where are all the proclamations of Jinnah? The more I dwell on these matters the more unhappy I become. I do not believe in shedding tears. But today, having heard you and seen you, my heart weeps.

Do as God guides you. I have said what I had to say. I can only pray to God to grant us good sense.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 8-10

141. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING[1]

PANIPAT,
December 2, 1947

Gandhiji told a mass meeting mostly of refugees from West Punjab that he was not very happy on his second visit to Panipat. During his last visit[2] he was assured by the non-Muslims of the locality that they would not let the Muslims go from Panipat. He was hurt to hear from Mr. Gopalaswami Ayyangar[3] that arrangements were now complete for sending the Muslims to Pakistan. He hoped that he would hear about the Hindus persuading the Muslims not to go to Pakistan. Why did the Muslims of Panipat, who were previously not eager to go to Pakistan, now want to leave?

All the Muslims in the camp here want to go. I told them that they would get all the protection here. But one should depend on God's protection rather than on the protection of the army and the police. Supposing you are eating and death comes while food is in your mouth, no army or police, no doctors or drugs, will be of any use. If we could only stop to think how God holds in his own hand the string of death, the prevailing conflict between trust and distrust would end. If my brother has become mad and wants to kill me, does it mean that I should also go mad? To return evil for evil makes for the fall of both parties. No one can be forced to accept another's faith.

Referring to conversions, Gandhiji said that there had been conversions of Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan. To repeat the same here to Muslims would be denial of civilization and did not speak of humanity. By these conversions people neither enriched their religion nor themselves. By such acts people degraded themselves and their country for which they had made much sacrifice.

No one had imagined that the freedom that came would be such a terrible thing. But that was the will of God. If we can

[1] The Gujarati version in *Dilhiman Gandhiji* has been collated with the report in *The Hindustan Times*.

[2] On November 10

[3] (1882-1953); Prime Minister of Kashmir, 1937-43; Minister without Portfolio, Government of India, 1947-48; Leader of Indian Delegation to United Nations Security Council; Union Minister of Railways and Transport, and later of Defence

pass the present test we shall have risen very high. Sjhariar asks, if India fails what will become of his country? The whole of Asia today has its eyes fixed on us. God has given us a jewel in the person of Jawaharlal. The whole world likes him. We have a leader such as the Sardar. The two make an inseparable pair. Neither can do without the other. India has a name in the world because of Jawaharlal. Who otherwise would care about India? But Pandit Nehru will not be able to do his job without your co-operation. Let us not allow India's name to fall into disrepute.

To the refugees from West Punjab, Gandhiji said that he knew that they had encountered untold sufferings. It might also be a fact that the Muslims staying here might be having some property and enjoying themselves a bit. But, just because they had suffered, they should not deprive the Muslims of their property. He would not believe that all refugees were bad people.

There are 28,000 refugees in this camp. Not all of them can be good. If there are goonda elements among them you should pick them out and make of them good men by your love. They are all brothers here, so what need is there for the military? If there are two brothers in a family does it need any police force to guard them? Your salvation lies in learning to protect one another. You should go to your Muslim brothers and sisters and plead with them not to leave India. If you do not cast covetous eyes on their homes, I am sure Hinduism will live for ever. We must forget what has happened. In this alone lies our good. You may listen to an experienced old man if you care, for today my voice is a voice in the wilderness. However I must say what I consider my duty to say. Today I do not have the wish or the zest to go on living. Time was when I wanted to live 125 years and bring about Ramarajya. But if I do not have your co-operation what can I do all by myself ?

It was said, Gandhiji continued, that the Muslims had arms in their possession. There might be arms with the Hindus and Sikhs too. He said that all arms, whether they be with Hindus, Sikhs or Muslims, should be licensed.

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 10-2, and *The Hindustan Times*, 3-12-1947

142. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 2, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I had told you I should be going to Panipat today. I had intended to be back by four o'clock. But there was so much work that I could not come before thirty-five minutes—at any rate thirty-three minutes past five. Then I heard the prayer. I have said that the prayer should begin whether I am present or not and we must be regular. Then I went and washed myself. Hence the delay, for which I apologize.

I had already hinted at the purpose of my visit to Panipat. I had been hoping and I continue to hope even now that by some means or other the Muslims of Panipat should be stopped from going [to Pakistan]. It will be good for us, good for the whole of India and because it will be good for India it will be good for Pakistan as well.

There are people living in distress there—the refugees who have come from Pakistan—and they must continue to live in distress as long as they do not return to their homes. Similarly the Muslims who have been forced to flee to Pakistan will be unhappy there. You should have no doubt about it.

It was good that I went there. It was my duty to do so. Dr. Gopichand Bhargava had come and so had Sardar Swaran Singh, the Home Minister. I had no idea that Dr. Gopichand was coming. Sardar Swaran Singh had of course sent word that if he should be needed he would come. I said there would be no need for him to come because whatever had to be done would have to be done by me. Nevertheless he came. East Punjab is after all his region and it was his right to come. Deshbandhu Gupta had sent a message that he was ailing and so would not be able to come. I had agreed, but since he belongs there he did come. It was good that all of them came. Then there was the Maulana whom we often see here. I then spoke to people. I spoke to the Muslims separately, though the two Ministers were present.[1] They thought that the Ministers should be there, for

[1] *Vide* pp. 154-5.

what was the good of my saying something which the Ministers would not know about and which I would not be able to enforce? The Muslims admitted that they had agreed in talks earlier not to go but that later the situation had worsened; that nothing had been done on the lines I had assured and they had felt harassed; their honour was not protected. When they could not protect their lives, their property and their honour, how could they stay? They said they would put up with the destruction of their houses, they would put up with arson, they would put up even with loss of lives but they would protect their honour to the last. If they could do that they would stay. I said that he who loves mankind loves God. He has nothing to fear.

I then spoke to the refugees there.[1] By the time I was done it was half past three. I had set out from here at 10.30 and reached there at about 11.30. My talks with the Muslims continued up to 3; there was so much to talk about. Then I spoke to the refugees. After me Dr. Gopichand Bhargava addressed them. But when Sardar Swaran Singh got up to speak there was pandemonium. People started shouting; not because they wanted to insult him but they could not contain themselves. They became angry that he dared to speak at all.

It was a large crowd. There must have been some twenty thousand people. The ground was filled to capacity. Roofs were covered with people. They heard me in silence. But when the others began, people stood up. It has become customary with us to give vent to anger. They stood up and began to shout that the Muslims should be expelled. I told them that it would not be good to drive out the Muslims. They had their homes, and they should not be forced to leave; that forcing the Muslims to leave would undo all our efforts there. I was ready to resume my seat but Sardar Swaran Singh, being the Home Minister and also a brave man, would not be cowed down, he said this would not do. He tried to speak but nothing came of it. People continued their shouting and continued to stand. Then their representative, their leader came forward. He began with a *bhajan* in Punjabi. I had not known that he was a poet. He knew that Punjabis like *bhajans*. Then he admonished them in Punjabi and told them that he was their representative and they must listen to him, that shouting would achieve nothing. What would they gain by disturbing the meeting. It would only harm them. Peace was restored at last but it took some doing. People sat down and the proceedings were continued in Punjabi.

[1] *Vide* pp. 156-7.

I cannot speak Punjabi but I understand it. I liked what [Sardar Swaran Singh] said. When we were with the Muslim leaders he had assured them that whatever might happen in Pakistan we would not become inhuman. He said that ours was a democratic Government and would not let such things happen here. If any Muslim girl had been kidnapped she would be restored by every means. Help would certainly be needed for they would not know where an abducted girl was. But if it was known she would be brought back. The other thing they would do was about the Muslims who had been converted to Hinduism or Sikhism. They were still Muslims. Such conversion would not be accepted as lawful, for it was against morality. Similarly the Muslims who were still here would be protected whether or not Pakistan protected [the Hindus and Sikhs]. Thirdly, Sardar Swaran Singh said that the mosques would be protected. Of course, protection of life and property was a difficult matter. There was the police, the Government—they would do what they could, but if everyone took to plunder and pillage they could not be shot down. The Government was helpless. Our freedom was crippled and we had to confess our helplessness. They could certainly plead with people but they had to admit their helplessness. He was very persuasive. He pleaded with them saying that India's honour and dignity were in their hands, that the Government was theirs, for it was they who had elected the Ministers. And since the Government was there it would do its duty, do what it must and they must help. He explained all this. It took a long time. In the end there was peace at the meeting. Every time it happens that when people lose their temper on such occasions, they begin to understand things after a time when they calmly think over it. I saw this during the course of our struggle for freedom. There were many occasions when it looked as if the meeting would have to be terminated, but in the end they saw the point. Afterwards the representatives of the refugees came and followed me. I asked them to accompany me in the car. If I was not to do so, I would have been further delayed. I had to count every minute, for I wanted to reach here in time. I have forgone my siesta. When everyone is unhappy, how can I seek rest? I am certainly much more comfortable than they are. They tell me that the refugees there are in much distress. Of course something has been done. Things are certainly much better than I had seen them last. Some arrangements have been made. Some roofs have been put up. They certainly have tents to live in, but the food is not all that it should be. The

Governor of East Punjab[1] also saw it and admitted that it should be improved. As to clothing it seems all the decent clothing is taken away by some people. What shall I say as to who does it? The result is that the refugees get only rags. This should not be so. They must get the things that are intended for them. People die too, which is only natural. Two persons had died; there was no firewood to cremate them. A whole day was lost. I forget the name of the doctor in charge. He was not to be found anywhere. By then it was seven in the evening. Since no arrangement could be made for firewood, some people approached a relative of one of them and offered to raise a contribution often to fifteen rupees. But the relative who was a strong man refused to accept the donation. He said that if there was no firewood he would bury the dead. Burial is not common among the Hindus and I was sorry that he had to do it.

I learnt afterwards that well-to-do refugees are able to get things but not the poor ones because the arrangements are not in the hands of senior officers. The workers were taken from among the people there and everything is done through them. If they are good, altruistic and dedicated to service things go well. But if they do not have the spirit of service it becomes difficult. I like to have everything in the open. Let us not resort to physical violence. It generates poison. We have an alternative method and that is to speak up frankly. It does not do to hide things. One must call a spade a spade. What is lost by accusing those who indulge in evil practices? If they are guilty the charge should be made. That is why I tell you that it is a bad practice. We are already unhappy. Hundreds of thousands of people have been uprooted from their homes and have come here. If we indulge in such practices it would be very bad. Today a small boy confronted me. He was wearing a sweater. He took it off and stood glaring at me as if he would eat me up. He was just a child. What could he do? "You say that you have come to protect us," he said, "but my father has been killed. Get me my father back." But his father was dead. How could I bring him back. The boy became angry. I can imagine that if I had been of his age and in his position perhaps, I would have done the same. I was not annoyed. I felt sorry for him.

We see such scenes today. The refugees say that all of them at any rate are not bad; that the management should be entrusted to some of them, for after all magistrates and others were there to

[1] C. L. Trivedi

supervise. Other people too had to be supervised. At least the distribution of blankets should be entrusted to them. Their children should get milk but the milk does not reach them. The staff appropriates it. Would it not be better to give them the milk for distribution rather than that the members of the committee should drink it up? Then some of them have been receiving letters from other refugees elsewhere. They ask them in the letters to tell the Mahatma to attend to them too. It is good I went there. I told them to be peaceful and to persuade the Muslims to stay on. I told them that it would be something unique for Panipat which has been the scene of so many battles.

There are 28,000 refugees living in the camp. I told them, "If more refugees join you what can it matter to you? It is enough for you if you get food to eat, clothes to wear and a roof or even a tent to live under. You can get nothing more than this wherever you may go. You can create many things out of these three things. You should know what developments are taking place all over India, what problems are coming up and how we can solve them. The Government is there, but the Government cannot force you to do anything."

Yesterday Jawaharlal said a beautiful thing. I happened to see it in the papers today; it is rarely that I get a chance to read anything. Jawahar says that he does not like being called Prime Minister. When did he ever become Prime Minister? He would like it and it would be more appropriate to call him the first servant of the nation. If everyone became the first servant he would have to think of others all the twenty-four hours of the day. If the officers under Jawaharlal were to think so, our country would become a land of gold. We would have Ramarajya, the kingdom of God upon earth. Then our freedom would be complete. If after attaining freedom we continue to conduct ourselves in the manner we are doing now then that freedom will irk me. Is this the kind of freedom we are going to have? No, it cannot be.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 154-9

143. LETTER TO CHAMPA MEHTA

December 3, 1947

CHI. CHAMPA,

I have your letter. It will not help me in any way to call you here. I still do not feel confident about you. The final decision lies with Chimanlal and others. You can stay on only if you win their confidence. But how can you stay on if you yourself have no faith in them? They have no axe to grind. They assumed the responsibility of letting you stay there for my sake. Be calm now and do what seems proper to you. Don't hurt their feelings.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

144. LETTER TO SHAMALDAS GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
December 3, 1947

CHI. SHAMALDAS,

Herewith a copy of a wire from Junagadh. If the contents of the wire are true, I would say you are out of your senses. If they are absolute lies you have nothing to lose. I get a fairly large number of letters against you from Hindus. They say that you cannot talk of anything but the sword. The problem of Kathiawar is not as simple as you all might be thinking. Even after you have eliminated the Princes, so long as you do not have a humble and selfless leadership no good will come to Kathiawar. We might have found it easy to win swaraj but preserving and making it worth while has become difficult.

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

145. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

December 3, 1947

CHI. LILI,

I have your two letters. In one you say that Dwarkadas has completely recovered, and Damayanti also is all right. In the other letter you say that another operation may be necessary. I do hope you will get a room somewhere.

Herewith a note for Rs. 100.[1] Can you not manage to borrow Rs. 100 from some source? I hesitate to send even a draft. If there is no facility at the hospital for encashing it, how far will you have to go for it?

You should put in regular hard work and clear your final examination. That will be the end of a struggle. Really speaking once we have made up our minds to do a thing, then there is no more struggle, it is all play.

I got the liquorice tablets. You wasted your time over it. But now I shall use the same mostly and cloves very rarely.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

146. LETTER TO BACHCHHARAJ & CO.

NEW DELHI,
December 3, 1947

TO

Bachchharaj & Co.

Pay Rs. 100 (Rupees one hundred only) to Lilavati Udeshi who is studying medicine and debit it to my public account.

M. K. GANDHI

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

[1] *Vide* the following item.

CWMG - XC

147. TALK WITH LT.-GEN. K. M. CARIAPPA[1]

NEW DELHI,
December 3, 1947

Gandhiji turned to him and said smilingly:

I see you have again removed your shoes outside. You had done it when you came two days ago also.[2]

The General replied: "It is but proper that I should do so when coming to see a godly man like you."

I have been receiving numerous complaints concerning the police and the army personnel. They take bribes and are biased in favour of their own community. If the seed itself is rotten what will become of the plants and the foliage? Not even thorns will then grow. The army and the police are potent limbs of the country. It is a pity that following the partitioning of the country the army also had to be partitioned on communal lines. But it is the duty of policemen not to show caste and communal bias. They must bravely serve the country. It is the duty of every armed force to protect the minority community. Pakistan will not heed my word, but if you the Generals of the army of the Indian Union listen to me and help me, I shall believe we have truly gained freedom in a non-violent way. Let us make ourselves worthy of such freedom. In the swaraj gained in such a wonderful way, the personnel of the army and the police must always remain pure and above board.

What a wonderful example of this unity is set by Netaji, the founder of the Indian National Army; "Let every Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi and others think that India is their country and work unitedly for it." He has proved this unity before us all.

Q. Pakistan has no use for non-violence. How then can we win their hearts and prove the efficacy of ahimsa?

Violence can only be overcome through non-violence. This is as clear to me as the proposition that two and two make four. But for this one must have faith. Even a weapon like atom

[1] The version in *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase* has been collated with the Gujarati in *Dilhiman Gandhiji*.

[2] *Vide* "Note to Lt.-Gen. K. M. Cariappa", p. 147.

bomb when used against non-violence will prove ineffective. This applies to true non-violence. But very few people have grasped this eternal truth. Faith by itself also will not do. It must be supplemented by knowledge. Training in ahimsa is not to be had like training in the use of weapons in military training colleges and institutions. It requires purity of heart and soul-force. The difficulty we find in pitting non-violence against violence only shows our inner weakness. A short time ago, even Mr. Jinnah had clearly stated that in political disputes violence must be eschewed.[1] If Mr. Jinnah meant what he said then the violence that today engulfs us can be brought to an end in no time. And if Pakistan does not stop violence, the violent killings can still be stopped if Hindus in the Union have faith in non-violence. A votary of non-violence will not allow the slightest hint of violence to enter his heart. How then can his conduct be violent?

The General said: "... If we have to have an army at all ... it must be a good one.... I would ... like to remind them in my own way of the need for and the value of non-violence. Tell me, please, how I can put this over, i. e., the spirit of non-violence to the troops ... without endangering their sense of duty to train themselves well professionally as soldiers. I am a child in this matter. I want your guidance."

Gandhiji laughed. He was still at his charkha. He paused, looked at the General and said:

Yes.... you are all children; I am a child too, but I happen to be a bigger child than you because I have given more thought to this question than you all have. You have asked me to tell you in a tangible and concrete form how you can put over to the troops you command the need for non-violence.

I am still groping in the dark for the answer. I will find it and I will give it to you some day.

He then went on to recount how even Lord Wavell and Lord Mountbatten, both veteran professional soldiers, had expressed their implicit faith in the value of non-violence.

Lord Wavell was very impressed with the non-violent way in which the communal troubles between Hindus and Muslims had been tackled by us. They both hoped that our ideologies of non-violence and pacifism would be understood by the peoples of the world and practised by all in solving international disputes.

Of course, they had at the same time said that one should always be prepared for self-defence. At parting Gandhiji repeated:

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXXVII, p. 261.

I will think about this seriously in the next few days and will let you know about it soon. However, I would like to see you more often so that we may further discuss this important subject. . . . I have always had the greatest admiration for the discipline in the army and also for the importance you army people pay to sanitation and hygiene. I tell my people in my talks to them to copy the army in these respects.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 524-5, and *Dilhiman Gandhiji*—II, pp. 13-5

148. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 3, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I receive many visitors. I do not relate to you everything they say. I do let you know if something is important enough. Today I had some visitors. It appeared they had had some business with the Prime Minister. They said the Prime Minister had earlier made a certain promise to them and that he was now going back on the promise. How was that, I asked. They said they had his letter. I asked them to show me the letter. After all I had no more power than they. I was not the Government. Yes, I was a servant, a friend of the Prime Minister, a co-worker, and so I would speak to him. But how was I to mention it to him? Then I reflected on the matter and I asked myself why this sort of thing happened,—people saying one thing and doing another. I have to bear the brunt of all this. I am sure that I have never deliberately deceived anyone. It is possible that, without understanding the implications, one may say something in all good faith without any dishonest motives. And yet a person may feel aggrieved thinking that he has been deceived. Often things are not fully understood and the result is breach of faith. But if a person deliberately breaks a promise it is a bad thing. This should not happen. The best thing is to keep quiet. Once we have put into words what we feel, we must act accordingly. Only then can we be said to be keeping our word. And now especially when we are free and run the Government in the name of the millions we must be very careful. We must show restraint, discretion and humility. We must not be arrogant. Only then can we take our work to a successful conclusion. No one then will be able to

charge us with breach of faith. If we say that we shall distribute a certain thing free of cost and later say that we shall charge something even a little for it, then it is breach of faith. Today we have come to such a state that we do not value our word. We make a promise today and wriggle out of it the very next day. If I make an appointment with you for 4 o'clock tomorrow but at the appointed time go off to a dance, it is breach of faith. So I say that we have to be very careful. We must stick to our word, we must weigh our words before we utter them. We must not say anything on impulse. For instance we may say that there was rioting and later colour it and say that there was murder. This sort of thing cannot be hidden for long. The truth comes out in the end. So we must be careful.

A doctor from Sind has written to say that the Harijans left behind there are in a pitiable condition.[1] If only Harijans were left behind in Sind and caste Hindus went away, nothing but annihilation awaited them. The only condition for life there would be complete slavery and ultimate acceptance of Islam. This is a bad situation. Today the situation is such that if the Pakistan Government says something, the officials at its behest do not implement it. Of course the same thing is true of India. Jawaharlal and the Sardar say that they shall protect Muslims, they shall not allow even a single Muslim to be driven away to Pakistan, but it does not happen. They do not have people to enforce what they say. Their subordinates do not carry out their wishes and the people too do not pay any heed. Yesterday I told you that I had been to Panipat. All the Hindus and Sikhs who have arrived there are in a miserable plight. They were ill-treated in Pakistan and they had to flee. They came because they were oppressed. Otherwise what was the need for them to run away? Having themselves run away from oppression, does it behove them to force others into a similar situation? But this happens. How then can I complain to Pakistan? But I have to do so. The correspondent has written in detail. He says no Harijan wants to continue living in Sind. If they want to stay together at one place they are not left in peace. Forced labour is extracted from them. They are told to clean lavatories, do the sweeping and so on. A Bhangi should not be forced to clean lavatories today. If he can become a barrister, why should he be stopped? Why should we insist that his only work is to clean

[1] According to a telegram sent by Choithram Gidwani to B. R. Ambedkar, Harijans in Sind and Baluchistan were being prevented from migrating to India under the Essential Services Ordinance.

lavatories? They must be free to act according to their inclination. If they are told that they can stay only if they embrace Islam, what can they do and where can they go? You will have seen the long statement Jagjivan Ram[1] has issued. He says that Harijans must come away from Sind. If they want to come they should be given facilities to do so. So long as they are in Pakistan they must be allowed to go about their business unhampered; otherwise they should be allowed to leave. If this is not done it is going to leave a permanent sore spot on the Hindu and the Sikh minds. Although India and Pakistan are two countries, we cannot forget one another. We have to conduct ourselves as gentlemen. We must not hurt anyone. We must not force anyone to become a Muslim. We must not molest and abduct anyone's wife or daughter. Dr. Gopichand Bhargava and Sardar Swaran Singh also said yesterday that India could not tolerate such things. Today the atmosphere has become so polluted that if a Muslim says that he has embraced Hinduism this should not be accepted as genuine. Harijans are non-Muslims. If they say that they have embraced Islam it is not to be accepted. It is only fear that makes them say so. All such conversions should be considered null and void.

Contradictory reports are coming from Kathiawar. Some reports say that the situation in Kathiawar is as bad as described. A telegram to that effect has come only today. Other reports are from the Congress sources and these say that such is not the case, that the Congress workers can never indulge in such things. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh say that they have never burnt anybody's house. Which reports am I to accept as true? Shall I believe the Congress, or the Muslims, or the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh? It has become very difficult to get at the truth. If mistakes have been committed we must acknowledge them. If the Hindus have been in the wrong, if they have committed excesses, it must be admitted. But if this is not the case and if the Muslims exaggerate when they say that their properties were burnt, they were forced to become Hindus, that their daughters were abducted, we must proclaim it to the world that that was not the case. Similarly if the Hindu Mahasabha and the R. S. S. have not done anything wrong I must congratulate them. What the truth is I do not know, though I am trying to find out. I

[1] (b. 1908); President, All India Depressed Classes' League, 1936-46; Labour Minister in the Interim Government; later held important portfolios like Railways, Food and Agriculture and Defence in the Government of India

have written to people[1] I know there. I have also written to Muslims. I have asked them to give me all the details so that I may be able to see what shapes things are taking there and what the upshot is going to be.

Now about South Africa. You will have seen what Vijayalakshmi Pandit has said. She says we have been defeated because we have not been able to secure the required two-thirds of votes.[2] However, a number of people have been helpful and supported her stand. Besides, truth is on our side and in a way we have secured a victory.[3] The Indians in South Africa should therefore not be disheartened. But there is something I have to say. Vijayalakshmi could not have said it because she represented the Government of India. You do not have a remedy but I have one which I had applied in South Africa. What is defeat or victory? The whites of South Africa and Smuts[4] may say that they do not want us there, that we must leave. They may deny us food and water as is happening to non-Muslims in Pakistan and to Muslims in India. They have driven away Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan under threats. There are still a large number of Hindus and Sikhs in Bannu. What will happen to them I do not know. Meharchand Khanna[5] has been to see me today. He says that in other places too there are people whose lives may or may not be saved. If they survive they will have to embrace Islam. But at Bannu the number is very large. What should they do? They are like prisoners. They cannot get out and if they stay on what are they to eat? They are in a sad plight. What can the Government do? It has its own problems. What I have to say here applies also to the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in South Africa. I must tell them that victory and defeat are of no consequence. 'You must

[1] *Vide* pp. 151 and 163.

[2] The Indian Resolution calling for a Round Table Conference on the treatment of Indians in South Africa failed to obtain the requisite two-third majority in the United Nations General Assembly, 31 having voted in favour, 19 against, with 6 abstentions and one country absent.

[3] Vijayalakshmi Pandit had said: "Ours has been a moral victory of no small importance."

[4] Field Marshal Jan Christiaan Smuts, Prime Minister of South Africa

[5] Ex-Minister for Finance in N. W. F. P.; Secretary of the Khudai Khidmatgar Parliamentary Party. He was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment on November 27 and on being released on bail came to Delhi. He expressed grave concern about the safety of the 40,000 Hindus and Sikhs who were still in Peshawar, Mardan, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Parachinar, awaiting evacuation as no refugee train was allowed to leave the N. W. F. P. since October 28. He was also concerned about the non-Muslim prisoners and under-trials in the Frontier jails.

say that you will live in South Africa with honour, that you will not leave. You did not go there because you wanted to. You were invited. You went as indentured labourers and afterwards you had children there. If it is a question of rights no one except the Negroes have a right to be there. The Boers do not have even as much right as you have.' There were delegations from all over the world at the U. N. O. Our country also had to send a delegation. We acted rightly. People assemble there to bring about justice, that they cannot or will not is another matter. We must continue our fight in South Africa, not with a sword but with soul-force. Even the little girl sitting beside me has soul-force, others too have it. The soldiers, too, have soul-force. The sword can be snatched away from us. We can be disarmed. Our arm can be cut off but no one can take away our soul. It is eternal. It is there today and it will remain tomorrow and the day after. The body is worthless without the soul. The body one day has to be disposed of. My wife died and I could not keep her with me. Mahadev[1] died who was of so much help to me. But I could not keep him and his body had to be cremated. So I shall say that if the Indians in South Africa have self-respect which I think they have, if they have courage, they must say that even if they did not secure two-thirds of the votes at the U. N. they did secure a very large number. They must tell the whites of South Africa to let them stay in the country with honour. They must tell them that they intend to conduct themselves with dignity. They do not want government service. They do not expect help from the whites but they must be allowed to breathe the air, drink the water and live on the land. After all they pay their way, earn their keep, wherever they want to stay. They do not claim the right to vote. If they want the vote they must have it in the same way as the whites have it; otherwise they will do without it. They will not carry on satyagraha for franchise but they must safeguard their dignity. They must have bread and they must have water and they must have land. Also their children must have education. They will understand if no grants are forthcoming for the purpose but the education for the children is their right and they have the right to fight for this. It is not a question of victory or defeat but of laying down one's life. They must do or die. There is no other recourse. If they want to live in this world in dignity they must do or die. Their duty is clear and admits of no argument. This is what I have to say

[1] Mahadev Desai

to the Indians of South Africa and to you. I have nothing else to offer.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 160-5

149. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
5 a. m., December 4, 1947

CHI. KANAIYO,

Winter has now begun in right earnest here. We have an electric heater for the night.

I got your letter and the enclosed copy of your suggestions. I read them as carefully as I should. I like your suggestions. The entire department should become self-supporting. That will be the true test of its genuineness. True, we are faced with the question of the real meaning of 'self-supporting', and then there is always such a thing as self-deception.

Four or five of you may come over if you can. I should like it. But even then it would still be doubtful if I can give an impartial verdict. I need to see things for myself and it can be only if I were personally present in Noakhali. It remains to be seen whether such an occasion will come in my present life. Hence I leave it to each one of you to choose to come here or not to come. Whoever wants to, may come.

You keep on worrying on Abha's account. Rid yourself of this anxiety if you can. You can always ask her to go to you. Jamna wants to see both of you merely because of her attachment. But that does not affect me. Give the enclosed[1] to Amtussalaam to read. I have written in Gujarati so that I may do it quickly.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] *Vide* the following item.

150. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

NEW DELHI,
After the morning prayer, December 4, 1947

DAUGHTER A. S.,

You wrote to me and asked Abha not to give the note to me. Abha told me this; I told her it was her duty to give it to me. She therefore handed it over to me at night. I read it just now. You wrote a letter, and sent it and [yet] left instructions that it should not be delivered to me—all this gives a complete picture of your unsteady mind.

You seek my guidance and your mind works in the opposite direction. This is no sign of a desire for guidance. I have already written to you about this matter, and helped you to understand it.[1] I see your good as well as mine only in that. That alone is real service. You can go to Borkamta on your own. You may not ask for money from me. You can stay there at your own free will and at your own will go to the Punjab. If I could take a definite decision I would certainly take one. But I am not perfect, I am not omniscient, am I? Hence, whenever I am doubtful about my own view I might perhaps offer an opinion. I cannot do so in your case. You can come if you want to, either with the others or even alone, provided you can be spared from there. I have no such desire. Calm down! Calm down!! Calm down!!!

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXXIX, p. 451.

151. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

NEW DELHI,
Afternoon, December 4, 1947

DAUGHTER A. S.,

Yesterday I did not understand that it was an afterthought on your part not to let me have your letter.[1] Abha strongly takes your side and says that my letter is sharp and would pain you. You would surely be pained if I did not at all write to you. This is true, isn't it?

There is a letter from Charu Babu today. Am I forbidding you from going to the Punjab? Only you cannot go with my consent.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

152. TALK WITH BURMESE DELEGATION[2]

NEW DELHI,
December 4, 1947

I am very happy that you could come. But there is nothing you can learn from our country today. It is our misfortune that today brother is cutting the throat of brother. You will not take away this example with you. Our country is very ancient; it has a unique culture. We must admit with shame that today we have brought this culture into disrepute. You must not remember our disgrace. You must be generous. You must ignore our lapses and see our virtues and make them your own. That we have secured freedom for our four hundred million people without a drop of blood having been shed is something unprecedented. Of course it is possible that the British had got tired or that we were

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

[2] Thakin Nu, Prime Minister of Burma, accompanied by U Tin Tut, Foreign Minister and U Pe Kin, High Commissioner for Burma in Pakistan, called on Gandhiji in the afternoon.

The report in *The Hindustan Times* has been collated with the Gujarati version in *Dilhiman Gandhiji*.

too weak to take up arms. But non-violence is not a weapon of the weak. It is a weapon of the brave. Its immense value can be measured only when the brave take it up and use it. I therefore advise you to copy from us not our brutalities but the noble virtues you see in this country. We have to sustain without the sword the freedom that we have gained without the sword. Today, one must admit India has an army. But it is my dream that this army will wield not guns and rifles but pick-axes and shovels, and they will be suitably trained in this art as they are today trained in martial arts.[1]

Gandhiji told them that he hoped Burma would prove equal to any situation that might arise in the wake of its attaining independence. He was happy that the Burmese people were united and that there was no trouble so far.

Thakin Nu invited Gandhiji to visit Burma. Gandhiji said he would be glad to do so but could not until peaceful conditions returned to India.

The Hindustan Times, 5-12-1947, and *Dilhiman Gandhiji*—II, pp. 19-20

153. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 4, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I talked to you yesterday about Kathiawar. Today I have a telegram from Shamaldas. Yesterday I had a telegram from Dhebarbhai too. Both say that the news I have been receiving had been highly exaggerated. So far as they know no women had been abducted and there was not a single case of murder. In fact after Sardar Patel went there nothing untoward happened. Before that there had been some little rioting and looting. Shamaldas was upset by my statements, and that was but natural. He has gone to Kathiawar from Bombay. He will make an investigation and let me know. I have been receiving telegrams also from the U. S. A., Iran and London repeating the charge that the Muslims in Kathiawar have been subjected to terrible atrocities. Truthful people should not indulge in this kind of propaganda. And what has Iran got to do with what happens in India?

Shamaldas Gandhi says that he makes no distinction between Hindus and Muslims. I would like to help the Muslims who write

[1] A Burmese peasant-hat was then presented to Gandhiji.

to me provided they are on the path of truth. But if they give up truth and make a mountain out of a molehill and if they spread stories all over the world, that will be too much. I can understand wires coming from inside India but when wires come from abroad it pains me.

I have received a letter from a Muslim in Hoshangabad. It is a very good letter. Guru Nanak's birthday is an important day. Sikhs wherever they are celebrate it. At Hoshangabad also they celebrated it and invited the Muslims. They assured them that they were brothers and the Sikhs had no quarrel with them. Perhaps I told you once how at the Hoshangabad station a Muslim was on the point of being killed and the Sikhs had come to his rescue. So if on Guru Nanak's birthday the Sikhs really did what the correspondent describes, it is a great thing. If this example is followed everywhere the blot on us will be removed. I thought that the newspapers should give publicity to such happenings.

Another thing I want to talk to you about is the Chamber of Commerce. I have already hinted to you about the Marwari and European Chamber of Commerce.[1] If we can have a Marwari Vyapari Mandal why can we not have a Muslim Vyapari Mandal too? But the Marwari Vyapari Mandal people say that it is for all and that others besides Marwaris are represented on it. I enquired as to how many Marwaris it had and how many Hindus, how many Sikhs, how many Europeans. The letters I have received from them are in English. They have sent a statement of their policy and their rules and their report—all in English as if I did not know Hindustani or Hindi. I confess that I do not know English as well as I know my own language. How can I disregard the language that I imbibed with my mother's milk and give more importance to English which I first started learning at the age of twelve? I asked if there were many Englishmen on that body. They must tell me what it is all about. If the name is Marwari Vyapari Mandal, then how can everyone join it? The Muslim Chamber of Commerce can similarly say that it represents everybody. It can have on it a Hindu or two. This sort of thing does not convince one.

The Prime Minister of Burma had been to see me.[2] He is full of humility. I told him that it was a very good thing that he had paid a visit to India. Our country was geographically large and its culture was no doubt ancient. But what was happening

[1] *Vide* pp. 125-6.

[2] *Vide* the preceding item.

today—the mutual mistrust of Hindus and Muslims—was not something from which anyone could learn anything. Guru Nanak preached that the Sikhs should be friendly with both Muslims and Hindus. In fact there is no such distinction between Hindus and Sikhs. Tara Singh has said that one cannot separate Hindus and Sikhs. I should be very happy if we could conduct ourselves thus. The two religions are fundamentally one. Even Guru Nanak never said that he was not a Hindu nor did any other Guru. If we read the *Granthsaheb* we shall find that it is full of the teachings of the Vedas and Upanishads. The teachings of Koran are similar. The same is true of the teachings of Guru Govind Singh. What he taught is also to be found in the Hindu scriptures. There is nothing wholly new. He has only emphasized certain things. I claim that they originate from the Vedas. It cannot be said that Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism are separate religions. All these four faiths and their offshoots are one. Hinduism is an ocean into which all the rivers run. It can absorb Islam and Christianity and all the other religions and only then can it become an ocean. Otherwise it remains merely a stream along which large ships cannot ply.

What Burma can take from India is its culture which today has fallen into disrepute. Never before in history has there been a single instance of so large a country with such immense population securing its freedom not by violent conflict but through non-violence. You may say that the English had got fed up and they left. That is not so. If there is anything to be learnt from India, it is non-violence. Not that we have learnt the lesson of non-violence fully. We are weak. We took to non-violence because we had not the weapons for a violent fight. Non-violence is the best weapon. Only the pure of heart can use it. I therefore told the Burmese Prime Minister that if he wished to take anything from India it should be this non-violence. He must not think that if India lapsed into barbarity, how could Burma which took its religion from India advance ? I told him that if he wanted to copy India he must copy the good qualities that India once had and still retained. He must not take anything barbarous. We must export only what is good so that the world may learn from us. Had India not attained its freedom, Burma and Ceylon also would not have attained theirs. And India did not become free by resorting to the sword. And if we did not need the sword for securing freedom, we will not need it for sustaining it. If we cannot keep our freedom without the sword, then I shall think that India has done nothing for the world. Today we have an army. Attempts

are being made to strengthen it. Attempts are also being made to further enlarge the Navy and the Air Force. I declare that in this way we are not really strengthening ourselves. We shall be doing no good to the world in this way. And if the world learns this kind of thing from us it is not going to gain anything, rather it will be doomed.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 166-8

154. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

December 5, 1947

CHI. NARANDAS,

Jehangir Patel and Dr. Dinshaw Mehta are going there to observe for themselves the condition of Muslims in Kathiawar. They are going in their individual capacities and not on my behalf or with my authority. They feel that this is the best contribution they can make towards the service of the country. Introduce them to whomsoever you think it necessary for them to meet in this connection. They will not stay in Kathiawar for long. It will not be more than eight to ten days. They know the Jamsaheb. If necessary, they will meet the other Princes too. We have to consider what truth there is in the allegations made by the Muslims.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–9: Shri Narandas Gandhine, Part II, p. 320. Also C. W. 8648.
Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

155. LETTER TO SHARDA H. KOTAK

December 5, 1947

CHI. SHARDA,

I am not sorry that Harjivan[1] has passed away. He suffered a lot. We tried so many remedies but the disease was fatal. One would always prefer to pass away in one's bed. I am not surprised that everyone there helped. I would have been surprised, pained, if they had not.

[1] Addressee's husband

CWMG-XC

It remains to be seen what you will do now. Remain calm and do as Lakshmidas and other elders advise.

Could Harjivan see my last letter[1]? Was he conscious till the end? I shall await your letter.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

156. TALK WITH GHANSHYAMSINGH GUPTA

NEW DELHI,
December 5, 1947

Now that the English have left the country the national language for inter-provincial communication can only be Hindustani. I have great respect for the English language. But it can never be the national language of India. We do not persevere in learning our two ancient scripts, which only means that we do not have enough patriotism. I will go so far as to say that every Indian should, if possible, learn all the languages of India. One should have a zest for it. There is no harm in this. It will only develop our minds and increase our knowledge.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 26

157. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 5, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

The letters given to me here are sometimes too long. You cannot expect me to go through them and answer them, because it takes time even to read them. I cannot read them here for it would be wasting my time and yours. I have a note which mentions my meeting Liaquat Ali Khan. The writer asks if I am still not satisfied that nothing untoward has happened in Kathiawar. If the writer of the note is present I may tell him that nothing has happened in Kathiawar. Shamaldas Gandhi says that nothing has

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXXIX, p. 509.

happened to justify the reports that I have received. There had been incidents but minor ones. They were given publicity by the Pakistan newspapers and telegrams were dispatched. The reports were terrible but such terrible things did not happen. Today I have another wire from Shamaldas. He says he has made investigations and found that such things had not taken place. Certainly after the Sardar's visit to Kathiawar nothing untoward has happened. The reports I had earlier received appeared to suggest it was the Sardar who incited the people to rowdyism. But after he went to Kathiawar no incidents took place. This changes the complexion of things. Shamaldas Gandhi says that he will tell Muslims not to send such telegrams. I have received further telegrams from the very Muslims who had earlier made the allegations, admitting that they were exaggerated and that they had made a mistake. They have also written to say that the reports carried by the Pakistan newspapers were incorrect, that the extent of the damage reported was also wrong and it could not be said that the Muslims were scared and nervous. I am happy to hear it. I have said that I shall do whatever I can for our Muslim brethren. We must never kick one who is already down. We must raise him up. This is the demand of humanity, of love, this is civilized behaviour. I shall never throw anyone down even if he be my enemy—though of course I have no enemy. It was a mere dream that the Muslims would get everything once Pakistan came into being. After all it is not as if only those who are in Pakistan would be left alive and those outside Pakistan would be killed. Pakistan is a veritable sea of Hindus and Muslims. Will they drive out all the Hindus and Sikhs from there ? Those that have come out did not really want to leave their homes. But it has happened. I have received letters from Sikhs saying that they will know no rest till they are able to go back. For instance a person may have a thousand-acre farm near Lyallpur where he had been growing wheat, bananas, cotton and fruits. How can he leave it for good? He will not rest till he can go back. And what happened in India? The displaced Sikhs were furious and wanted revenge. I said it was not humanity. It was barbarism. They should not indulge in it, that good should be returned for evil. We must not copy the wrong-doer, we must emulate the man who does good. It, therefore, gave me satisfaction when I received that wire from Kathiawar. I shall tell my Muslim brethren : if something had happened they should have toned it down to a half or even a quarter; they should not have exaggerated it and given it publicity in foreign

countries. After all if Hindus and Sikhs—though there are no Sikhs there—go wild, can the world save the Muslims? Yes, they can say that we have not made the right use of our freedom. They can threaten to take it away. All that is possible. But the dead will not return to life thereby. We should therefore never exaggerate. Our agony is our own and no outsider can take it on himself. We should try to make light of it. We impress the world only when we exaggerate the good work done by another, not his folly.

There is another thing I must tell you. It does not concern you but I can convey it through you. I have told Brijkrishna not to give anyone any appointment to see me from the 6th to the 13th. That I do not want to see people does not mean that I am ill or that I want to enjoy myself. For many months now this matter has been under consideration. I cannot go to Sevagram. So people from Sevagram are coming here. The Kasturba Trust will be sitting from tomorrow. Then there will be meetings of the Spinners' Association, Nayee Talim, and Village Industries Association. The four associations are going to meet during this time. If they are properly conducted they will certainly consume some time. How am I to give my time to these meetings and to visitors? I have therefore requested people not to try to see me during this time. Not that I shall not be doing my own work. But people coming from outside want to see me out of curiosity.

As I have already said there have been talks going on about lifting the control on cloth, also on food. Not that it is going to happen tomorrow, but a process has started and everybody says I have done a good thing by suggesting it. I have received letters from all quarters saying that it would be good if the controls were lifted. Of course if the controls are lifted it will not mean that we shall be relieved of our obligations. Once decontrol comes into effect certain obligations devolve on the traders. I must tell Ghanshyamdas also to produce more cloth. He may say that he only carries out orders. He produces what cloth he is asked to produce and he takes the price. But once the cloth is decontrolled, what will Ghanshyamdas and other friends do? Does it mean they will be free to loot the people? In that case I shall be having a very bad time. People will hold me responsible for it. I am a servant of India irrespective of my status. If what I say does not appeal to the Government, that is, to those running the Government, it will have no effect however much I may shout. I am not God so that whatever I may say will prevail. I discuss and decide and then say that the control

on cloth and other articles should be lifted. It means that if five maunds of foodgrain is available today, we shall have ten maunds tomorrow because I feel that some of it has been hoarded. But if the peasants do not have any foodgrain and I say that the control should be lifted, will the people not then starve? I am not a fool who will let the people starve. I myself do not starve because Ghanshyamdas makes available to me goat's milk and fruit and vegetables. I believe that the farmers have enough foodgrain but that the price offered is so low that they cannot even feed themselves on it. They part with whatever the Government forces out of them. For the rest they say they will declare their stocks after the control is lifted. I feel that if the farmers can clear their stocks at a good price they will not starve. Admitting that we do not have as much foodgrain as we need, does it mean that a person should eat all that he can lay his hands on, while his neighbours starve? If we have sunk so low, then there is no cure. Control certainly is not the cure. If that happens the Government which is run by our Ministers must abdicate. People indulge in deceit. They are not truthful. The traders who should carry on trade for the benefit of the people are interested in filling their own coffers and in amassing wealth for their sons and daughters. What should the Government do? Should it use force or should it shoot people down? We do not have such power nor do we want such power. We may have a police force but not for shooting down people. If we start shooting down people who will be left alive? Where is our thirty-year old training? Where is our humanity? This cannot go on. In this way we shall only lose our newly gained freedom. I, therefore, say that controls must go. If the Government says that decontrol will lead to starvation, then I shall say that Panchayat Raj has not been established, democracy has not come to us, that Ramarajya has not been established and it is for Ramarajya that I want to keep myself alive. I shall say that those who are made free from controls should have self-imposed controls on themselves and make others happy. The civil servants in the Government may call me names. They may say I have no right to interfere, that I have no experience of running a government, that afterwards it would be difficult to reimpose the controls and feed the people. I shall say they are right. I have never been in the civil service, I have never run a government, but I have moved among the millions. I know their hearts. I understand them.

Now about cloth. About food you may say that we have not enough stock of it. But nobody has yet said that we do not

have enough cotton. We have so much of it that we export it. You will say we do not have enough mills. I shall say the mills are in our homes. They are in the homes of all the women sitting here. Every one of you has been blessed with two hands. If you want clothes on your back you should spin. If you cannot, you may go naked. We have a number of mills but if the production does not come up to the requirement we must resort to hand-spinning and hand-weaving. Weaving is not difficult. We have so many weavers in our country that we can have any amount of cloth woven, but some people have a delicate taste. They will weave only mill-yarn. They cannot weave hand-spun yarn. If they start weaving hand-spun yarn there is no need to go naked. Then our beautiful country—the home of so many hundreds of millions who know their trade, who know how to produce cloth—cannot go naked. Therefore control on cloth is the limit of ignorance and the sooner it is lifted the better. So far as foodgrain is concerned the farmers and traders must declare that they produce and sell to meet the people's needs, and they will not indulge in dishonest practices. The farmers should understand that they have to grow crops not merely to feed themselves but to feed all. We must produce one seer where we produced only a half. But let us guide the people; let us provide them incentive. There is no need for anyone to go hungry or naked in India. We have been denuded of our cloth because of our ignorance. We do not produce as much food or as much milk as we need even though we have a large number of cattle. What is this if not folly?

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 169-74

CWMG - XC

158. A TALK[1]

NEW DELHI,
December 5, 1947

When someone has fever the doctor first seeks to rid him of the fever by giving a mixture. The fever goes down. But it will come back, for the disease has not been diagnosed and the cause of the fever has not been traced. Similarly most people in the world today want an end to war, but wars continue. If the causes of wars were discovered and justice done where justice was demanded, there would be no wars. Today various groups of people have been pleading with the Government to ban cow-slaughter. I know that even beef-eaters have asked for such a ban, but as soon as a cow goes dry people stop looking after her. They do not ask that cows should be cared for. They simply ask that cow-slaughter should be stopped. But if everyone looked after cows well and insisted that no one should eat beef, cow-slaughter would stop by itself. But beef-eating goes on, the cows are neglected and yet the Government is asked to stop cow-slaughter. That would be making fun of the Government. In the same way one must first look deeply into the causes of wars and seek ways to remove those causes. Wars in a large measure are fought over economic issues. If we give up selfishness and resolve to take the barest minimum for the satisfaction of our wants, there will be no occasion for wars. Unless there is a complete transformation in our economy and our style of life, peace will elude us, however hard we may strive for it. Europe and America want peace and yet they use their intellectual, technical and scientific resources for production of nuclear weapons. Therefore, while they express the wish that peace should reign in the world, they are busy inventing ways to disturb the peace and to destroy the world. It does not occur to them to seek ways to restore peace and stop the possibility of wars.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 28-30

[1] A friend accompanying Jawaharlal Nehru had asked Gandhiji how peace in the world was to be established.

159. GIVE AND TAKE[1]

A Sindhi sufferer writes:

> At this critical time when thousands of our countrymen are leaving their ancestral homes and are pouring in from Sind, the Punjab and the N. W. F. P., I find that there is, in some sections of the Hindus, a provincial spirit. Those who are coming here suffered terribly and deserve all the warmth that the Hindus of the Indian Union can reasonably give. You have rightly called them *dukhi*,[2] though they are commonly called *sharanarthis*. The problem is so great that no government can cope with it unless the people back the efforts with all their might. I am sorry to confess that some of the landlords have increased the rents of houses enormously and some are demanding *pagri*. May I request you to raise your voice against the provincial spirit and the *pagri* system specially at this time of terrible suffering?

Though I sympathize with the writer, I cannot endorse his analysis. Nevertheless I am able to testify that there are rapacious landlords who are not ashamed to fatten themselves at the expense of the sufferers. But I know personally that there are others who, though they may not be able or willing to go as far as the writer or I may wish, do put themselves to inconvenience in order to lessen the suffering of the victims. The best way to lighten the burden is for the sufferers to learn bow to profit by this unexpected blow. They should learn the art of humility which demands a rigorous self-searching rather than a search of others and consequent criticism, often harsh, oftener undeserved and only sometimes deserved. Searching of self ennobles, searching of others debases. The sufferers should learn the art and virtue of corporate life, in which the circumstance of co-operation is ever widening till at last it encircles the whole human race. If they do this no sufferer will live in isolation. All of them, no matter to which province they belong, will hold together and would be considering not the welfare of self but that of all. This does not mean that all of them will live or insist on living at one place, an impossible feat at any time, more so today, when lakhs upon lakhs of people have been torn from their homes, not

[1] The Gujarati version of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 14-12-1947.
[2] *Vide* p. 104.

knowing where to lay their heads upon. But this humble spirit of co-operation does mean that wherever they are placed, they will feel one with all the sufferers, no matter from what strata of society they are drawn or to which province they belong. Insistence on being accommodated in a particular place of one's choice there will be none. The sufferers will never grumble. They will disdain to occupy houses belonging to Muslim owners or tenants, whether these places are physically occupied or evacuated. It is for the Government to decide what they will do with property evacuated under abnormal conditions that are prevalent in India today. The sufferers' one and only care would be to hold together and act as one man. It would be seen that if the idea thus presented takes shape and spreads, the problem of accommodating sufferers, otherwise styled refugees, will become incredibly simple and they will cease to be a menace.

Moreover, every sufferer who is not a cripple will do his or her full share of work against bread, clothing and shelter in a becoming manner. Thus they will realize the dignity of labour and feel dependent upon no one. All will be equal to one another irrespective of sex. Some labour will be shared by all, e. g., sanitary work including latrine-cleaning and scavenging. No labour will be considered too low or too high. In this society there will be no room for drones, idlers or loafers. This camp life is any day superior to the city life of dirt and squalor side by side with palaces—difficult to decide which is a greater eyesore between the two.

NEW DELHI, December 6, 1947

Harijan, 14-12-1947

160. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

December 6, 1947

CHI. VALJI,

I read your article on the cinema[1] just now. It took me some time to decipher some of the English words which were unfamiliar to me. When you quote from a book, it will perhaps help if you send the book, too. Alternatively, you may get the article typed or write it in a still clearer hand. I would not be able to translate this article into Gujarati. I myself did not

[1] The article entitled "Reconstitute Film Censor Boards" appeared in *Harijan*, 14-12-1947.

follow all the English words fully. You had agreed to send the Gujarati and the Hindi translations also. Even if you cannot send the Hindi, send the Gujarati. You may, if you wish, send it directly. I am writing to the people at Ahmedabad not to translate it into Gujarati. As for your previous articles, I am inquiring about them.

Are you all right?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 7506. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

161. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 6, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You heard the *bhajan* and the *Ramdhun* sung by Subbulakshmi[1]. She is new to Delhi. Usually she gives music recitals. One ought to lose oneself while singing *bhajans* and *Ramdhun*. Today you must have realized why people are so keen to hear her. She has a melodious voice. I welcomed her message offering to come and sing here.

Today I do not wish to take more than 15 minutes. Yesterday I took 25 minutes which was too long. I am ashamed of it. I must train myself to finish within 15 minutes. Today I intend to take only 15 minutes and leave out what cannot be covered within that time.

I had a letter from a friend yesterday. I have only been able to read a part of it. I have another letter today which I have not been able to go through. I must ask to be excused. The letter which I have read in part says that I am too simple a man, that I do not know how the world's affairs are run and am apt to be deceived. The correspondent also explains the nature of the deception and cautions me to be careful. He asks me to see what is happening in Pakistan and suggests that we should do the same here. That we should take revenge I do not agree. We cannot burn the houses of the Muslims. However humble those houses may be they are as dear to their owners as the palaces of millionaires may be to them. It is in these houses that they live. When a Muslim has to go to Pakistan he suffers.

[1] M. S. Subbulakshmi, eminent exponent of Carnatak music

The correspondent asks when the displaced Hindus and Sikhs can go back to their homes. I may inform him that so long as they do not go back I shall not rest. It is a different thing if they die before that happens. So long as there is a single Hindu or Sikh left who does not get his house back, I shall not rest. Yes, one may not ask that the house that has been burnt should be restored to its former state. No government can do that, not even the Government of India. I shall say that the Hindus and Sikhs should go to Model Town and stay there. The Lahore Hindus and Sikhs can ask the Pakistan Government to return them their houses and their land just as they are. All that they should ask is that the Muslims who have occupied their properties should be made to vacate them. We cannot ask them to raise houses on the land. They should merely return the land. Those who are now in the Indian Union should become truthful and decent. We must not imitate Pakistan. If they cut off their noses we can't do the same.

I shall further say to the correspondent that if we have made a mistake we must rectify it. Everyone makes mistakes. Only, one must not repeat them. Man is liable to err, even as he has the potentiality to do good. Once he rectifies his mistakes, he can only do good. If we stick to our dharma it is not necessary to advertise it to the world.

I have had to write on what happened to Kathiawar Muslims. I did the right thing. It is good to tell the Hindus there about it. It is good to tell the Government. It is our right. When we agreed to the formation of Pakistan we had not bargained for the houses of Hindus and Sikhs being burnt in Pakistan and their being driven out of the country. If mistakes have been made they must be rectified. Of course they can say that we should also rectify our own mistakes. They may say that the Muslims who had gone to Pakistan were driven out of India and that they should be taken back. If that is done the displaced Hindus and Sikhs could go back to Pakistan and the displaced Muslims in Pakistan could come back to India. This will be good both for India and Pakistan. If not, then both the countries will fall in the eyes of the world. We have always conducted ourselves honourably. We won our freedom honourably. It is not I who say it. It is not Hindus and Muslims who say it. It is the whole world that says that we have attained our freedom by honourable means. We should preserve it by honourable means and not by resorting to rowdyism. Rowdyism could be the way to lose our freedom. If we keep our conduct and our behaviour

clean the world will see that we have made amends for our former mistakes. What is the world going to do about Pakistan —you may ask. I shall say that the world does not have to do anything or say anything. Pakistan has to cleanse itself.

I am reminded that the Resolution[1] passed by the A. I. C. C. had my support and that I am responsible for its being passed. I am however told that people do not want it. Displaced Hindus and Sikhs do not want to go back to Pakistan. I do not say that they should go back as beggars. True, they have come away from Pakistan because they were helpless. But they must go back with dignity. The Pakistan Muslims should tell them that they have changed for the better and now invite them to go back. Similarly we should tell the Muslims who have gone away that their houses and their land are as they had left behind and that they should come and occupy them. If we get over our madness and behave as gentlemen, things will be all right. Where is the deception here? I do not deceive anyone. The world should not look for deception here. The A. I. C. C. has passed the Resolution that the displaced Hindus and Sikhs should all go back to their homes and land in Lyallpur and they should be invited to do so with love. Our Sikh brethren used to be farmers there. They have to go there in any case. This is my dream. I wish to live to see this dream realized. If it is not the will of God that this dream be realized, He will take me away. That is why I am staying on in Delhi. If I cannot do this here, where else can I do anything? If only Pakistan would mend its ways, confess its errors and assure us that it would behave decently, all would be well and we could live as good neighbours. There is no reason why we should remain enemies of each other. Enmity cannot be our dharma. I have concluded within ten minutes today.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 175-8

[1] *Vide* Appendix I, Resolution (2), "Repatriation of Refugees".

162. *DISCUSSION AT KASTURBA GANDHI NATIONAL MEMORIAL TRUST MEETING*

NEW DELHI,
December 7, 1947

QUESTION: Should the *sevikas*[1] of the Kasturba Trust be given instruction in first-aid and home remedies or should this be a different department? For instance, should the women engaged in Nayee Talim and khadi work receive such training too?

GANDHIJI : I do hold that any woman who wants to be an all-round village worker must have a basic training in nursing. That is to say she must know how to deal with and treat common diseases such as boils, malaria, scabies, vomiting, diarrhœa and so on. I of course believe only in nature cure. But these women must know what the disease is, what diet is to be given and how sponging, enema, etc., have to be given. All this is of course covered under Nayee Talim.

Q. Now that we have our own Government, should we accept assistance from the Government? For instance scholarships?

G. This, as in the case of the previous question, is a matter of individual discretion. But I hold the view that we should not alter the policy we have adopted so far. People everywhere seem to have become unconcerned and imagine that since now we have our own Government there is no harm in accepting grants. But our Government has been there for barely five months, and in this brief period it has had to carry enormous burdens. The financial plight of the Government today is far from easy and we must not make it more difficult by burdening it further, nor should the Government involve itself in the question. This much relief can certainly be expected with our own Government in power, viz., that workers, both men and women, working in the Kasturba Trust and other national institutions, will not have to face the difficulties they did under the British rule.

Q. If the *sevikas* who have received training start working for the Communist Party, what should one do? Should one ask them to refund the expenses incurred on their training? Again, if women from the Communist Party or the Socialist Party request for training being given to them, should

[1] Women workers

they be given the training? And should we take in trainees recommended by the Government?

G. It cannot of course be a happy situation if we train workers and are then denied the benefit of their services. But we must not be disappointed. If the Government sends us trainees and pays their expenses we must give them the training. And we must emphatically tell the trainees that courtesy demands that they observe the conditions that go with the training. We must not worry which ism a trainee follows, or which party she comes from. We must be satisfied if she signs the pledge and follows the rules. This is not a sectarian organization or a party organization. It is an institution of service. We should not seek Government grants. We have to train women village workers for the revival of the villages.

Q. Should we have prayers in the training institutions?

G. Certainly, prayers we must have. In fact I hold that prayers must become a part of life. It is so with me. Prayer is the food of the soul. It is the broom to sweep away all the dirt from the mind. And the women getting instructions in the camp should as a matter of etiquette present themselves for prayers at the appointed time. Whether they are believers or non-believers, whether they have faith in prayers or not, they must attend the prayers. It cannot be without its effects.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 43-5

163. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 7, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today I wish to talk to you about a very complicated matter, which is also rather sensitive. It has appeared in the newspapers. You will have seen that yesterday some Hindu women workers went to Lahore and met some Muslim women there.[1] They discussed the question of what ought to be done about the Hindu women

[1] An Inter-Dominion Conference was held in Lahore on December 6, to consider ways and means for the restoration of abducted women.

A joint appeal to the people of Pakistan and India to restore all abducted women was made by the representatives at the Conference. Prominent among the signatories to the appeal were: Ghazanfar Ali, Iftikhar Hussain Khan of Mamdot, Begum Liaquat Ali Khan, Begum Shah Nawaz, Begum Bashir Ahmed, Iftikhar-ud-din, K. C. Neogy, Swaran Singh, Rameshwari Nehru, Mridula Sarabhai and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya.

abducted by Muslims in Pakistan and the Muslim women abducted by Hindus and Sikhs in East Punjab. A very large number of Muslims have already left India and it is possible some more may yet leave. We should now resolve that not a single Muslim will be compelled to leave. If they voluntarily opt for Pakistan that is a different matter. But the fact is that no one wants voluntarily to leave India. Why should anyone want to give up one's house and property? It is not as if they had houses and properties waiting for them in Pakistan. Those voluntarily opting for Pakistan or going for the sake of jobs are very few, which is natural because there are not enough jobs for them in Pakistan. And if their established businesses in India are not affected, there is no reason for them to go.

But what of the women? This is a complicated question. Some say that about 12,000 women had been abducted by Hindus and Sikhs and twice that number had been abducted by Muslims in Pakistan. Some others say that this estimate is too low. I would say 12,000 is not a small number. Why, a thousand, or even one, is not a small number. Why should even a single woman be abducted? It is barbaric for a Hindu woman to be abducted by a Muslim or a Muslim woman to be abducted by a Hindu or a Sikh. Some people believe that 12,000 represents a very conservative figure. Let us say that 12,000 women had been abducted by Muslims of Pakistan and another 12,000 women had been abducted by Hindus and Sikhs of East Punjab. The problem is how to recover them. The women workers had been to Pakistan to consider how to solve this problem. The Hindu and Sikh women carried away by force should be restored to their families. Similarly the Muslim women taken away should be restored to theirs. This task should not be left to the families of the women. It should be our charge. They also met Ghazanfar Ali[1] and a police officer whose name I forget. Mridulabehn[2] and Rameshwaribehn[3], who had been to Lahore, both gave me separate reports and told me that they discussed the question of how abducted women should be recovered. Obviously it will

[1] Minister in charge of Relief and Rehabilitation in Pakistan; he had suggested at the Conference that a joint organization of the Dominions of India and Pakistan should be formed for the restoration of kidnapped women and children to their families.

[2] Daughter of Ambalal Sarabhai; one of the trustees of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust

[3] Rameshwari Nehru; Vice-President, Central Board of Harijan Sevak Sangh; President of the women's section set up by the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation

not do to send police parties or armed units as an escort for these women. Of course some Hindu and Sikh women workers could go to Pakistan accompanied by police officers from East Punjab to bring back the abducted women. But this is not being done. It is said that the women concerned do not now want to return, but still they have to be brought back. Muslim women similarly have to be taken back to Pakistan. It is also said that the Sikh and Hindu women concerned have embraced Islam and married their Muslim abductors. It could be true. But I do not admit that they are not willing to return. Similar is the case of Muslim women in India.

We have become barbarous in our behaviour. It is true of East Punjab as well as of West Punjab. It is meaningless to ask which of them is more barbaric. Barbarity has no degrees. Raja Gazanfar Ali says that both parties have indulged in atrocious behaviour. It is not necessary to ask who has been more guilty. Atrocities have taken place on a mass scale and it is irrelevant who took the first step. The need is for women who have been abducted and harassed to be taken back to their homes. It is my belief that the police cannot do this. The army cannot do this. Yes, a team of women workers could be sent to East Punjab and another team to West Punjab but I do not think that would be effective. I can say as a man of experience that this is not the way to do this work. This is a task for the Governments to tackle. I am not saying that the Governments were behind the abductions. It was not the Government of East Punjab which organized abductions. In East Punjab Hindus and Sikhs were responsible for them and in West Punjab Muslims were responsible. What further investigation is required? Whatever the number—I put it at 12,000 at least—East Punjab and West Punjab should return them.

It is being said that the families of the abducted women no longer want to receive them back. It would be a barbarian husband or a barbarian parent who would say that he would not take back his wife or daughter. I do not think the women concerned had done anything wrong. They had been subjected to violence. To put a blot on them and to say that they are no longer fit to be accepted in society is unjust. At least this does not happen among Muslims. At least Islam is liberal in this respect, so this is a matter that the Governments should take up. The Governments should trace all these women. They should be traced and restored to their families. The police and women social workers cannot effectively deal with this. The

problem is difficult, which means to say that public opinion is not favourable. You cannot say that all the 12,000 women were abducted by ruffians. I do not think that is the case. It is good men that have become ruffians. People are not born as goondas; they become so under certain circumstances. Both the Governments had been weak in this respect. Neither Government has shown enough strength to recover the abducted women. Had both the Governments exercised authority, what happened in East Punjab and West Punjab would not have happened. But our independence was born only three months ago. It is still in its infancy.

In my view Pakistan is responsible for spreading this poison. But what good can come from apportioning responsibility? There is only one way of saving these women and that is that the Governments should even now wake up to their responsibility, give this task the first priority and all their time and accomplish it even at the cost of their lives. Only thus can these women be rescued. Of course we should help the Government if it requires help.

As I told you yesterday I should not speak for more than fifteen minutes; so I end here. Two or three minutes are still left but I shall not use them.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 178-82

164. A FOREWORD

Charlie Andrews[1] was simple like a child, upright as a die, and shy to a degree. For the biographers[2] the work has been a labour of love. A life such as Andrews' needs no introduction. It is its own introduction.

NEW DELHI, December 8, 1947

Charles Freer Andrews, p. 15

[1] Charles Freer Andrews (1871-1940); English missionary, author and educationist; a close associate of Gandhiji and Rabindranath Tagore

[2] Benarsidas Chaturvedi and Marjorie Sykes

CWMG-XC

165. NO LIMITATIONS[1]

A correspondent says in substance:

> Individual ahimsa I can understand. Corporate ahimsa between friends is also intelligible. But you talk of ahimsa towards avowed enemies. This is like a mirage. It will be a mercy if you give up this obstinacy of yours. If you do not, you will forfeit the esteem you enjoy. What is worse, you, being considered a *Mahatma*, mislead many credulous persons to their own and society's harm.

That non-violence which only an individual can use is not of much use in terms of society. Man is a social being. His accomplishments to be of use must be such as any person with sufficient diligence can attain. That which can be exercised only among friends is of value only as a spark of non-violence. It cannot merit the appellation of ahimsa. "Enmity vanishes before ahimsa", is a great aphorism. It means that the greatest enmity requires an equal measure of ahimsa for its abatement. Cultivation of this virtue may need long practice, even extending to several births. It does not become useless on that account. Travelling along the route, the pilgrim will meet richer experiences from day to day so that he may have a glimpse of the beauty he is destined to see at the top. This will add to his zest. No one is entitled to infer from this that the path will be a continuous carpet of roses without thorns. A poet[2] has sung that the way to reach God accrues only to the very brave, never to the faint-hearted. The atmosphere today is so much saturated with poison that one refuses to recollect the wisdom of the ancients and to perceive the varied little experiences of ahimsa in action. "A bad turn is neutralized by a good", is a wise saying of daily experience in practice. Why can we not see that if the sum-total of the world's activities was destructive, it would have come to an end long ago? Love, otherwise ahimsa, sustains this planet of ours.

This much must be admitted. The precious grace of life has to be strenuously cultivated, naturally so because it is uplifting. Descent is easy, not so ascent. A large majority of us being

[1] A Gujarati version of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 14-12-1947.
[2] Pritam

undisciplined, our daily experience is that of fighting or swearing at one another on the slightest pretext.

This, the richest grace of ahimsa, will descend easily upon the owner of hard discipline.

NEW DELHI, December 8, 1947
Harijan, 14-12-1947

166. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
Silence Day, December 8, 1947

A Muslim organization has cautioned me against taking at face value anything said to me whether by a Hindu or a Muslim and making it the basis of an argument. It suggests that I had better investigate the matter first and then decide what to do and it adds that I should personally visit Kathiawar and see things for myself. I have already said that this is a thing I cannot at present undertake. I should do what I can remaining in and around Delhi. Those who offer me advice forget that so far it has been possible to have the charges withdrawn. When one wants to arrive at the truth for the sake of the truth, the result is always good. This has been repeatedly tried. In such matters patience and perseverance are of the utmost importance.

I keep receiving letters from Sind. There is one from Karachi which says: "There are no killings but Hindus cannot live here with honour and dignity. The Muslims who have gone there from India can enter any Hindu homes at will and announce their intention to stay there. They have no authority, but we dare not say no to them. There had been innumerable incidents of this kind. The Karachi of a few months ago has become a thing of dreams." This is the substance of the letter which is very long. What the letter says can, I feel, be believed. It means that there is total anarchy there. This is the way of killing people slowly. There is also such a thing as killing souls. I appeal to Pakistan to stop this lawlessness. It is a disease and the sooner it is got rid of the better.

Sugar has been decontrolled. Cereals, pulses and cloth will soon be decontrolled. The purpose of decontrol is not to bring down the prices all at once. The purpose for the present is to

[1] As Gandhiji was observing silence, his written speech was read out at the prayer meeting.

make our life natural. Controls imposed from above are always bad. In our country, this is especially so because we have a vast population spread over a country 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad. I do not take count of Pakistan here. We are not a martial nation. We produced, or at any rate we can produce, our own food and enough cotton for our requirements. When controls are lifted people will have a feeling of freedom and they will also have the right to make mistakes. This is an age-old way of making progress—to advance by making mistakes and rectifying them. If you keep a child wrapped up in cottonwool it will die or become stunted. If you want to see him grow into a strong man you will have to train him to stand every kind of weather. Similarly if the Government deserves to be called a government it must teach people how to face shortages. It must teach them to weather bad times by united effort. It is no good helping them somehow to keep alive without their having to work for it.

Viewed thus, decontrol means that instead of merely a few people in the Government the millions have to learn to be farsighted. The Government will have to assume fresh responsibilities on behalf of the people so that it can discharge its obligation towards them. It would have to improve transport. It would have to teach people ways of improving the yield. In this matter the Food Ministry will have to pay more attention to small farmers than to big landlords. The Government thus has on the one hand to trust the people as a whole and keep a watch on their occupations and on the other to keep in mind the interest of the small farmers. So far no attention has been paid to them and yet a large majority of the population consists of them. The peasant himself consumes what he grows. He sells his small surplus in order to buy the other necessities of life. One consequence of controls was that the peasant could realize only a very low price from the market for his produce. Therefore in so far as the peasant gets a higher price for foodgrain the price of foodgrain will increase. The consumer should not mind that. The Government will have to see that any benefit from the rise in prices under the new arrangement goes wholly to the farmer. This will have to be explained to the people every day or at least every week. Millers and all kinds of middlemen will have to co-operate with the Government and work under its direction.

I think this is being done. All these various persons and organizations should work in full concord and in full co-operation. So far they have always exploited the poor. The rivalry that has so marked their attitude to each other should go. Especially in the

matter of food and cloth no one should work for the sake of profit. If decontrol leads to traders making larger profits, then the purpose of decontrol will be defeated. Let us hope that capitalists and businessmen will offer full co-operation.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 182-5

167. LETTER TO ISMAT IFTIKHAR-UD-DIN

NEW DELHI,
December 9, 1947

MY DEAR ISMAT[1],

I was sorry that you were so ill and glad to hear that you were better. You should get quite well quickly, so as to do the very necessary work of reclaiming the poor abducted women in both the parts of the Punjab.

Tell Iftikhar[2] it was naughty of him to cease to write to me after his transfer of loyalty.

BAPU

BEGUM IFTIKHAR-UD-DIN

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

168. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

December 9, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI,

I have not been able to write much this time. Still enough is being dispatched. There are two copies of each item.

The Hindustani will be completed by Sushila by this evening and will, therefore, be dispatched tomorrow. That is what was done last week, too.

I understand why some articles were left out. Nobody on that side is to be blamed.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 6962. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai. Also G. N. 9988

[1] Wife of Mian Iftikhar-ud-din

[2] President, Punjab Provincial Congress Committee; left Congress in 1946 and joined the Muslim League; Minister of Rehabilitation in Pakistan till November, 1947; President, Punjab Muslim League, 1950; on being expelled from it founded the Azad Pakistan Party

CWMG-XC

169. LETTER TO A MAULANA

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,
December 9, 1947

MAULANA SAHEB,

I had a talk with Sardar Patel about the Muslims from outside who want to settle in Delhi. He says that he has no objection to nationalist Muslims settling in Hazarat Nizamuddin if they wish, whatever their number. But he is against bringing Muslims from outside, to be rehabilitated in the interior of Delhi in houses now evacuated. For, if the Muslims now evacuating these houses return, where will they be accommodated? Secondly, if Muslims from outside are rehabilitated in these houses the Hindu and Sikh refugees who cannot find accommodation are bound to object and argue that while they have not been rehabilitated outsiders are brought in for settling. The Sardar's view seems quite right to me. Therefore you may bring the nationalist Muslims and help them settle in Hazarat Nizamuddin. These outsiders should not be accommodated in the city's interior.

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

170. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 9, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today I attended a meeting of the Trustees of the A. I. S. A. and naturally I had to speak for half an hour to the women. If I have the time—for I shall be finishing the speech in 15 minutes —I shall tell you about that today. Otherwise I shall do so tomorrow.

You will have seen in the papers today a report saying that Sardar Patel and I are going to Pilani. Why? For a change of air. It is a mere canard. I do not know what the Sardar has in mind but I certainly know that this is not the time to seek a change of air. The Sardar works all day long and rests at night and that is all the change of air he gets. The same applies to me.

It is true that I am not so overworked because I do not have to run a government. But I receive many visitors and I get tired. Therefore I have to give myself rest. The air is quite congenial in Delhi at present and there is no need to go out for a change of air. What can Pilani offer? So far as I am concerned I have taken a pledge to do or die. I have not fulfilled that pledge. I cannot understand why newspapers publish such rumours. I can only conclude that a large part of what the newspapers put out consists of falsehoods. Then I came to know—though not from newspapers—that since we are going there certain directives have come from Jaipur about the quantity of sugar, wheat and other provisions that we shall be needing. Although we are only two persons to be provided for, a scarcity seems to have been created in the market. It is of course only hearsay. If true it reveals a shocking state of affairs that our movements should influence the market. It is as though we lived only in order to eat or that we had large retinues following us. This should not be so. The Sardar is a poor man, and so am I. It is true that he lives in a palatial house; so do I at present. Of course the best thing would have been for him and for me to live in a mud hut. Anyway, what I was trying to tell you is about the way rumours are spread. After all I am available here. They might have asked me if I planned to go to Pilani. I now have a telegram from the Associated Press in this connection which hurts me even more. The Sardar is always busy but they should have asked me whether we are going.

I have a letter from a friend from Sind. He has given his name but I shall not disclose it though he would not mind my doing so. I had told you about a letter from a doctor in Sind who had reported the hardships of the Sind Harijans.[1] The doctor has been arrested. Whether he was arrested because he wrote to me or for some other reason I do not know. Many persons who served Harijans have been arrested. This is the kind of thing that is happening in Sind. I admit that people are not being murdered, but as I told you yesterday this is worse than murder. When you murder a man he is dead and everyone then puts up with the fact, but to harass people and kill them by inches is much worse. A man was arrested and then released—maybe they will release others too. But it is bad to arrest people like this. I do not wish to make accusations against the Pakistan Government but I must warn them that if they keep arresting Harijan workers

[1] *Vide* pp. 168-9.

in this way it will be impossible for the workers to continue to stay in Sind. The same is true of Harijans. This sort of thing was common during the British rule. Must we continue the same practice?

I still have a few minutes, so I shall tell you about another matter, viz., about the women. The Kasturba Memorial Trust has been set up because there are 700,000 villages in India and women and children living in them must be served. But there is a larger issue confronting us; a large number of Hindu and Sikh women have been abducted by Muslims and an equally large number of Muslim women have been abducted by Hindus and Sikhs. Leave aside the question which community has abducted more women. In any case under each of the two Governments no less than 12,000 women and girls have been abducted. What is the Kasturba Trust to do? I shall do what lies in my power. One thing is obvious, that we cannot take up this work to advertise ourselves. Those who are public servants have to do the work of service. Once the work is over there is an end to it. It is of no importance whether the matter is reported in the newspapers or not. Again, we have to consider the various things that should be done for women. I can suggest a few things. Most women workers we have are from the cities. We could find a few in villages and even these had some connection with cities. I do not say that it is bad, that it is wrong to have anything to do with cities. But for the last 150 years the trend has been for cities to exist only to squeeze wealth out of the villages. They took raw material from the villages, carried on trade with foreign countries and made crores of rupees. This money did not go to the villagers, or only a very small fraction of it did. The bulk of it went to millionaires and the mill-owners. Towns exist to exploit the villages. The city culture does not therefore fit into the framework of villages. A woman worker from a town should not carry to the villages the atmosphere and the ways of towns. Maybe she has a lot of money and articles of luxury. Maybe she has a motor car, cosmetics, dresses of velvet and toothpastes, foreign or indigenous, tooth brushes, dainty shoes and sandals. If she takes all these things along with her, how can she serve the villages? If with these things she sets the standard for the villagers they will devour the villages. The cities should be for increasing the prosperity of the villages, for making money available to them for developing the village culture. But what is happening is the very opposite of this. I cannot explain to you everything. All I have to say is that the women workers who

truly want to serve, not to exploit, must have a sense of propriety and take to the villages only the things that it would be appropriate to take. Such reforms as they wish to introduce must be in conformity with the genius of the villages. If that happens our seven lakh villages which today are in a sunken state can come up. The villages are not inhabited by uncivilized people with no art and nothing good to show in life. There is much beauty in the villages. There is much art and there are industries that the whole world knows about. Village crafts have been appreciated all over the world. Therefore the women workers who would serve villages must leave behind the things associated with city-life. They should take with them only what is good and moral. Then alone can they help in the uplift of the millions of our women and children. This much at any rate let us do.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 185-8

171. QUESTION BOX

Q. Why does Gandhiji resort to a fast when he faces extreme difficulties? What is the effect of this action on the life of the public of India?

A. Such a question has been put to me before but never, perhaps, precisely in the same terms. The answer, however, is easy. It is the last weapon in the armoury of the votary of ahimsa. When human ingenuity fails, the votary fasts. This fasting quickens the spirit of prayer, that is to say, the fasting is a spiritual act and, therefore, addressed to God. The effect of such action on the life of the people is that when the person fasting is at all known to them their sleeping conscience is awakened. But there is the danger that the people through mistaken sympathy may act against their will in order to save the life of the loved one. This danger has got to be faced. One ought not to be deterred from right action when one is sure of the rightness. It can but promote circumspection. Such a fast is undertaken in obedience to the dictates of the inner voice and, therefore, prevents haste.

NEW DELHI, December 10, 1947

Harijan, 21-12-1947

172. ITS DEEP ROOTS[1]

A correspondent writes to the effect that:

> Even after independence, the hold of the English language on the city people does not seem to have relaxed to any appreciable extent. In proof of his statement he cites the Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition held in Bombay, at which the opener's speech was in English, the signboards were painted in English and the correspondence for the most part was conducted in English. The ration cards are in English, much to the annoyance of the general public, who cannot read English. Our leaders feel that their important pronouncements must be made in English without the slightest regard for the poor public.

This is a just complaint, demanding peremptory redress. The unfortunate inertia has to be thrown out before a visible change for the better takes place in this important matter.

NEW DELHI, December 10, 1947
Harijan, 21-12-1947

173. DISCUSSION WITH H. S. SUHRAWARDY

[*December 10, 1947*][2]

You must know that the people here and even in a greater measure the members of the Union Government do not have that trust in you that I have. They tell me that you are fooling me, that in Calcutta you hung on my words because the Muslims were in peril but here things are different and so are you. If you wish to remove their distrust and suspicion, you must have the courage plainly to tell Jinnah and Liaquat Ali that they must adopt a uniform policy with the Indian Union in regard to the recovery of the abducted women and other matters pertaining to the minorities. Similarly, you must ascertain the truth about what is said to be happening in Karachi and ask Jinnah how it

[1] This appeared under "Notes", a Hindi version of which appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 21-12-1947.

[2] From *Dilhiman Gandhiji*—II

comports with his declaration that the minorities in Pakistan would be fully protected. And if you cut no ice with them, you must, as a Muslim and an Indian national, issue a statement disapproving of Pakistan's policy in unequivocal terms. Thereby you will serve both India and Pakistan.[1]

Mahatma Gandhi— The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 525-6

174. TALK WITH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,
December 10, 1947

Students, parents and teachers should all become proficient in crafts. Only by imparting education through crafts can India stand before the world. Just as there are laboratories in schools, our kitchens should be our laboratories. For instance germinated pulses are rich in vitamins, but when we cook them with spices all the vitamins are destroyed. How much heat and how much time will food require to cook so that it is easily digested and also preserves vitamins ? How much food in calories will a child, a student, a grown-up man, a moneyed man, a worker or a common man require? How much ghee, oil, milk or grain should one consume? If all this is taught to the students while cooking, they would become experts in the science of nutrition.

There is similarly a science in the charkha as also in nursing the sick. Today boys of twenty become graduates and can speak a foreign language as fluently as their mother tongue. Although history, geography, arithmetic, geometry, Sanskrit, etc., are taught through a foreign language they pass the examinations. This shows that our boys are not dull or incompetent. I tell you that no English or other foreign students can speak Hindustani or Gujarati however hard they may try, as fluently as our students can speak English. I know of many Englishmen who have been here for years and who have been trying to learn Hindi and yet even now they cannot pronounce the word तुम[you], they pronounce it टुम. Look at Mirabehn. No one could be more hard-working. She resents it if she is introduced as an English woman. She lives and

[1] A group of local Muslims called on Gandhiji soon after. He gave them similar advice that they should set forth their views in a public statement if they felt that the minorities in Pakistan were not getting a fair deal and boldly and unequivocally say that this was a disgrace to Pakistan and a stigma on Islam.

serves as a daughter of India. She still cannot properly pronounce the sound 'व' of Hindustani. But we must not be content with getting degrees in English. We must learn hygiene, chemistry, economics, etc. And that not through books but through crafts. Students should diligently acquire knowledge. When there is knowledge to be found in cooking, in disease, in recreations, what need is there to pore over books? If you take chillies in excess you will get dysentery. So from this we can gain knowledge about the cause of dysentery. Thus we can make experiments on ourselves and gain knowledge from our experiences. This knowledge is permanent. Why need one cram the dates of Lord Curzon's birth and death? And if, even after cramming them, one forgets them at the examination one's parents will have wasted the fee money. Of course if one wants to study these dates because of interest in them, that is a different matter. But today we do not need such education. If therefore the flame of freedom is to be lighted in India the very first need is a revolution in education. After all, students are the real wealth of the country. Teachers, in so far as they mould the students, are the silent servants of the country. Their profession not only earns them their bread but is also one of service. But today we neglect those we call teachers. Parents must take an active interest in teachers. Parents commit a grave sin when they address teachers disrespectfully. The teachers can impart no enlightenment to students till we learn to show towards them the same respect that we show to the priest in the temple or to our spiritual preceptor. And if the students are not enlightened we may be certain the country will remain enveloped in darkness. Today all this seems a fond hope. We fought the English for so long. People used to make fun of us and ask if we thought we would get freedom by going to jail and by being flogged. But I had the firm conviction that freedom would come through that path alone and no other. Similarly while today the cloud of hatred and enmity darkens the relations between brother and brother, we cannot find a way to happiness because of our ignorance. Ignorance has rendered us blind. It is our misfortune that we are unable to see what is clear as day.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 71-4

175. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 10, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Yesterday I told you that I attended the meeting of the A. I. S. A. and addressed a few words to the women. Today again I had to go to a meeting of the Talimi Sangh. But maybe I shall have to leave that out for today. I must speak today of the A. I. S. A. You know what the Spinners' Association is. It carries on khadi activity which is centred round the charkha. First, the cotton has to be ginned, carded, made into slivers, and then spun and woven. If the hundreds of millions of people in India take to this work —it is easy, we can even teach it to children—all the expenditure on cloth can be saved. If cloth is thus manufactured in villages it becomes almost free. And if cotton is grown in the villages the saving would be twice as much, for we would have to spend nothing on cloth and we could also benefit from the craft and prosper. I therefore feel that if we do not behave foolishly there should be no dearth of cloth in our country. There should be no dearth even if there is not a single textile mill left in India. Today we have to look up to the mills. We have forgotten the charkha and khadi. People do certainly sport khadi caps because they have got used to it, having worn it during the struggle for freedom. But one feels sad that khadi is not a living thing in our lives. The Spinners' Association has been working for many years. It has disbursed crores of rupees and yet we are where we were. This is a matter to be pondered over. The charkha teaches us ahimsa. If everybody took up the charkha the villages would become prosperous and would not present the depressing spectacle they do today. During the discussion at the meeting, it was shown how, through the charkha and khadi, the shortage in cloth could be made good and crores of rupees could be given to the villagers, not in cash but in the saving that would be effected from not having to buy mill-cloth. It may be said that in manufacturing khadi we would have to pay for the cotton. But the price of cotton would be very little. If we use all the cotton that is today produced, it should be enough. But the Government gives all the facilities to the mills. It is more

concerned for the capitalists than for the farmers. It is a painful fact. I am not against capitalists, I am myself staying in the house of a capitalist. But I know the attitude that the capitalists have adopted. The Government may say that they do everything for the poor. But even the British used to say it. The truth is that the interests of the poor are not served. The Government should humbly accept this. It is easy to say that the poor should be helped. Let the ministers decide to go and live in the villages. If they are true socialists—and if I have my way I would make them behave so—if they are true servants of the poor, not only of the workers but of the peasants who are more numerous, if they want to uplift the people, I would tell them that they should only wear khadi. There is nothing to prevent them from producing their own khadi at home. I will tell the people what they are doing. Ever since I came here I have been saying this but have been able to achieve nothing. All that I have managed to get is a few crores of rupees for the villages. But what I want is that the music of the charkha should be heard in every home and no cloth except khadi should be seen anywhere. If this happened the poverty prevailing in the villages would disappear. That it has not so far happened is our misfortune.

One cannot say that in other respects things are going on well here. There are speeches being made—I shall not name the speakers because full particulars are still lacking—that the few Muslims still remaining here will not be allowed to stay on, that the mosques still standing will be taken over to house Hindus. What else will happen only God knows. I think that if the Hindus occupied the mosques it would be the end of Hinduism. So much for Delhi.

Something about Ajmer has come to our notice. And it is the same story there. I have visited the town many times. It has Muslims and Hindus in large numbers. There is an important Muslim shrine[1] there. It is also visited by Hindus and thus the two have been living in amity. They are one not in religion but in their ways of life. Not that there were no quarrels between the two communities but today the rioting has been much more serious. It seems from what little has appeared in the newspapers that a large number of Muslims have been killed. There was first a scare among the Muslims and those who could ran away leaving a few behind. Then followed the riots. I understand that is what is happening in the villages all around. I

[1] Of Hazarat Moinuddin Chishti

shall talk to you again after I have full particulars. All I say is that it is a shameful affair. Let us pray to God to give us the wisdom not to destroy Hinduism by our conduct. It cannot do any good to destroy Hinduism in the process of killing Muslims. If we wish to live we must let live. Man was not made by God to live through killing others. It must not be allowed to happen that the Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan and Muslims in India are killed and the rest become slaves. We are inviting our own destruction. There is a saying in Sanskrit: "A man loses his reason when he is to be destroyed."[1] Our minds have become perverse. The cries of "kill, slaughter, drive out the Muslims", are a sign of our having lost our reason. There are many other things I want to say but I have not the time, having resolved not to speak for more than 15 minutes.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 189-92

176. WHO SHOULD BE PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS?[2]

The following is a free translation of Principal Shriman Narayan Agrawal's letter in Hindustani from Wardha:

> In the Constitution that is being framed by the Constituent Assembly, there is to be provision for the election of provincial Governors by the majority of voters under the adult franchise system. From this one is entitled to infer that, as a rule, the nominees of the Congress Parliamentary Board will be elected. The Chief Minister of the province will also be of the Congress party. Common sense dictates that the provincial Governor must be above party politics of the province concerned, or above being unduly influenced by the Chief Minister or above friction between himself and his Chief Minister.
>
> In my opinion there is no necessity for a Governor. The Chief Minister should be able to take his place and people's money to the tune of Rs. 5,500 per month for the sinecure of the Governor will be saved. Nevertheless, no provincial Governor should belong to his own province.
>
> Moreover, in this way the expense and worry of an election by the majority of the adult population will be saved. Will it not be proper and better for the President of the Union to select Governors satisfying the reasonable test above

[1] विनाशकाले विपरीतबुद्धिः

[2] A Hindi version of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 21-12-1947.

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suggested? Such Governors will surely raise the tone of the public life of the provinces governed by them. It is worthy of note that the present Governors have been appointed by the Central Cabinet of the Union on the above basis and, therefore, their influence on their provinces has been wholesome. I fear that if the Governors are elected as threatened under the forthcoming Constitution, their influence is likely to be unwholesome.

Further, the Constitution as foreshadowed makes no mention of the village panchayat being the foundation of the progressive decentralization in the place of the old hunger for centralization. There are other such defects which one can profitably point out, but I have no right or desire to enter into an elaborate criticism of our seasoned leaders. I have but ventured to draw your attention to the defects which have appeared to me and demand your guidance.

There is much to be said in favour of the argument advanced by Principal Agrawal about the appointment of provincial Governors. I must confess that I have not been able to follow the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly. I do not know the context in which the proposal under discussion has been made. But, examined in isolation, the criticism appears irresistible, with the exception that much as I would like to spare every pice of the public treasury, it would be bad economy to do away with provincial Governors and regard Chief Ministers as a perfect equivalent. Whilst I would resent much power of interference to be given to Governors, I do not think that they should be mere figure-heads. They should have enough power enabling them to influence ministerial policy for the better. In their detached position they would be able to see things in their proper perspective and thus prevent mistakes by their Cabinets. Theirs must be an all-pervasive moral influence in their provinces.

Principal Agrawal says that there is no mention or direction about village panchayats and decentralization in the foreshadowed Constitution. It is certainly an omission calling for immediate attention if our independence is to reflect the people's voice. The greater the power of the panchayats, the better for the people. Moreover, panchayats to be effective and efficient, the level of people's education has to be considerably raised. I do not conceive the increase in the power of the people in military, but in moral terms. Naturally, I swear by Nayee Talim in this connection.

NEW DELHI, December 11, 1947
Harijan, 21-12-1947

177. LETTER TO MANIBHAI B. DESAI

December 11, 1947

CHI. MANILAL,

I got your letter only today. I also got the one sent with Dinshaw. I am replying just now to the former.

It was indeed welcome news to me that Gangabehn[1] had gone there. If she is able to stay on there permanently, nothing could be better. But that will of course depend on Purushottam's[2] health.

I will be glad if a primary teachers' camp is held there. The condition that the camp should involve no financial liability is only reasonable.

I hope Balkoba's fund will be completed. That Dhiru is persisting in his effort is not surprising, for it is in his nature.

If the gentleman sent there by Haribhau Phatak can stay there and can be a help to you, that would indeed be fine. But his being able to work will depend on his not getting fainting fits.

In view of the decision not to purchase the Ramanama land, the plan to purchase some other plot seems all right. Where will you find the money for it?

If the work at Uruli progresses steadily, no matter how slowly, I should be very much pleased.

Your vow of lifelong dedication cannot but produce an echo in the hearts of other people. Whatever effect is produced there will be the fruit of ahimsa. Without ahimsa village uplift seems impossible to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 2724. Courtesy: Manibhai B. Desai

[1] Wife of Purushottam Bhatt
[2] Purushottam Bhatt

178. LETTER TO VIJAYALAKSHMI PANDIT

NEW DELHI,
December 11, 1947

CHI. BEHN VIJAYALAKSHMI,

This letter will be handed over to you by Shri Datar from Uruli Kanchan. His son Chi. Madhavrao is blind. Datar has read somewhere that they are providing the blind with new eyes in Russia. If this is true Datar would like to take Chi. Madhavrao to Russia. If this is feasible do whatever can be done. Datar is a man of means and he will be able to bear the necessary expenses.

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

179. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 11, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

A friend desires that the verses from the Koran we recite here should be explained. These verses are ancient. The Koran was composed by Mohammed Saheb—it was spoken by him, thirteen centuries ago. The extracts from it that we recite are considered sublime like our *mantras*. The very reading of it bestows merit on the reader. It is good to know the meaning, of course, but even without knowing it a correct recitation itself is of great value. I can now explain the substance of it. I do not know Arabic or Persian. I do possess a translation, but it is not here now. Tomorrow I can provide a literal translation. In substance, it is a prayer to God. God is one and the same, by whatever name we may call Him. Allah is one of His names. Then His attributes are described. He is called Rahim and Rehman but He is one God. It is then said that God alone can save us from Satan. Satan drags us down and makes us do evil deeds. Only God can save us from that fate. Man admits that he on his own does not do noble deeds but God prompts him to do so. Man is like a drop of water in a sea. If God does not save man

Satan will devour him. God is great. God is All there is. His mercy alone can save us. I should say that however much we may recite this prayer, ponder over it and follow its import it is not enough. You may ask why in that case Muslims indulge in such barbarous behaviour. But then do Christians who have made so much progress, who are learned, follow the teachings of the Bible? Where are the Christians that live according to the Bible? Where are the Hindus who conduct themselves according to the *Gayatri*? We recite from *Ishopanishad*, "All things are pervaded by the Lord", meaning that God is in everything. He gives us everything. Whatever a man possesses has been given to him by God. We should renounce all and enjoy what we must. Nothing is ours. House, property and everything is surrendered to God. It is a great thing. Then it is said that we should not be envious of others' riches. We should not covet another's wealth. Let the Hindus but conduct themselves according to this one single *mantra*. Let the whole world thus conduct itself. It is not for the Hindus alone. It does not even mention Hindus. Let the Sikhs conduct themselves according to the *mantra*. It is not as if they did not believe in it. If everyone conducted himself accordingly the tragedy we have been witnessing all around us could not have come to pass. Everyone is not wicked, nor is everyone an angel. We cannot say that all Sikhs are wicked while all Hindus are angels or that all Muslims are angels.

Another verse is from the Parsi scripture. The first *mantra* in the prayer proclaims obeisance to the Guru.[1] It is followed by other verses in Sanskrit. Then there are *bhajans*. And yet we do not keep our hearts clean. It is a painful thing.

I had said I would explain to you what was being done in the Harijan Colony. But I have to leave it for the present, for there are other things to speak of and I have only fifteen minutes. Some Muslim friends from the U. P. came to see me today for a second time. They told me that they had been to the Punjab in Pakistan. They found other Indian Muslims there. They had planned to work out with the Muslims there some kind of a compromise which would make things easier here in India. They had obtained my permission for the visit. They returned today. They said they wanted one thing from me. I should ask the Hindus and the Sikhs to return to Lahore. These Muslim friends will accompany them. Should it become necessary they will be the first to lay down their lives. But that will not be necessary. They have

[1] *Vide* Vol. XLIV, p. 388, verse 7.

talked to the authorities there. They are willing to rehabilitate the non-Muslims there. I asked them to give it to me in writing. It is not something that can be done right away. It is a big thing. If this can be done a great part of my work will have been accomplished. They said, I should at least test their word. They have given to me their views in writing. Their report says:

> The Peace Mission from the U. P. visited West Punjab twice. The first visit lasted a month and the second a week. The conditions there are much improved. The Government as well as the public are trying to re-establish order. It is the desire of the West Punjab Government that the non-Muslims residing there at present should continue to live there and those who have migrated from there should go back to their homes. The Government has issued the directive that the non-Muslims returning to their homes in West Punjab should be given back their rights over their houses and properties and given full protection and provided with all the facilities they may need. If, notwithstanding all the pleading, some non-Muslims do not wish to go back, they will have full rights to exchange or sell their properties in any way they like. The Government is being very severe with those provoking riots and are taking all measures to ensure protection to those who may return. The Peace Mission has been able to persuade the people and the Government of Pakistan to accept the responsibility to protect the honour and dignity of non-Muslims. We, the members of the U. P. Peace Mission request the non-Muslim brethren from Pakistan to go back to West Punjab and settle there. We are willing to accompany them on their journey back and will protect them at the cost of our own lives. We will return only after these non-Muslims are fully assured of their safety.

This is signed by four persons. It is a very promising development. The newspapers have put out something quite different but we should not worry about that. There are many refugees concentrated in Model Town. In Lahore Hindus and Sikhs have large properties. There is also a Gurdwara there. I asked the Mission from U. P. if the Sikhs could go back there. They gave the assurance that Sikhs could go there. They said it was not that people in general had become friends; there was still some poison in the air; it could not be removed all at once. But the Government had made sure that there would be no more killings.

It would be a great thing. I had not thought things could improve so quickly. I do not know how far this is the case, but

let us in our hearts grant the possibility that there are people among Muslims who can do this. It would be inhuman to think that all Muslims are wicked. There are very good men among them. A Hindu friend had accompanied the Muslim friends. He brought me a letter. I have not the time to read it out but its substance is the same. He runs a large hotel visited daily by about a thousand persons. A majority of them are perhaps Muslims but certainly Hindus also go to the hotel. They find no difficulties in their way. He says there is nothing to prevent the Hindu refugees from going back there. I will not say that they must go back right away. Nor would I say that they should not go. But it would be good if they did go back.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 192-6

180. ADVICE TO DECCAN STATES' UNION RULERS[1]

NEW DELHI,
December 11, 1947

Gandhiji advised the Rulers to have perfect unity with their people. They are trustees of the people and their servants, he added.

The Bombay Chronicle, 12-12-1947

181. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

NEW DELHI,
December 11, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

Your promised letter was delivered here at 5.15 p. m. It came into my hand after 7 p. m. You have given me more than I had expected or wanted.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE G. G. OF INDIAN UNION

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] The Rulers of Sangli, Aundh, Phaltan, Miraj (Senior), Ramdurg and representatives of Bhavnagar and other States met Gandhiji in the evening.

182. DISCUSSION AT CONSTRUCTIVE WORKS COMMITTEE MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
December 11/12, 1947

J. B. KRIPALANI: This meeting has been convened by the Constructive Works Committee of the Congress. The question has been raised what the constructive workers should do.

GANDHIJI: The first thing we have to do is to improve our national character. No revolution is possible till we build our character. The pity is that though swaraj is so recent an achievement, there is already a slackness in constructive efforts. I know there are a few difficulties. Government help also may not be forthcoming at places. But the Congress has always been in our hands. And if you will only make an effort the Government too will remain in our hands.

QUESTION: Should constructive workers take part in politics?

GANDHIJI: I have answered this question many times before. I repeat my answer: leave politics to Rajendra Babu, Jawaharlal and Vallabhbhai. You confine yourselves to constructive work.

It is difficult to answer the question why constructive work is making so little headway, though the Congress has sworn adherence to it for years and men like Jawaharlal, Rajendra Babu and Vallabhbhai are at the helm of affairs. All the Sanghs, except the Harijan Sevak Sangh, were brought into being by the Congress. Why is it then that the workers of these Sanghs lack the power to make the Government go the whole hog with them? No doubt, the fault lies with us, the constructive workers. We had faith in constructive work, but our faith was not deep or enlightened enough to illumine our intellect and so our growth has been lop-sided. The criticism levelled against the

[1] The versions available in *Mahatma* and *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase* have been collated with the Hindi version in *Dilhiman Gandhiji*.

Congress workers, including Shankarrao Deo and R. R. Diwakar, had posed the question whether it would not be better in view of the halting policy pursued by the Government, to form themselves into a separate body and go into the Government for the furtherance of the constructive programme.

constructive workers is that they are generally lacking in imagination and intellect. Our intelligentsia are not lacking in sympathy. Reason, as a rule, follows in the footsteps of feeling. But we have not sufficiently penetrated the hearts of the intelligentsia to convince their reason.

This is my analysis of the situation. There should be rapport between the constructive workers and the institution. We must first purify ourselves. The Congress has always had the constructive programme. Now it has the power. Why is it then that our work is not progressing? It may be that we have no heart. Because if we were endowed with a heart we would have been sensitive to the pain of others. Moreover, a person may be in sympathy with one in distress and still may not be of any help to him. But our minds have not opened. Many eminent people who are in politics have had this experience. I have had a hand in the formation of all these various institutions, and I can say that things are in such a state because our hearts are not pure. A current was generated. The people caught on to the idea that that was the way to overcome the British. Villagers too flocked to us in ever larger numbers. It gladdened us that there was such awakening in the country. But in the forefront were intellectuals. And the result was that the freedom that came was not true freedom. The fight being over, our interest in the constructive programme waned. Constructive work is not a strategy or a technique of fighting. Constructive work connotes a way of life. It can be carried on only by men who have adopted it by the heart as well as by the intellect.

Kumarappa[1] pointed out that our way of life would be determined by what we do. Then the Sangh[2] came to be formed, in which the Congress helped. The Congress lent the constructive workers' Sanghs its name and also gave them the charter to function. But the Congressmen failed to come up to the scratch and to shoulder the burden. Such is our bankruptcy. If the Sanghs could come together and could work under the direction of a jointly chosen representative, it would mark a big step forward. To set our own house in order is the first indispensable requisite, if we want to influence political power. If all the Sanghs gave a good account of themselves, worked unitedly and in co-operation, without a jar or jolt, it would be a grand thing. But they must not do it for the sake of popularity, nor

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

hanker after political power, even in their dreams. Soon we shall have adult suffrage. That is a good thing. But to regard adult suffrage as a means of capturing political power, would be to put it to corrupt use.

The objective of the constructive works organizations is to generate political power. But if we say that political power having come, it must be ours as a price for our labours, it would degrade us and spell our ruin. Take the case of the Charkha Sangh. It has the largest membership of all the Sanghs. But we have never endeavoured to get its members enrolled on the voters' list. It was suggested at one time that we should get their names enrolled on the Congress register. I opposed it. "Do we want to capture the Congress?", I asked. That would be tantamount to killing it. The Congress can be ours only by right of service. Today we have our own Government. Under adult suffrage, if we are worth our salt, we should indeed have that hold upon the people that whomsoever we might choose, should be returned. In Sevagram I deprecated the proposal of our people enrolling themselves as voters. What actually happened was that the people from the village came and sought our advice as to whom they should give their vote, because they knew that we were their true servants and had no axe to grind.

Today politics has become corrupt. Anybody who goes into politics gets contaminated. Let us keep out of it altogether. Our influence will grow thereby. The greater our inner purity, the greater shall be our hold on the people, without any effort on our part.

My eyes have now been opened. I see that what we practised during the fight with the British under the name of non-violence, was not really non-violence. God had purposely sealed my eyes, as He wanted to accomplish His great purpose through me. That purpose being accomplished, He has restored to me my sight. Now I can see with open eyes what is to be done. I have been learning the art for so many years. Maybe I have got the technique. If I make a mistake I rectify it. I therefore say that there is no need for us to consult the Government. They went as far as they could.

Has what I am doing today penetrated your hearts? Then you should have the strength to remove corruption, wheresoever it may be. You have met here as the constructive wing of the Congress. For that you need not get into any committee. Your work is among the masses. The Constituent Assembly is today forging the Constitution. Do not bother about making changes

in it. Shriman Narayan Agrawal has written to me that in the Constitution that is being framed now, there is no mention of *gram* panchayat, whereas the Congressmen have always said that the *gram* panchayat must be the foundation of our future polity. We have to resuscitate the village, make it prosperous and give it more education and more power. What good will the Constitution be if the village does not find its due place in it? What Shriman Narayan Agrawal says, appeals to me. But we must recognize the fact that the social order of our dreams cannot come through the Congress of today. Nobody knows what shape the Constitution will ultimately take. I say, leave it to those who are labouring at it. Let the constructive workers consolidate their strength, and the way to do it is through the unification of the various constructive works organizations. And if we cannot do that, let each Sangh continue on its way and develop its strength as best as it can, making intelligence more and more the hallmark of all its activity. The Charkha Sangh is the biggest Sangh. It has funds. It is pursuing the policy of decentralization. I am not unaware of its perils and its difficulties. We have to create a superior, more advanced type of khadi worker. Not till then, shall Panchayat Raj become a reality. The workers of the Charkha Sangh are not there merely to earn a living for themselves or merely to distribute some wages to the spinners and weavers, etc., by way of poor relief. The only goal worthy of their ambition is to create a non-violent order of society. But, in this they have not made much headway. If our khadi workers are there for wages only, then we had better bid good-bye to the dream of realizing a non-violent social order. The success will depend on our uttermost purity. Impatience would be fatal.

We are today rather poor. But this poverty does not discourage me. Only now we are coming to realize that all our workers are from cities. They do not even know what non-violence is. When a woman gives me yarn she does it for money. But why does she covet money? The root cause is poverty. It is that root we have to destroy. Where is khadi today? The people who wear khadi do so to gain political ends. There is no credit in it. Our work may be slow but we can generate great strength through it. Let us forget about the Congress Constitution, because even after the Constitution has been given shape our work must go on. We have to pursue our ends in a different way. You must not succumb to the desire to become ministers.

The really poor villager is haunted by the spectre of destitution. He cannot see beyond the satisfaction of his primary

needs. The villager does not understand non-violence, nor do I talk to him of it, but I try only to see that he becomes a good spinner and gets a fair minimum subsistence wage. I do not mind if the volume of our work is small, so long as it is solid. Constitution-making will be over in a few months. What next? The responsibility of working it and making a success of it will rest on you. Suppose you get a constitution after your heart, but it does not work. After five years, someone will say: 'You had your innings, now give us a chance.' You will have to give in and they may try to seize power, set up a dictatorship and strangulate the Congress. *Per contra*, suppose you do not assume power but gain hold on the public, you will be able to return at the polls whomsoever you may wish. Forget membership so long as the voters are in your hand. Think of the root and take care of it as much as you can, and make self-purification the sole criterion. Even a handful imbued with this spirit will be able to transform the atmosphere. The people will soon perceive the change and they will not be slow to respond to it. Yours is an uphill and difficult task but it is full of rich promise.

QUESTION: The people are with us, but the Government obstruct our effort. What are we to do?

GANDHIJI: If the people are with you, the Government are bound to respond. If they do not, they will be set aside and another installed in their place. Even in the days of Lord Wavell, I used to tell the people that they did not know their own strength, or they could get Lord Wavell removed at will. When the British saw that he would rule over us only by martial law, they removed him. It is a tribute to the British, for they could very well have imposed martial law.

QUESTION: Should there not be an over-all organization, which would include and co-ordinate all the Sanghs' activities?

GANDHIJI: A separate organization is not necessary for that purpose. What is needed is co-ordination of the work of the Sanghs. The various Sanghs have worked separately and independently of one another till now. We tried to set up a co-ordinating committee for the purpose of *samagra gram seva*, but it did not work. If we all unite, we shall function like the departments of the Central Government. For instance, why should there be separate stores and sales depots for the Spinners' Association and the Village Industries Association? Why could not the machinery of the Spinners' Association be available for furthering the activities of both? The members of the Charkha

Sangh will do the work of the Gram Udyog too. There is the question of the sale of *tad gur*. Why should not the Charkha Sangh take it over? Our workers' children have to be educated. Shall we build a separate school for them? Is that not the function of the Talimi Sangh? If we will not co-operate even in such matters, it will show that we have not understood how ahimsa works. The central body will lay down the general lines of policy which all the Sanghs will follow. If we are determined and pledge ourselves to 'do or die', we are bound to succeed.

ARYANAYAKUM: Let the Presidents and Secretaries of the various Sanghs meet first in a preliminary informal conference and, after discussion, place before Gandhiji the implication and difficulties of unification.

SHANKARRAO DEO: This is not the right way to go about it. The workers should meet first. A gathering of the Presidents and the Secretaries will not have the requisite atmosphere. It is a narrow and subjective approach.

GANDHIJI: It is neither narrow, nor subjective. The workers' conference can follow, not precede. The Charkha Sangh has its Board; Jajuji[1] must consult it first. The average worker will not even understand.

SHANKARRAO DEO: We have a number of intelligent workers, let them be called.

GANDHIJI: We seem to be talking at cross purposes. The discussion that I have proposed, involves technical matters. It needs specialists. The general workers will feel themselves at sea in such a discussion. Let the props and pillars unite. All will then feel the glow of strength. Forget me. Dr. Zakir Husain is a great organizer. He has suggested that just now nothing should be decided under the spell of my presence. And, therefore, he has recommended that the matter be taken up later at Sevagram. I like it. The atmosphere at Sevagram would be calmer and free from the communal virus. When I came here, I did know that I would have to speak on these things. I was told that in the Constitution Committee of the Congress there were some constructive workers; how could they make their influence felt in the Congress? I had come to tell you that you must not expect to get the Constitution you desire through the Congress. Nor need that worry you. It should be enough if the Constitution you get does not actually stand in the way of constructive effort. The second thing I had come to tell you was that the various Sanghs should become the research laboratories in their respective fields. Our constructive works institutions are not democracies, but they

[1] Shrikrishnadas Jaju

are the instruments for the building up of democracy. The Congress has lent us its name and its prestige and, in return, it derives prestige from us for the service which, as its true servants, we render. The connection of the constructive works organizations with the Congress is spiritual. It can be severed at any moment. As specialists we should be able to tender to the Congress our advice on what needs to be done.

QUESTION: Why cannot we get it done through the Congress?

GANDHIJI: Because the Congressmen are not sufficiently interested in constructive work. If they were, it should not have been necessary for us to meet here.

QUESTION: That being the Congressmen's psychology, what is the use of giving place to the constructive works organizations in the Congress Constitution?

GANDHIJI: Because the Constitution moulds the psychology of the people. People may not do the things they believe, but then it should be our duty to see that through our neglect our case does not go by default.

QUESTION: Labour is represented in the Assembly through their representatives. There are special seats reserved for universities. Why should not constructive workers' organizations have their functional representatives in the A. I. C. C., who would act in the general way, too?

GANDHIJI: No, surely not the mixture. Functional is all right. But in general there is so much corruption today, that it frightens me. Everybody wants to carry a lot of votes in his pockets, because the votes give power. Under adult suffrage, anybody who is eligible has a vote. Let all such members of the various Sanghs form themselves into one body and let the Congress Working Committee and the A. I. C. C. take from among them their nominees, to advise and to guide them in matters and policies pertaining to constructive work. There are many labour organizations in the country. There is the Ahmedabad Labour Union, the Charkha Sangh, the Goseva Sangh, the Chamber of Commerce and so on. The Congress claims to represent them all. The Congress, of course, claims to represent the Princes too. But I would not ask you to include the Chamber of Princes in your scheme. Take all the living organizations with you. Purify yourselves of all dross. Banish the very idea of capture of power and keep it on the right path. Therein lies salvation. There is no other way.

Mahatma, Vol. VIII, pp. 279-85, *Mahatma Gandhi— The Last Phase*, Vol. II, pp. 661-6, and *Dilhiman Gandhiji*—II, pp. 80-5

CWMG-XC

183. DISCUSSION AT HINDUSTANI TALIMI SANGH MEETING[1]

December 11/12, 1947[2]

There were some workers, who were worried at the paradox free India Government presented. The Congress had sworn adherence to the constructive programme for years, while it was in the wilderness. But having come into power, it showed signs of giving it the go-by. Was not the remedy for those who had faith in the constructive work to enter the Government and use it for the purpose of building up a non-violent social order? Gandhiji was opposed to it, but he held that the purpose could be achieved if the various organizations which he had founded for carrying on constructive work came up to the standard which he had set for them. And as a preparatory step to the discharge of that role, he recommended the unification and co-ordination of those organizations into one body. He placed the onus of the transformation on the shoulders of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh. It should be easy for them to do that if Nayee Talim was what he had envisaged it to be. What he had proposed was only a part of adult education.

The Nayee Talim is today on its trial. It has either to transform the prevailing atmosphere, or perish in the attempt.

There is one section in the country today in our midst which holds that the Hindus and Muslims cannot coexist, that either the Muslims should get out of Hindustan or they should live here as the vassals of the Hindus. And similarly, in Pakistan, only the Muslims should remain. It is a poisonous doctrine and in it lies the root of Pakistan. Pakistan has come into being; their dream has vanished but the virus has remained. I have pledged myself to resist this doctrine and to do or die in the attempt. But to correct the wrong psychology of the people is the function of Nayee Talim.

Dr. Zakir Husain said that while in principle what Gandhiji had stated was unexceptionable, still there was need to hasten slowly. Things had changed considerably after independence. Everybody felt the urge and impatience to make new and daring experiments and the need for an absolutely free hand. If the merger resulted in maladjustment, it might retard, instead of helping progress.

[1] The two-day session was presided over by Zakir Husain.
[2] From *The Hindustan Times*, 13-12-1947

A suggestion was then made that they might function as the separate branches of a tree that have sprung from a common trunk and a reference was made in that connection to the Gandhi Seva Sangh which was described as functioning as the parent trunk, at one time. But Gandhiji smelt danger in that. He did not want the constructive workers' organizations to be drawn into power politics and become a rival to the Congress or the Government in the contest for political power.

Gandhi Seva Sangh is no longer there. Nor did it attempt to rally all constructive workers under one organization. It did once make a short-lived attempt to enter into and purify the politics of the country but had to admit defeat.

DR. ZAKIR HUSAIN: Various organizations were created separately as *ad hoc* bodies to perform certain specific functions. If they are united into one body, it will not be possible to keep power politics out of it.

If the united constructive workers' sangh tried to go into power politics, it would spell its ruin. Or else why should I myself not have gone into politics and tried to run the Government my way? Those who are holding the reins of power today, would easily have stepped aside and made room for me, but whilst they are in charge, they can carry on only according to their own lights. But I do not want to take power into my hands. By abjuring power and by devoting ourselves to pure and selfless service of the voters, we can guide and influence them. It would give us far more real power than we shall have by going into the Government. But a stage may come, when the people themselves may feel and say that they want us and no one else to wield the power. The question could then be considered. I shall most probably be not alive then. But when that time comes, the Sanghs will produce from amongst them someone who will take over the reins of administration. By that time, India shall have become an ideal state.

DR. ZAKIR HUSAIN: Shall not we need ideal men in order to inaugurate and run the ideal State?

We can send men of our choice, without going into the Government ourselves. Today, everybody in the Congress is running after power. That presages grave danger. Let us not be in the same cry as the power-seekers. Today, many Congressmen say: "Pandit Jawaharlal is getting so much salary, and why should not we?" They forget that a person of Jawaharlal's talents could any day have commanded a far greater emolument than he is getting today. If an ordinary humble worker like myself, who

neither needs nor has the capacity to earn independently, say, Rs. 3,000 per month, draws that much amount as salary, it is a deplorable thing. It is my firm view, that we should keep altogether aloof from power politics and its contagion.[1]

Mahatma, Vol. VIII, pp. 227-9

184. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

December 12, 1947

CHI. BABUDI,

I have your letter. It is good that you have patiently stayed on at Nagpur. Continue to stay there. I know you will not easily lose heart, you must not.

I am very glad that Shakaribehn is there. You did well in sending over Anand to Sevagram.

Remember that all of us, whether healthy or sick, live through God's grace.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 10080. Courtesy: Sharda G. Chokhawala

185. LETTER TO KANJI[2]

NEW DELHI,
December 12, 1947

BROTHER KANJI,

I have received your letter. Only that you may not feel any anxiety, I am writing this reply.

Other controls may go and there may be harm because of their going. Let there be harm. But why don't you give up the control on your English? Your mother tongue is Gujarati, how is it that you have forgotten it completely?

How can I leave the Birla Brothers' house if somebody else tells me to do so? When my experience is to the contrary, to

[1] It was decided to hold an All-India Basic Education Conference from March 6 to 9 in Bihar. In the mean time a preliminary conference was to be held at Sevagram to work on the reorganization plan.

[2] The Gujarati original is not available.

say that they are opposed to [de]control is not correct. Reasons for removal of control for me and them are different and my opposition to control is of long standing and from the time when I was not living in their house. Everybody must act on the promptings of his conscience; you, on yours; I, on mine; others, on their own; and from that at last truth will come out.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: B. G. Kher Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

186. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 12, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I have a letter from a refugee, saying I had advised the refugees yesterday to start going back. I had said nothing of the kind. I had said that we would have to see about it and could say something definite only after I had made sure that what I had been told represented the truth. The correspondent says that he wants to go back right away because here there is anarchy all round, no one cares about anyone else, there is no food to eat and no clothes to wear, and nothing is being done for the refugees. I am aware that all this is true. Things have reached a stage where everyone cannot be looked after and everything cannot be made available. I think that all that is possible is being done. But even if it is not being done I cannot advise anyone to go back. If they had not come at all it would have been different. But since they have come they should return only after things are fully normal. They should certainly be in readiness, for the sooner they are in a position to go back the better it will be.

Yesterday I had said I would read out to you the translation of the verse from the Koran recited here. I had already explained to you the substance. The translation runs: "I surrender myself to Allah to save myself from the wicked Satan. I begin with the name of God. Whatever I do, I do in His name because it is He who provides everything, He who is Rahim, the mighty, and Rehman, the merciful. He is all in all. God is one. He is unborn. It is He who causes everything to be born. He has no equal. He is sufficient unto Himself. That is why we say

that He is faultless and formless. He is the home of all attributes. His attributes cannot be fathomed.''

Today I have four or five letters. One is from Kathiawar. I had mentioned a letter from some Muslims from Kathiawar[1] but a few Muslims object even to that. I do not know why. The same people who had made accusations had written to me that nothing much had happened and if there had been some slight disturbance the Congressmen had tried their best to establish peace and that they were living happily in their homes.

Another letter is from Burma and yet another from perhaps Bombay. It is unsigned and I do not know where to send my reply. The letter from Bombay says that I do nothing but create confusion. Whether or not I am creating confusion, I know, and you who hear me also know. It says I should investigate what happened in Kathiawar, but how can, I unless I am supplied with details? It is not within my power to initiate any investigation. I can only ask the Government to do so.

Another letter is about Ajmer. It is from the Hindus. They say what I had said was not the truth.[2] There had been rioting no doubt but it was not started by the Hindus. It was started by the Muslims. It had always been like that. Then I realized that this is the other side of the picture. God alone knows what is true and what is not. I had based my statement on what I had seen in the newspapers. I had also heard things from various people. If we persist in such conduct we cannot keep the Government going.

A correspondent wants money to be made available for the renovation of the Somnath temple. The Sardar had agreed that the temple should be renovated but that the money should not be taken from the Junagadh treasury or the treasury of the Government of India. The correspondent asks why the money should not thus be made available. I do not wish to go into the question in any detail. All I can say is that if money is taken from the Government for this purpose, then the same rule should apply to other cases also. It will have far-reaching consequences.

According to newspaper reports there has been rowdyism in Calcutta.[3] It seems that we have got used to thinking that we

[1] *Vide* pp. 180-1.

[2] *Vide* pp. 207-8.

[3] On December 11, there was a demonstration in Calcutta against the Security Bill, which was pending in the Assembly. One person was killed and several people were injured in the clash between the demonstrators and the police.

can take what we want by resorting to rowdyism. It is a dangerous trend. This is a thing I have never taught. We fought against the British for thirty years. But it was a non-violent struggle. There was no place in it for physical assaults or snatching things by force. The Government in Bengal is our government. It is run by Congressmen. They should not have been subjected to such behaviour. Supposing they have made a mistake—I personally do not know where their mistake lay—rowdyism is not the way to point it out. Why should we indulge in barbaric behaviour? There were students among those who indulged in rowdyism. They are well-educated. It hardly behoves them to stop the members of the Assembly from entering the Assembly, to block all the entrances and, not stopping there, to get into the Assembly itself. But that is what they did. It seems to me that if we persist in this kind of thing the Government cannot be carried on for long. The demonstration was intended to make the Assembly desist from enacting the Bill that the demonstrators did not want. The Bill proposed by the Government is meant for preventing people from indulging in violent activities. Even if the demonstrators did not like this Bill, they should have expressed their opposition in a peaceful way. They should not have indulged in rowdyism. We did not do such things against the British. If any people did so I used to admonish them. We always behaved as gentlemen—I for one even used to undertake fasts.

Our Government today is faced with a number of important tasks. Those tasks have to be attended to. We cannot complain if it becomes necessary for the police to resort to lathi charge or use of tear-gas or to firing. Freedom does not mean that those provoking breach of peace should not be punished. If this happens one should not complain. There are various lawful ways of voicing protests. You can talk to people, write in the newspapers, complain to the Parliament or to the Central Government. We have all the necessary means. We cannot say the Government is ineffective. It is only three months old. We are like a three-month-old child. One cannot say we are mature. I would therefore humbly plead with those who resort to rowdyism to desist from it.

It is not that all of those indulging in rowdyism are hooligans or illiterate people. There are among them well-educated people. If they carry on such activities all the work we want to do will come to a stop. We have to reach food to the people. We have to provide them assistance in various other ways. It seems that it has become a profession with some to have all work stopped.

This should not be so. It is a mercy that the entire population of Calcutta was not involved in this. But even if they were, it would not have been a good thing. This kind of thing should stop. People should realize that the Government belongs to them and if the Government does not help them they should protest in lawful ways.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 196-9

187. NEVER DANGEROUS[1]

When it is relevant, truth has to be uttered, however unpleasant it may be. Irrelevance is always untruth and should never be uttered. Misdeeds of the Hindus in the Union have to be proclaimed by the Hindus from the house-tops, if those of the Muslims in Pakistan are to be arrested or stopped. Confession of one's guilt purifies and uplifts. Its suppression is degrading and should always be avoided.

NEW DELHI, December 13, 1947

Harijan, 21-12-1947

188. THE DOCTRINE OF MERGER[2]

Merger, as used here, has no legal significance. People of some States in the Deccan Union[3] are reported to have expressed an intense desire for extinction of their Princely houses and their absorption in their provinces. This has been described as merging in British India (as it was called during British rule), as distinguished from Princely India or States.

In a society based on non-violence, there should be no impatient destruction compassed by [one] man of another, for, every evil-doer, unless he mends his ways, is bound to destroy himself. Evil can never be self-existent. Therefore, the Congress policy has always been to mend Princely rule, not to end it, and to induce the Princes to become trustees and servants in reality of

[1] A Gujarati version of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 21-12-1947.

[2] A Hindi version of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 21-12-1947.

[3] The Deccan States' Union consisted of the States of Aundh, Bhor, Miraj Junior, Sangli, Ramdurg, Phaltan, Kurundwar Senior and Kurundwar Junior.

CWMG - XC

their people. In pursuance of that policy the Congress Government has tried and in the main succeeded in inducing the States to accede to the Union instead of planning the destruction of Princely rule and absorption of their States as an integral part of the Union provinces concerned. Therefore, merger can take place only under two conditions, viz., if the misrule of a particular Prince is self-evident and is irremediable, the people will have the right, as it will be their duty, to seek absorption or merger in their province. The second condition would be when a Prince and the people of his State both desire merger. It is suggested that any one State or its people, whether powerful or insignificant, should not seek merger unless all the States or the majority desire it. I do not think so. Misrule cannot wait to be ended before there is equal misrule in other States. Nor can a Prince who does not wish for any Princely power be expected or be made to wait till the other Princes are ready. Each case will have to be decided on its merits by the Central Government.

NEW DELHI, December 13, 1947

Harijan, 21-12-1947

189. SPINNING STILL![1]

A correspondent writes:

> I and the members of my family have been regular spinners and weavers of khadi. Now that we have got our freedom, do you still contend that we should spin and wear khadi?

This is a strange question. Nevertheless, it represents the condition of many people. Such persons evidently took to the spinning-wheel and khadi merely mechanically and as one of the means of attaining freedom. These friends forget that freedom was not mere removal of the foreign yoke, though it was the first essential. Khadi represents and represented a way of life based on non-violence. Rightly or wrongly, it is my opinion that practical disappearance of khadi and non-violence shows that the main implication of khadi was not grasped by us during all these years. Hence, the tragedy we witness of fratricidal strife and the lawlessness on many sides. I have no doubt that spinning and weaving of khadi are more important than ever if we are to have freedom that is to be instinctively felt by the masses of the villagers of India.

[1] A Gujarati version of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 21-12-1947.

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That is the Kingdom of God on earth. Through khadi we were struggling to establish supremacy of man in the place of the supremacy of power-driven machine over him. Through khadi we were striving for equality of all men and women in the place of the gross inequality to be witnessed today. We were striving to attain subservience of capital under labour in the place of the insolent triumph of capital over labour. Unless, therefore, all the effort made during the past thirty years in India was a retrograde step, hand-spinning and all it implies must be prosecuted with much greater vigour and far greater intelligence than hitherto.

NEW DELHI, December 13, 1947
Harijan, 21-12-1947

190. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

December 13, 1947

CHI. NARAHARI,

I am addressing this to you because I think that you alone will be able to read it. As Dada also will be arriving there by tomorrow, I must write a few lines. I don't like your having the stroke. If the cause is not internal, you will soon get well. But the rule is that after such an attack the patient must take complete rest for some time. Probably the sea-coast will be more suitable. Whether you are fit enough to undertake the journey, the doctor there would know. I might say that if I had been there I would have known. God is the support of us all. May He protect you.

I hope Mani[1] is not scared. Vanamala[2] at any rate must not be.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S. N. 9147

[1] Addressee's wife
[2] Addressee's daughter

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191. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 13, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Yesterday I told you that I was going to Harijan Nivas for doing some work there. The meetings of the Charkha Sangh and Talimi Sangh, etc., were being held there in which I had something to do. I shall speak to you about that.

Today I would speak to you about the charkha which was the subject of discussion there. What is the significance of the charkha? Why do I lay so much emphasis on it? It is true that when I first discovered the charkha, it was a common thing in the Punjab. But I did not know about it. And when women came and placed before me heaps and heaps of yarn it made me very happy. I took a charkha from there. The same thing I saw later in Gujarat. By Gujarat I do not mean the Gujarat of Punjab which is a district and a town. I am speaking of the Gujarat which is near Bombay. Vijapur is a town in the Gaekwar State. There was a woman worker there who used to travel a good deal. Her name was Gangabehn. She came to know of my craze for the charkha. She too went to Vijapur. In Gujarat women, who lived in purdah and included both Muslims and Rajputs, used to spin. But no one took notice of their spinning. Gangabehn told them that she would buy all the yarn they could spin. They then began to sell all their yarn to her. Women would line upto go to her, give their yarn and take slivers from her. I do not wish to go into the question of who made the slivers. They also got some money from her. Later, as we progressed, the amount of money the women received also increased. In this way lakhs of homes could get some money earned by the women. The charkha thus became very popular there and through this work of khadi the women were able to earn enough money for their food. Their demands were small. They did not ask for a daily wage of two rupees, or three rupees. They got two pice and they were content. When they got three or four they were more than satisfied. Still later the progress was much more.

Afterwards when I thought over it I realized that the charkha had tremendous potentiality. What is this power? What

can the charkha achieve? The charkha represents the power of non-violence. If on the one side there is the armed might of the whole world and on the other the charkha plied by the chaste hands—not unworthy hands—of our women, the power of the charkha is greater. You have all had a glimpse of that power. I have had a little more of it. But no one amongst us has known the whole of it. People merely thought that the charkha was only for poor women. That it certainly is. But it is also a symbol of non-violence. If people knew this they would not burn the charkha.

Time was when the whole of India plied the charkha and it enjoyed pride of place. There were no mills then either in India or anywhere else in the world. Cotton textiles were sent to the outside world from India and there was a time when Dacca muslin known as *shabnam*[1] was very popular. It was greatly valued by people outside India. They appreciated its beauty. I do not wish to go into all that history, though it is quite interesting. Nevertheless at that time the charkha was a symbol of slavery, for women were then forced to give a certain quantity of yarn and this was done by order of the government. And the Government was not a Muslim government but a Hindu government. It is all described in the books written at the behest of the Hindu Government. Later on Bengal passed into Muslim hands, but this system goes back to much earlier times. The charkha then truly stood for slavery. Women were forced to spin; they had to supply fixed quantities of yarn and they could not even ask to be paid for it. The Government itself decided what little money was to be paid for their labour and when even that money was not paid the women could do nothing about it. The attitude then prevalent was that after all women were born to do such work. They should be thankful if they were paid just a little money for it. It is a tragic history the way women were exploited and I do not wish to go into it. The charkha which was then a symbol of slavery has been transformed into a symbol of our freedom, and that is what I have been shouting from the house-tops.

During the Khilafat days the Ali Brothers were quick to seize on the charkha. They said that we should now be able to gain a victory over England through the balls of yarn prepared by our women. All we had to do was to fling the balls at those who imported cloth from England to sell it here. This was in 1920. But the work of the charkha had been started perhaps in 1916. In 1919[2] I had toured the Punjab. You may ask me why, although

[1] Literally "dew"

[2] Gandhiji had toured the Punjab in October-December 1919.

we have gained freedom, this storm is raging in India. The reason for it is that in truth we have not embraced the charkha. It is only women who have done some work in this direction. They liked what I said because I am their friend and their servant. Some of them came out from their seclusion after I entered the field. Before that women would not attend meetings nor speak at meetings. So women were kind to me and they took up the charkha. But if they had taken up the charkha not out of kindness to me but in the knowledge that the charkha would give them strength and give India strength, we would not have been in the predicament we are in today. We have to develop in us the power that non-violence alone can give. For that we shall once again have to adopt the charkha. Today we have forgotten the charkha. We shall have to accept the charkha with all that it stands for. Only then can we sing the glory of the tri-colour. That is why we have the charkha in the middle of the tri-colour though of course now the figure has been reduced to a wheel and we find a different interpretation for it.[1] That interpretation is not bad. The idea behind the three colours was that the Hindus, Muslims and others should work together and the idea of having the charkha on it was that such work should be pursued through the charkha. Today we have a larger army. We are trying to augment it further. Our expenditure on the army has increased enormously. What if the British are no longer here. It is a tragedy and a shame. For so long we fought through the charkha and the moment we have power in our hands we forget it. Today we look up to the army. It is because we have forgotten the charkha that we indulge in mutual fighting. Our mistake was to imagine that the charkha was a thing only for women.

When I told the Sikhs and Muslims of the Punjab to ply the charkha they were shocked. Could the charkha be for men? Men had swords in their hands. I merely laughed. Later a few Sikhs and Muslims accepted my advice and began to spin quite well. But still I must say that the charkha has not made for itself a home in the Punjab. But I do not want them to take up the charkha out of kindness to me. They may well burn the charkha and give up wearing khadi. The charkha being a symbol of non-violence and a repository of great power, it is an emblem of

[1] Attributing great significance to the *Chakra*, Prof. Radha Kumud Mookerjee traced its origin to Lord Vishnu's *Sudarshan Chakra*—the Cosmic Circle, comprehending all that is animate or inanimate. The Buddha called it the *Dhamma-Chakka*—the Wheel of Righteousness—which was later adopted by Emperor Ashoka as the State symbol. *Vide* also Vol. LXXXIX, p. 120.

courage. Let us embrace that ahimsa with deliberation and with all our heart and intellect. Then no one can take it away from us. If the ten crore adults in our country take to spinning there can never be a famine of cloth in India. We produce a great quantity of cotton and we can earn crores of rupees. The important thing is that no military force can stand up to the power created by crores of people working together. It is my fault, not that of ahimsa, if I cannot prove that. That is because I am lacking in *tapashcharya.* But you cannot say that ahimsa does not have the power. That power can find the fullest expression through the charkha. If the millions do not ply the charkha, the loss is obvious. Only a few lakhs of people can be employed by the mills. What occupation shall we provide for the hundreds of millions? This is what you have to consider. This is a supreme economic as well as moral question.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 200-2

192. REPLY TO RICHARD B. GREGG

A correspondent writes[1]:

I wonder if the correspondent has fully grasped the deeper meaning of Mr. Gregg's presentation. The latter will answer if he chooses.

Harijan, 14-12-1947

193. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 14, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

As I was coming to the prayer, I received a note saying that a Muslim friend of the writer had been forced to go away to Pakistan. The friend had left with the writer of the note some gold and silver bought with the earnings of his own labour. He wants to know how it is to be sent to its owner in Pakistan, who

[1] The letter is not reproduced here. The correspondent had rejected the explanation suggested by Richard B. Gregg, for the recent violence in India. *Vide* pp. 1-3.

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however has not given his name and address in Pakistan. If he furnishes the particulars I shall pass on the gold and silver to the Government to be sent to the person concerned. Till he is traced the property can remain with the Government. It is gratifying to know that notwithstanding all that has happened there are still among us Hindus and Muslims between whom fraternal feelings continue to exist and who do not covet what belongs to their friends of the other community. If everyone was like this the misfortune that has befallen us would soon be overcome.

I told you I would be reporting to you briefly whatever took place at the meetings of various Sanghs being held in the Harijan Colony. Yesterday I told you about the Charkha Sangh and its activities of spinning and weaving. I have to tell you now about village industries and Nayee Talim. I shall deal with Nayee Talim today.

Nayee Talim is not a thing with which everyone is acquainted, though the work has been going on now for seven or eight years. Nayee Talim consists in imparting all instructions through some handicrafts. The idea in a way has much deeper roots. The argument is that no education is true education unless it is founded in truth and non-violence. A man may have acquired all the learning, understood the essence of all the scriptures, may have studied Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, but, as the Sanskrit saying[1] goes, unless he has acquired true wisdom all his education has been in vain. By true wisdom is meant that which leads us to *mukti*. There are of course various kinds of *mukti*. There is release from the bondage of action, release from the clutches of a tyrant, release of a girl from the hands of a maniac, and liberation of the country from foreign yoke. The *mukti* meant here is the liberation from all the ills of the world. Education that is not rooted in truth and non-violence is no education in the proper sense of the word. There are so many instances of people who were highly learned and yet were satanic in their pursuits. One famous instance is that of Ravana. Ravana possessed great learning and his penance too was great. And yet because his pursuits were demoniac he perished, whereas Rama lives even today. We regard Rama as a manifestation of the Supreme Lord. So in order to acquire true wealth of learning we must cultivate truth and non-violence. The discussion at the meeting centred round the question of the method of giving such education. It could not obviously be imparted

[1] सा विद्या या विमुक्तये

through books. Then what should be done? Millions of people in the country pursue some handicraft. They cannot all be rich. Even in America everyone is not rich. True, the poverty there is of a different order but the hardships attendant on poverty are similar. In the same way various other ills widespread in India also exist there. With all their wealth and all their learning they have not been able to overcome these. I thought that if the millions were to be given education it could be done only through handicraft. If among a population of hundreds of millions a lakh or two have secured what now passes for education, what good can it do? And if everyone tried to have that education we would go bankrupt. The real system of education is one where the children of rich and poor, of king and subject, receive education through crafts. And this cannot be done unless we adhere to truth and non-violence. It becomes a question of religion here—not religion in a sectarian sense but religion in a universal sense. Such religion is eternal. It cannot change. It is for all, as much for Hindus as for Muslims. One cannot say that Hindus should speak the truth and Muslims should tell lies. It is in the interest of all to speak the truth. It is no one's religious duty to commit violence. If someone asks me whether Sikhs and Muslims may not receive Nayee Talim I shall say that if Sikhs and Muslims both declare that they are votaries of violence then certainly Nayee Talim would not be for them. Nayee Talim is not the special province of any one sect. I have studied all religions and assimilated their essence. Muslims and Sikhs both come and sit beside me. They advocate violence only where all other methods fail. But when we initiate a child into education we should begin by teaching him how to die rather than kill. We therefore decided that if we had to conduct Nayee Talim it had to be in this way. Those carrying it on must stand by truth and non-violence. Only then can it succeed. But I do not know if it is so now. I cannot read anyone's heart. I am also not a prophet. The reins of Nayee Talim are not in my hands. All I can do is to offer advice when asked. True, I conceived the idea. But the organization itself was formed by the Congress. Zakir Husain is its President. If he does not hold by truth and non-violence he should resign. But I have never known him to be guilty of falsehood or violence. He is associated with me only because he does not believe in violence. The Secretaries of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh are Aryanayakum and his wife. They too are votaries of truth and non-violence. I am busy otherwise and they have to run the scheme. They are the moving

spirit behind Nayee Talim. It is not even Zakir Saheb. He is only the President. If Aryanayakum and Asha Devi abandoned it the scheme would collapse. It is not an organization which can run on its own. Take the Congress for instance. I am of course out of it. But even if Jawaharlal, the Sardar and Rajendra Babu go out of it the Congress will go on. Or take the Charkha Sangh. I am its President. If I leave it, its work will go on, for it is an organization that has existed for many years. But that is not so with Nayee Talim. It has yet to establish itself well. It will be well established when those running it have the qualities of the *sthitaprajna* described in the *Gita*[1]. We must find an activity in which everyone can participate. I want to tell you that handicrafts alone provide such activity.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 202-4

194. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

December 15, 1947

CHI. VALJI,

I got the letter written on the reverse side yesterday. I am sending the article on railways[2] after revising it.

I feel a trace of violence in what you have suggested. Read what St. Paul says about charity[3]. I am doing that, too, in my own way. Though I am a friend of the Ministers, I am not a Minister. People outside the Government cannot understand their difficulties. And I, too, am an outsider. Need I say more to a wise man?

I am sending Thadani's to the man himself. I have still not received the volumes of *Prempanth*[4]. But I think they will arrive in due course. I will not write specially to acknowledge their receipt.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 7507. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

[1] II. 55-72

[2] The article was published under the title "Democratize Our Railways" in *Harijan*, 21-12-1947.

[3] I Corinthians, ch. 13

[4] Ten volumes of Gandhiji's writings in Gujarati edited by the addressee. For Gandhiji's foreword to it, *vide* Vol. LXXXV, p. 81.

195. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
December 15, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I was pained to read in the papers that the refugees have forcibly occupied the buildings of six municipal schools and have so far resisted all attempts of the New Delhi Municipal Committee to make them vacate the buildings. The Municipality, one understands, is now seeking police help in the matter.

This episode is an instance of shameless rowdyism. In the capital city of India such happenings are a cause for great shame. I hope those responsible for this will repent and leave the school premises. If they do not, I hope their friends will try to make them see reason and the authorities will not be forced to carry out its threat. It is a general complaint against the refugees that in spite of all their tribulations they have not become sober, responsible and industrious citizens. Let us hope that the refugees in general and those who have forcibly occupied schools will repent and prove that the complaint is not justified.

On Saturday[2] I referred to the rowdyism in Calcutta. Those indulging in rowdyism there were not refugees. The incident had a different background too. It is the duty of all leading men, whatever their persuasion or party, to safeguard the dignity of India. India's dignity cannot be saved if misgovernment and corruption flourish. I mention corruption because misgovernment and corruption always go together. I have it from very trustworthy sources that corruption is increasing in the country. Is everyone then going to think only of himself, not at all of India?

A correspondent writes:

> I have just been listening to your prayer speech of yesterday on the radio. You say some Muslims from U. P. who have been to Lahore, have assured you on behalf of the Pakistan Government that non-Muslims, and in particular Hindus, can go back there and resume their businesses. In the first place to invite only the Hindus and not the Sikhs shows cunning and is intended to create a breach between Hindus

[1] As Gandhiji was observing silence, his written speech was read out at the meeting.

[2] December 12

and Sikhs. Such assurances are treacherous. They are a mockery. Only persons like you can be taken in by such talk from the Muslims. I send you a cutting from *The Hindustan Times* of December 11. It will tell you something about the sincerity and truthfulness of the Pakistan Government. Will you still say that the Muslims who come to you are honest people? All they are concerned about is to make you believe that the Pakistan Government is just to the minorities and all is well in that country, although facts speak otherwise. If those Muslim gentlemen come to you again, please show them the cutting. I am sure you will not have forgotten what befell the Hindus and Sikhs who had gone to Lahore on November 20 last to take out their valuables from the bank. The armed units escorting them were attacked in the presence of responsible Government officers of Pakistan who did nothing to stop the attackers.

The cutting says:

According to a report recently published in the *Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore, non-Muslim traders and shopkeepers who had left Pakistan during the riots are coming back in the hope of resuming their trades, after an interval of months. But before they are given back the possession of their shops they are made to sign such impossible conditions that many had to go back disappointed. The Rehabilitation Commissioner has laid down the following conditions for letting people reopen their shops:

1. The proprietor or owner will keep a full account of sales.
2. He will not transfer cash or commodities from one place to another without prior permission of the Government.
3. He will give an undertaking to keep his shop as a going concern.
4. He will deposit in a bank the daily proceeds from sales.
5. He will live permanently in Lahore.

No conditions are laid down for the Muslims. Then why these conditions for the Hindus? The Hindus say they cannot abide by the conditions. So they go back disappointed.

I have already spoken of the possibility of disappointment and even if the report is accurate it does not necessarily follow that what the Muslim friends told me is false. The persons concerned have not only to think of their own position but they have to think of India, whose representatives they are, and of Pakistan which has given them the assurances. I may say that the Muslim friends concerned keep in touch with me. They came to see me today too. But I was observing silence and writing my

prayer message and so could not see them. They sent me word that they were not sitting idle but working for their mission. My advice to the correspondent is not to be so full of distrust and so sensitive. He will lose nothing by trusting. Distrust eats up a man. He should behave with discretion. For myself I can only say that I do not regret what I have done. All my life I have trusted in people with my eyes open. I shall continue to trust the Muslim friends till it is proved that they cannot be trusted. Trust begets trust. It gives one the strength to face treachery. If refugees from both sides are to go back to their homes the way for it is the way I have adopted and am following. The correspondent's suspicion that it is a trick to create a split between the Hindus and the Sikhs is wrong. I had even mentioned to the Muslim friends the possibility of their assurance being given such prejudicial construction. They denied vehemently that there was any trickery in it. I see nothing wrong in a path being paved for those wishing to return. It cannot be denied that there is more poison in Pakistan for Sikhs than for Hindus but the Hindus and Sikhs have to swim or sink together. They should harbour no malice. Intriguers cannot have sincere amity among themselves.

A correspondent from East Pakistan says:

> Now that India has been partitioned how can you call yourself a citizen of united India? Now what belongs to one Dominion cannot belong to the other.

Whatever the legal pundits may say they cannot rule the hearts of men. Who can prevent the correspondent from saying that he is a citizen of the world? Legally that is not the case and some countries have laws that would prevent him from entering those countries. But if one has not been reduced to an automaton, as some of us have not been, what does it matter to one what one's legal status is? So long as we are morally on the right path we do not have to worry. What we have to take care of is that we do not nurse enmity towards anyone or any country. For instance no one who harbours enmity towards Muslims or Pakistan can claim to be a citizen of both Pakistan and India. If such feeling of enmity spreads it will end up in a war breaking out between the two countries. Every country will treat as traitors those of its citizens who harbour malice towards it and help a foreign country. Loyalty is indivisible.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 204-8

CWMG - XC

196. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

December 16, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI,

I am sending a lot this time. The notes will be sent by Kalyanam or Sushila. The items contain three or four varieties of model Hindustani, including some articles[1] by Sundarlal. If all of them cannot be included this time, you may include as many as possible. Do you think the compositors there will be able to decipher the handwriting? If you think any portion requires to be revised here, let me know. Dev's article[2] is a long one. You may break it up into two or three instalments. Its English translation[3] also is there. It also may be broken up into the same number of instalments.

Please don't think that I shall be able to repeat this performance every time.

Pyarelal arrived here yesterday. He also will write something now.

Let me know if there is any effect on circulation.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original. C. W. 6963. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

[1] The articles entitled "Hindi ya Hindustani", "Somnathka Mandir" and "Notes" appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 21-12-1947 and 28-12-1947.

[2] Which appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 4-1-1948 and 11-1-1948 under the title "Prayashchittaki Yatra"

[3] Which appeared in *Harijan*, 4-1-1948 and 11-1-1948, under the title "The Pilgrimage of Penance"

CWMG - XC

197. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

December 16, 1947

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I have your letter. Bari[1] has written to you. How is it his letter has not reached you ? He does not wish you to come here. Go to Borkamta. Your field of work is there. I am sending a telegram.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 591

198. TELEGRAM TO AMTUSSALAAM

NEW DELHI,
December [*16*][2], *1947*

AMTULSALAAM
GANDHI CAMP
RAMGANJ
NOAKHALI

YOU CAN GO BORKAMTA.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 592

199. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 16, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am told—and to some extent it is true—that controls on certain articles of food and clothing have been removed and will be

[1] Bari Khan, addressee's brother

[2] The date has been inferred from the letter to the addressee dated December 16, 1947; *vide* the preceding item.

CWMG - XC

removed from more articles. There is now no doubt that controls are on the way out and Brijkishan has told me of its very first consequence. *Gur*, which used to be sold at Re. 1 a seer is now available at 8 [annas] a seer. This is some achievement. Of course the price should be still lower. When I was young no one could have dreamt that *gur* would ever become so dear. A seer of it could be had for one anna or less. We should therefore hope that the price of this commodity will further fall. No doubt we cannot have it free of cost. Similarly, sugar has come down from Rs. 32 to Rs. 20 a maund. *Moong*[1], *urad*[2] and *arhar*[3] are now sold at $1\frac{1}{2}$ seers for a rupee. The same is true of *gram*. *Gram*, in my opinion, is included in the pulses, but in this region it has various special uses and so it is kept separate. It used to sell at Rs. 24 a maund. Now the price is Rs. 18. The black-market price of wheat used to be Rs. 34 a maund. It is now Rs. 24. The same goes for other articles. People used to frighten me that I did not know how markets were operated, how prices rose and fell, that I did not know economics, that I was saying what I did because I was a mahatma and did not have to suffer the consequences of decontrol; it was the poor who would have to suffer. But from the first results of decontrol I see that the people will live rather than die through the measure. I shall therefore say that control on maize, barley and millet should also be lifted. Because those who are used to millet will continue to eat millet. They will not be able to digest wheat. Similarly there are many whose staple diet is maize. I thus see no reason why control on these articles should continue. Dr. Rajendra Prasad too had promised that gradually all controls would be lifted. We have seen the desirable consequences of some controls being lifted. Now take match-boxes. One has to pay an exorbitant price for a box of matches in the black-market, which is really the open market. There is no doubt that if it is decontrolled it will have a very good effect. Match-boxes never used to be so costly. In my time it cost almost nothing. Today a box of matches is sold, maybe, for one anna. Then one got a whole dozen for that price. Things were never so costly as they are now. I am happy when people's incomes rise but the rise in prices always distresses me. If the prices rise the excess should go to the toiler, but even then prices cannot rise so steeply. This happens when traders turn wicked and greedy and want to pocket as much profit as they can. We have got our independence and we have been

[1] to [3] Varieties of pulses

through a great calamity also, but still we have not learnt purity of conduct. If our traders content themselves with what is a just profit, I have not the least fear that decontrol will lead to a rise in prices. Even those who have such a fear attribute it to the fact that we are wicked and dishonest. Traders care only for their profits and the farmers and other producers too are only concerned with filling their own bellies and nobody bothers about the consumers. If that is so, how can one say that there is democracy in India? How can such things be permitted in a democracy? In a democracy it is incumbent on the Government to trust the people. It must clearly say that it will do as the people desire but that if what they desire brings them hardships it cannot be held responsible. True, we have a Civil Service, but all of us who are here should consider ourselves soldiers and serve the people. Today malpractices flourish. I am continuously receiving telegrams, etc., from everywhere. I understand there are some fishy practices going on in Bombay though I do not know exactly what. This should stop. But the people should congratulate the Government for the good work that has so far been done. It also encourages it. So much for the lifting of controls.

There is then the matter of the [Indian] Civil Service. I am receiving letters every day complaining of the expenditure still being incurred on the Civil Service. How can all I. C. S. men be removed all at once? And if they were, how would the work go on? Some have already gone and some others, who are soon to go, are having to do much hard work. The I. C. S. is in the charge of the Sardar. He praises that cadre very highly. Although they are few in number the I. C. S. men deserve to be complimented for the work they do. They no doubt receive high salaries. Still, it is we who constitute the real Civil Service. Let the Government accept us as the Civil Servants and, in order to enforce discipline, punish us as it does the Civil Servants. Let it summon any one of us and say he has to do such and such work. Is not there a law to punish those guilty of misconduct? If there is none, I shall say they should frame one. They should place on the whole people the responsibility they have placed on the Civil Service. It is after all a people's government.

Why do I have to say this? Because there has been a fresh development; the Congress has said that there should be a Parliamentary Secretary attached to each Minister, and these Parliamentary Secretaries should be not from among the I. C. S.

officers but from the ranks of the Congress or from among those supporting the Congress. Of course they will not work gratis. They will have to be paid salaries. If today we did not control the Government with its immense financial resources, how could we have paid these salaries? But since we control the Government we must pay one a salary of Rs. 1,500 or Rs. 2,000, give him a house and other benefits, and call him a Parliamentary Secretary. I must say it pains me—be it a Parliamentary Secretary attached to the Prime Minister or to the Home Minister or any other Minister. Even if the Parliament —or rather the Congress Party—insists on creating such a post, does one have to work only for a salary? In that case India will become a worthless country. Was our strength born only today? Let us first produce some results. Let us sit down and assess how much we have produced in excess of what was produced till August 14. Have we produced more grain, more cloth, more industrial goods? When people become industrious, earn money and become prosperous so that they can be generous in giving, then we can say that lustre has been added to India's name and its worth has gone up. But today our per capita income is only Rs. 70. This is nothing. When this has doubled or risen even further and the rural incomes have also risen you can then ask the Government to pay more. But if our production does not increase and we go on increasing our expenditure, where shall we be? Take for instance a shop—and India is only a large shop—whose proprietor seeks from the manager an account of the sales every evening. If he is told the sale today has been worth Rs. 1,000 while yesterday it was worth only Rs. 500 he is pleased. But when he is told that the expenditure has been of the order of Rs. 1,500, he will fly into a rage and start shouting at the manager. Shouting and abusing is bad no doubt and so is getting angry, but his point is well taken. If the income is Rs. 1,000 and the expenditure Rs. 1,500, where is he to find the Rs. 500 to balance the books? Today we have the money, so we go on a spree. Tomorrow it will be gone. It therefore pains me when we throw money away so recklessly. This will do for today.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 208-13

200. LETTER TO KIRAN SHANKAR

NEW DELHI,
December 17, 1947

DEAR KIRAN SHANKAR,

Your letter. I had some talk with Satin Babu but what I said I do not recollect. Anyone who quotes me should produce my written word. I could have only discussed general principles.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

201. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI[1]

December 17, 1947

CHI. VALJI,

I see no contradiction between the two replies. The only difference is that Tha. has enumerated more virtues.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 7508. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

[1] On top of the letter Gandhiji has made the following note in English:
Tagore's equations:

Rama	=	ideal son
	=	ideal brother
	=	ideal husband
	=	ideal ruler
Bharat, Lakshman	=	ideal brother
Sita	=	ideal wife

CWMG - XC

202. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

December 17, 1947

CHI. NARANDAS,

You have given me quite a vivid description. We are living in critical times. Be vigilant. Khadi is not merely khadi, but includes many other things. Without these other things, khadi is no more than a peasant's *pankoru*[1].

They say you have grown old. Could it be true?

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–9: Shri Narandas Gandhine, Part II, p. 320. Also C. W. 8649. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

203. LETTER TO JAMNA GANDHI

December 17, 1947

CHI. JAMNA,

I have your letter. Kanu and Abha can go there when they want. I think they are no more in a position to serve their own parents exclusively. Who can ride two horses at a time? The best course is to serve as well as you can and repeat the name of Rama, the dispeller of distress, whether or not you are in distress, and live as He keeps you.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

204. LETTER TO SHANKARLAL

NEW DELHI,
December 17, 1947

CHI. SHANKARLAL,

I got two letters from you. Nothing after that. I can understand that many friends come to you. But those whose presence

[1] A rich garment; literally, a silk sari, worn at a wedding

CWMG - XC

is not needed there should be asked to go back to their business. Keep them all well informed. This will stop the crowding around you, and allow the patients as well as their attendants to have some peace. It will also save money and time. Narahari will recover by and by. But he will have to have prolonged rest. Did the hailstorm cause heavy damage?

Blessings from
BAPU

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

205. A LETTER

December 17, 1947

I am passing through a difficult time. I have not a moment to spare. I am convinced that this communal conflict is not of the common people's making. A handful of persons are behind it. Whose fault is it if I do not see amity even between these two . . .?[1] If the ocean itself catches fire, who can put it out? Falsehood has spread so much that one cannot say where it will end.

If in that *yajna*, our struggle for freedom, we had been wholly negligent in preserving truth it is doubtful that we could have attained even this so-called swarajya. Truth is my only God. Truth alone to me is prayer, penance and the rest. I am a Hindu. I know that if the world were to adopt my Hinduism mankind would be free from all the worldly ills and man would live in a truly human manner. All this that I have dictated for you has just occurred to me after the prayer.

My health is all right. It is no small mercy of God that even under such heavy burden of work the body continues to be fit.

You would all be well. Chi. Manu will write to you the rest.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 112-3

[1] Omission as in the source

CWMG-XC

206. MESSAGE TO U. P. STUDENTS

December 17, 1947

I have your letter and invitation. I love being among students because I consider myself a student. But at present I am trapped here. Still, this too is a big school. I am being schooled here and am staying here for my examination. Whether I pass or not is in the hands of God. Both are the same to me. You should take your examination in the same spirit. I do not mean that you should only read books for your examination. I can say from experience that so long as our schools do not impart lessons in moral uplift there can be no awakening amongst us. Today the atmosphere in colleges and schools is not pure. First of all it should be purified. Today, though the students read so many books and spend so much money they are not free from anxiety, because they are not self-reliant. I want to change this pitiable condition and I want the students' help in this. We shall remain crippled as long as we do not conduct our universities through crafts.

Now swarajya has come. Let us all be brothers and sisters. Let no one be high and no one low. Let there be no Hindus, no Parsis, no Christians and no Jews. We should realize that we are only Indians, and that religion is a private matter.

M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 113-4

207. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 17, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

A friend who is living in Hoshiarpur, maybe he belongs there, has asked me a number of questions. He has given his name, but I do not wish to disclose it. I shall leave his questions too. He says before the partition the Punjab was one, so that if someone had his business in one part he had his house and property in another. This friend had his business in West

Punjab, while his house and property were in East Punjab. He had to flee West Punjab along with thousands of others. He thought since he had his property in East Punjab he would be able to carry on his business there. But he found on his arrival there that his house had been occupied by a Government official. He was given only two rooms, the rest being kept by the official. It would appear that it is a large house. He asks if he is not entitled to get back his house. If he does not get it back, will the Government help him or must he then go to court? In my opinion he should be given back the house. Why should litigation be forced on him? If the occupant is a Government official, it is all the more necessary for the house to be returned to its owner.

As I had occasion to mention earlier, refugees tend to occupy any vacant premises anywhere, even breaking locks where they happen to be locked. So long as someone lives as a tenant in a house and pays rent it is all right. But how can he continue to live there when the owner of the house returns to the house? He can only stay there if he arrives at some understanding with the owner, but it cannot be that he should retain the major portion of the house and the owner should become a guest in his own house. But the refugees are not in the position of tenants. All that they can say for themselves is that they have been forced out of their houses. Does it give them the right to occupy any property? If such property happens to be the house of a Muslim, then all is over. Refugees think it is theirs by right. But we can do no good either to ourselves or to India in this way. Has anyone ever done any good to himself by theft or plunder or arson? If this sort of thing goes on here, it must happen in Pakistan, too, and it will become impossible for anyone except Muslims to live in that country. I receive communications every day warning me against being taken in by sweet talk and telling me that no one except Muslims has any place in Pakistan. But if only Muslims are left in Pakistan in the end, they will then quarrel among themselves. Whether this sort of thing goes on in Pakistan or India, it is not good. It is worse in fact if it happens in India, for we never said that India belonged to Hindus alone or that only one community could live here. Everyone who is born in India and who considers himself an Indian has a right to stay in India. Pakistan however was conceived as a homeland of Muslims. But when Pakistan became a reality on August 14 they said everyone would be able to live in Pakistan. This

made me happy. What irks me is that what is said is often not implemented. And if the Hindus and Sikhs here do the same I see in it only the ruin of the two communities and of the world. No good can ever come of it.

A friend from Lahore says he had to leave his house and property against his wishes. He was forced to flee West Punjab and come here. When I advised the refugees to go back he went back. He found that his house and land were no longer his. He was given long lectures but he was not given back his property. How then could I say that the refugees should go back?

I have dealt with this question before but since he has raised it I shall say something again. I have very clearly said that the refugees should go back only when the circumstances have become more propitious. Those who would like to return, should keep themselves in readiness. First the Muslim friends who have taken the initiative in this respect have to go there. So far it is only an idea but it cannot remain only an idea indefinitely. They spoke in the name of the Pakistan Government. Or they will have to admit in the end that they have failed and that they were wrong in representing the Pakistan Government as desiring the Hindus to go back. The correspondent says that declarations are one thing and practice quite another and he wants to know whether he should go back. He has every right to ask. I must clearly say that at the moment there is no question of anyone going back. There are many people wanting to go back. I tell them that when the time comes for them to go back I shall let them know the date. I shall not ask anyone to go now. No one can really think of this at such an early stage, but it is very satisfying when these Muslim friends give this assurance. If they succeed I am sure that the present poison in the atmosphere will soon disappear. What needs to be done is to ensure that it will. For the present, however, the correspondent and others like him should keep calm. When the time comes I shall let them know. After all no one wants to go to Pakistan secretly. What I hope is that the Pakistan Government will arrange for a train which can take 5,000 people. They will go willingly and as a matter of right. They will go because they will have been invited.

There is yet another matter I must speak about and that is East Africa. You may perhaps not know that Nairobi is the most salubrious part of East Africa. It is like Simla in India. We in India have four or five months that are quite good and then we have months of severe heat, especially severe in the plains.

People then want cool air and go to Simla or Darjeeling for it. India is a big country. Not so East Africa. It was the Sikhs who built Nairobi. Sikhs are very sturdy and industrious people. With great labour they built a railway in Nairobi. And yet they are debarred from Nairobi. They may go there as labourers but not as settlers and traders. So much about Nairobi. But the thing does not stop there. Once the first step is wrong, you go wrong all the way. So now they propose to enact a Bill against Indian immigration into East Africa, very much on the lines of South Africa. Attempts are being made to take away such rights as the Indians have so far enjoyed. The Bill has not yet been passed but it has been introduced in the Legislative Assembly. The Indians there have hopes from us. They have sent a communication to Pandit Nehru, who is also our Foreign Minister in addition to being our Prime Minister. They have sent him a telegram and forwarded a copy to me. They want me to say something on the matter. Since I have been in Africa they have a claim on me. I therefore take this opportunity to raise my voice. It will no doubt reach there. India is now a free country. Will free India be treated thus? Mombasa and East Africa are British territories. Will the Indians be subjected to maltreatment in a British territory? You must know that there are a large number of Indian traders there—many of them Khoja and other Muslims. There are also many Hindus. They are from all parts of India. They have also earned a lot of money through their trade with the Negroes there. They have been there since long before the British entered the area. Even Europeans had not made their entry there and if they had they were not many in number. Indians have built large mansions there. Even ships then belonged to us. Later, when our position deteriorated, we lost the ships too.

Afterwards the British and other Europeans followed. It is a long story into which I need not go. Indians lived in peace with the Negroes and did business with them. I shall not say they were always honest but certainly they did not take anything from anyone forcibly. There are no communal differences between Hindus and Muslims there. They are living in amity and harmony. They want this anti-Indian Bill to be withdrawn. It must be withdrawn. India is a free country and I am sure Jawaharlal will do what needs to be done in this regard.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 213-8

208. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

December 18, 1947

I do feel angry but only with myself. Why should I be angry with you? Even if a woman like you hesitates to accept her mistakes, I do not see that you are at fault; the fault really is mine. For you have been brought up under my care. The atmosphere there[1] perhaps was not pure and so you did not inculcate all the virtues that make for sound character. And it was my responsibility to see that the atmosphere there was pure. I did not see to it. Hence I cannot disown my responsibility. In the same way I assumed that the satyagraha struggles were conducted solely on the basis of truth and non-violence. Today God has made me realize that that was not so. Hence I say that we make frantic efforts just to keep ourselves alive and therefore we cannot see our mistakes. Our ahimsa is not ahimsa. It has been used as a weapon of the weak. It is *himsa* that passes by the name of ahimsa. That is why today rivers of blood are flowing everywhere. What the consequences may be is anybody's guess. But seeing all this, people like you should take pity on an old man like me and pray to God to take me away. I know that today I irritate everyone. How can I believe that I alone am right and all others are wrong? What irks me is that people deceive me. They should tell me frankly that I have become old, that I am no longer of any use and that I should not be in their way. If they thus openly repudiate me I shall not be pained in the least. And I shall also then cultivate the indomitable strength needed to serve *Daridranarayana*[2]. I have only unburdened my heart to you. If possible let other girls read this. Your health will be all right. . . .[3]'s going to America is in the offing. I am not very keen about it. So I do not have full information as to what is being done in that regard.

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 123-4

[1] In the Ashram
[2] God in the form of the poor
[3] Omission as in the source

209. LETTER TO A MUSLIM

December 18, 1947

You of course come to see me every day. For a long time now I have been feeling that nationalist Muslims are perhaps a prey to fear. They come to me every day and talk a good deal but the impression I get is that they exaggerate somewhat. If we indulge in exaggeration it will do no good to anyone—be he Hindu or Muslim. If we think that we alone are right and suppress others in the belief that we are great and that therefore there is no harm in coercing others, we shall fall; we shall be deceiving ourselves. But if we are truthful we shall show fearlessness, discretion and earnestness in our conduct. If we are in error we should duly admit it. We shall not fall thereby, we shall only rise higher.

M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 122-3

210. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 18, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

A correspondent writes to ask why I object to English being used, but not to Urdu. The Muslims and the English are the same to us since we are friends of all. The correspondent's complaint arises out of ignorance. Not only do I not object to Urdu being used, I am its advocate. It is a provincial language like Punjabi, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali and Oriya. There are as many languages as there are provinces in India. To be sure there are many more languages in India but scholars have selected 14 or 15 which have well-developed literatures and which are more developed than the rest. But all these 14 or 15 languages cannot be used in all the provinces. The question also is what language should serve as a link language between the provinces. Ever since I returned from South Africa

CWMG - XC

I have been insisting that only a language which the largest number of Hindus and Muslims speak can be our national language. This can only be Hindustani written in the Devanagari or the Persian script. English has no place in India. The British ruled over India and so English became important. It is a foreign language, not an Indian language. Therefore I say, not reluctantly but proudly, that Urdu is an Indian language formed in India. We are all devotees of Tulsidas. You will be surprised to know that he has used any number of words of Arabic or Persian origin in his *Ramayana*. He just picked up words spoken in the streets and used them because Tulsidas was writing for you and me. He was not writing for the few speaking Sanskrit. The language of Tulsidas therefore is our language.

Lala Lajpatrai[1] was known as the Lion of the Punjab. He is now no more. He was a friend of mine and occasionally I jokingly used to ask him when he would learn to speak in Hindi. He said that would never be. You must know that he was an Arya Samajist[2] and performed *havan* and other rituals. As I used to stay with him I observed all this. In these rituals Sanskrit alone is used and he was able to pick a few words here and there in Devanagari. But his mother tongue was Urdu. He was a great Urdu scholar, could write fluently in Urdu and could also deliver long orations in that language. He could also deliver long orations in English but he could never understand Sanskritized Hindi. I could make myself understood by him only when I used selected Arabic and Persian words. How then can the correspondent object to my not objecting to Urdu? I think no one should object to Urdu. English I certainly object to. I have been twice President of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan[3] and I said the same thing there and no one opposed it. They in fact applauded me. I am the same man. How then can anyone suggest that I love Hindi less and am therefore less of an Indian? In my view he who objects to Urdu is to that extent less of an Indian.

[1] (1865-1928); nationalist leader from the Punjab, educationist and journalist; organized a massive agrarian movement in the Punjab in 1907, and was deported to Burma; President of the Indian National Congress, 1920; died of injuries sustained during demonstration against Simon Commission

[2] A member of the Arya Samaj, a reformist sect of Hinduism, founded by Dayanand Saraswati

[3] In March 1918 and April 1935

Today we find ourselves in a mess and have created poison for ourselves. This is what happened in Ajmer. If you want to safeguard Hinduism you cannot do so by treating as enemies the Muslims who have stayed on in India. My days in this world are numbered. Soon I shall be gone. You will then realize that what I said was right. The same rule applies to Muslims. Islam will be dead if Muslims can tolerate only Muslims. The same goes for Christians and Christianity. All the religions of the world are good, for they teach righteousness and friendship. Those that teach enmity between men, I do not consider religions.

Even during the British rule I had said that English could not be the language of India. I love the English language. I can read and write it. Everyone knows that I am not an enemy either of the English or their language. But everything has its place. English is an international language. If we want to deal with the world outside India, we can do so only through English. English is a universal language. Hindustani has not yet acquired that universality. It is a matter of sorrow that while we have freed ourselves of English rule, we have not been able to free ourselves of the impact of English culture and the English language.

Hindustani is the language that has been formed through the blending of Hindi and Urdu like the confluence of the two rivers Ganga and Jamuna at Prayag. They share the same grammar which is the grammar of Hindustani. It has words from Sanskrit, Persian, English and various other languages. The word 'court' is as much a foreign word as 'kachehari' and there is no reason to reject the first and keep the latter. Similarly there are words like 'bicycle' and 'rail'. By what name would you like to call a rail? The fact is that so many English words have got into our speech and we do not despise them. But if the correspondent had written to me in English, I would have thrown away the letter knowing that he did know Hindustani. Similarly if I were to send him any letter written in English he would have the right to throw it away. The matter is really quite simple but we have forgotten what is right and what is wrong. And a kind of perversity has come to lodge in us. May God protect us.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 218-22

211. LETTER TO REV. CARDES

[*December 19, 1947*][1]

MY DEAR CARDES,

Your letter. I am so glad you are there at last and in the room that was allotted to me. Make yourself at home and take up the work that suits you most.

I had thought you were passing through Delhi. Did you not? Do write to me fully.

Love.

BAPU

REV. CARDES
SEVAGRAM[2]

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

212. LETTER TO NAWAB OF BHOPAL

NEW DELHI,
December 19, 1947

DEAR NAWAB SAHEB,

Your kind wire reached me yesterday. I know the patients[3] are in safe hands. Chandrani is a promising servant of humanity. I wonder who the assailants were. An inmate of the Ashram is going to see the patients and bringing this note to you. A note is going to Shwaib[4] too.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] The letter is placed in the source among those of this date.
[2] The address is in Devanagari script.
[3] Chandrani and her mother, who were assailed by some miscreants near Bhopal Station. Chandrani was thrown out of the train.
[4] Shwaib Qureshi

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213. LETTER TO CHANDRANI

December 19, 1947

CHI. CHAND,

What a girl you are! People went thrice to the railway station to receive you but you did not arrive. At last a dining-car attendant mentioned that two women had come for meals and that even the bill was unpaid; but no one knew what happened after that. My apprehension proved right.[1] I learnt about it from the newspapers yesterday. Now I have all the details. Nawab Saheb has wired that you and your mother are out of danger. It's all God's grace. I hope you are both cheerful. You both are coming here soon, are you not? Take as much rest as the doctors advise. How were you attacked, who were the assailants? This is being brought to you by Om Prakash. Tell him everything if you cannot yourself write. Send him back soon. Your brother is ready to come. Would you like him to come? Whatever you say will be done.

Pyarelal is here.

Blessings to you both from

BAPU

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

214. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

NEW DELHI,
December 19, 1947

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I have had a full discussion with Aryanayakum. I suggested to him that although you were the lawful manager he should regard himself as the *de facto* manager and act accordingly. It means no one should lay claim to that part of the Ashram which he requires for the Talimi Sangh. If he asks all the inmates of the Ashram to leave, no one should stay on. He

[1] When the addressee and her mother failed to arrive at Delhi as scheduled on the 17th, Gandhiji had jocularly remarked: "Someone might have thrown Chand out mistaking her to be a Punjabi."

does believe that there is no difference between the inmates of the Ashram and the members of the Talimi Sangh or between the Ashram and the Talimi Sangh. He cannot do any good to the Talimi Sangh at the cost of that of the Ashram. I accept this fact in whatever I do, so should all of us. Moreover, he says that neither Jaju nor Krishnadas has the slightest misunderstanding about or mistrust of him, which they earlier had. I asked him to convey all this to you. I also asked him to write you a letter to this effect. He said that there was no need for a letter. Tell me if you wish to have any change in this. Tell me also if there has been any change.

You are likely to have seen something about Chand in the newspapers. It's a sad story. I cannot dictate any more.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

215. LETTER TO DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR

December 19, 1947

CHI. DEV,

Read this letter from Hunar. What is it about? Talk with Hunar if you wish. Hand over my letter[1] to him.

I have your letter. There are many articles of yours but I have not understood which of them you want back. I shall enquire from Pyarelal.

You must have read the report about Chand in the newspapers. Everything is being done from this end. There is a wire from Nawab Saheb saying that there is no cause for worry. Om Prakash has come. He is leaving today. You must not worry at all.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] *Vide* the following item.

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216. LETTER TO M. A. HUNAR

December 19, 1947

CHI. HUNAR,

I have your letter. Probably it became your duty to stay on when Mahesh detained you. Pandit Sundarlal is here. He has not told me anything. I should at least have the opportunity to give a hearing.

I do hope that there is only some misunderstanding somewhere about Dev. I have always held that Dev cannot be tainted by *Kaliyug*[1]. I am sending on your letter to him. You should have a free and frank talk with him.

General Shah Nawaz will be a little delayed.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

217. MESSAGE TO BIHAR

December 19, 1947

I am here but my heart is in Bihar. The peace that has been brought to Bihar should not suffer the slightest breach. Even if the whole of India should burn, Bihar must not lose its peace. If Bihar can do this, then just as the history of India's freedom movement began with the Champaran Satyagraha[2] and came to be written in letters of gold, similarly Bihar will occupy the place of glory in India's history for aeons to come. Of this I have not the slightest doubt.

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 133

[1] Last and worst of the four *yugas* (aeons)

[2] Launched in 1917 against the *Tinkathia* system, under which peasants had to grow indigo on 3/20 of their holdings at the will of the landlords. *Vide* Vol. XIII.

218. ADDRESS TO MEOS

JESARAH,
December 19, 1947

Addressing a gathering mainly of the Meos Gandhiji remarked that his voice was not so powerful as it once used to be. There was a time when whatever he said was acted upon. If it had the original power, not a single Muslim should have found it necessary to migrate to Pakistan from the Indian Union or a single Hindu or Sikh to leave his hearth and home in Pakistan and seek asylum in the Indian Union. What had taken place—the orgy of murder, arson, loot, abductions, forcible conversions and worse that they had witnessed—was, in his opinion, unmitigated barbarism. True, such things were not unknown before, but there was not that wholesale communal discrimination. Tales of such happenings had filled him with grief and shame. Even more shameful was the demolition and desecration of mosques, temples and gurdwaras. Such madness, if it was not arrested, must spell ruin to both the communities. They were far from freedom while this madness reigned.

What was the remedy, Gandhiji continued. He had no faith in the force of bayonets. He could only present to them the weapon of non-violence, which provided an answer to every emergency and which was invulnerable. It was common to all great religions—to Christianity no less than to Hinduism, etc., but it had today been reduced to a mere copy-book maxim by the votaries of religions and in practice they all followed the law of the jungle. His might be today a voice in the wilderness, said Gandhiji, but he had no other message to give them except this message of non-violence—of meeting the challenge of brute force with the power of the spirit.

Gandhiji then referred to the representation which was read to him by a representative of the Meos in which had been catalogued their complaints for which they wanted redress. He had placed that letter, Gandhiji told the audience, in the hands of Dr. Gopichand, their Chief Minister and the speaker would leave it to him (Dr. Gopichand) to tell them what he proposed to do in regard to the various points set forth in it. All he could say was that if any Government officer had been guilty of misconduct, he was sure, the Government would not hesitate to take suitable action against him. No individual could be allowed to usurp the function of the Government and expect a reshuffle of Government officers at his bidding. He was clear too that no conversion or marriage of a woman to a member of the opposite community could be recognized as valid on the plea of consent

or free will. It was abuse of words to talk of free consent when terror reigned.

He would feel happy, continued Gandhiji, if his words could bring some consolation to them in their distress. Referring to the Meo refugees who had been driven out of the Alwar and Bharatpur States, Gandhiji remarked that he looked forward to the day when all enmities would be forgotten and all hatred buried underground and all those who had been driven away from their hearths and homes would return to them and resume their avocations in perfect security and peace as before. His heart would then dance with joy. He would never give up that hope so long as he lived. But he was free to confess that today conditions were not ripe for it. He was sure that the Union Government would not be remiss in discharging its duty in that respect, and the States would have to listen to the advice of the Union Government. The Instrument of Accession did not give to the Rulers of the States the freedom to oppress their subjects. The Rulers had to be trustees and servants of their subjects if they wanted to retain their status.

Gandhiji concluded by giving a word of advice to the Meos. He had been told, he remarked, that the Meos were almost like criminal tribes. If the statement was correct, it called for an all-out effort on their part to reform themselves. It should not be left to others to do the work of reclamation. He hoped that the Meos would not resent his advice, but take it in the spirit in which it was offered. To the Government he would say that even if the allegation regarding the Meos was correct, that was no argument for sending them away to Pakistan. The Meos were subjects of the Indian Union and it was its duty to help them to reclaim themselves by providing them with facilities of education and establishing settlements for them to settle in.[1]

Harijan, 28-12-1947, and *The Hindustan Times*, 20-12-1947

219. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 19, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today I had to go to Gurgaon to see the Meos. The Meos there consist of refugees from Alwar and Bharatpur, besides those who are natives of the place. The East Punjab Premier Dr. Gopichand Bhargava accompanied me. He told the Meos that

[1] The audience was then addressed by Dr. Gopichand Bhargava. On his way back to Delhi, Gandhiji visited an open-air camp of the Meos and talked with the people there.

those of them who wanted to stay could stay on. The Government would protect them. That hundreds of thousands had to leave their houses and properties in Pakistan was something barbarous. It was also a barbarous thing that people had to leave their houses and properties here. One cannot go into who committed more barbarities because such a discussion cannot end the enmity that has been generated. It should not be our fate to be eternal enemies of each other. It will only end in our ruin. I have said that I cannot tolerate this. Those who have made up their minds to go will certainly go but no one will be forced to go. There are men and women there in large numbers. All of them are in distress. Many of them have not even tents to shelter them and the days are so cold. It is a tragic sight. The Alwar State should admit its mistake and invite them back. The Bharatpur State should do the same. One cannot say that Meos are a criminal tribe. Who can say who is criminal and who is not? And will you exile those who are criminals? Will you kill them? This will never do. You have to reform them and educate them and show them the ways of civilized behaviour.

My second topic today is sugar. Sugar is not produced everywhere. It has to be transported from the places where it is produced. If we do not have sugar here we have to bring it from the U. P. or Coimbatore, but how to do it? It can only be brought in railway wagons, but there are no wagons available. Dr. John Matthai who is in charge of the Railways is helpless. He says all the wagons are already in use and are being fully utilized. Then there is a shortage of coal and iron and of staff. Also the producers of sugar keep on raising prices and after all it cannot be carried on one's head. But though there is a shortage of railway wagons there is motor transport. A motor-truck runs as fast as a train and it does not require steel rails on which to ply. But motor transport requires petrol and petrol is still a controlled article. If the control over petrol is lifted the trucks and lorries will start plying more easily and haul goods from one place to another. The movement of salt can also become more smooth. It is paradoxical that we produce so much salt and there is no tax on it any more, and yet it is so costly. That is because supplies do not arrive. In my view it has been a mistake to appoint contractors for producing and supplying salt. If petrol is decontrolled trucks can be used for carrying salt and several other things. It does not seem right to decontrol certain articles and continue control over

others. When we have adopted decontrol as a policy we must pursue it fully and see what happens. You cannot say there is no petrol in the market. Black-market is flourishing in petrol and it will continue to flourish so long as the control over it is not lifted. I am told that corruption has also increased, that it is necessary to grease the palm of the petroleum officer and it is not a question of a rupee or two but of hundreds of rupees. Petrol is required only by those who run motor transport. The Government should retain what petrol it needs for itself and release the rest to be sold in the open market. Of course even if petrol should become virtually extinct and trains should become immobilized, the country's affairs will not stop. Only the mode of transport will be changed. We will revert to old ways. I have therefore no fears from the control over petrol being lifted.

We do not produce enough foodgrain for ourselves. We may tell people to cultivate whatever land they have but for this one is told that fertilizers are required for the import of which we have to spend crores of rupees. The fertilizers cause erosion of the soil. This is not what I say. It is what those who know the subject say. Mirabehn has been doing this work. She convened a conference of experts.[1] Some very important people were with her in this. There was Rajendra Babu and Sir Datar Singh and various others who know something about the subject. The conclusions of the Conference are in the newspapers. It recommended ways to make compost and what is called organic manure. We have dung in plenty; then there is also human faeces which can make very good manure. After it is converted into compost nobody can say how it was made. If you take it in hand it has a pleasant smell, not an unpleasant one. In making compost they also mix grass, leaves and other farmyard waste with the dung and in time it is converted into very good manure. The Conference also passed many resolutions but the substance was that we should all work hard at agriculture and grow four maunds where only one maund grew before. Mirabehn has left today. She lives in Rishikesh near Hardwar. She intends to carry on this work there. I thought I would tell you about this so that you can make what use you can of the information.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 222-6

[1] The All India Compost Conference; *vide* pp. 269-71.

220. LETTER TO DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR

5 a.m., December 20, 1947

CHI. DEV,

Yesterday I wrote a letter to you which will have reached you.

Don't worry about Chand. Her mother's brother met me yesterday.

Pyarelal read "The Call of the Hour" yesterday. I have read it by now. The ideas are good. The last portion requires more thought. I have made no effort to revise it; that would require more time and from where can I have it? It is not easy to form an association. First, discuss the matter with a few people, then proceed further. Anyway, it is for you to consider what the atmosphere prevailing there[1] demands. Of course, you must consult Mahesh. If he disapproves you may give up the idea. There is no harm in printing it as an essay after it has been trimmed.

Enclosed with the letter to you yesterday were a letter from Hunar and also my letter to him.

I do not understand what you have written in your letter to Sushila. I cannot imagine stopping any work that is being carried on in my name. I have not given up either Noakhali or Calcutta or Bihar. In any of these three places, as here, I have only to do or die.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

221. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

December 20, 1947

I am now an old man; and maybe the country is experiencing, in your sense, the surge of freedom. I do not see the joy of it on any face. It may be that since I myself feel no joy

[1] In Bihar

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my eyes cannot see any. Does not a jaundiced person see only yellow? If everybody practised his own dharma our condition would immediately improve. *Atman* itself is *atman's* friend and foe.[1]

It is quite true that . . .[2] has no use for non-violence and truth. But of what worth are non-violence and truth today? Truth is not a piece of stone. It is a diamond more valuable than the Koh-i-noor and requires much more hard labour to mine. . . .[3] But those who are today engaged in demoniacal activity will find it difficult to understand the experiment in truth.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 139-40

222. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 20, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It is a matter of grief that there has been rioting again in Delhi. It has been of a minor nature, but still it is regrettable. If it is our wish that Muslims should leave India, we should say so clearly or the Government may declare that it will not be safe for Muslims to continue to live in India. Or we should all tell them that rather than be killed off slowly in riots, it would be better for them to go. But if we do so I see in it the doom of Hinduism and Sikhism. Likewise it will be the doom of Islam if Pakistan decides that no Hindus and Sikhs may live there. There are not very many Muslims left in India. We have already expelled a large number. They did not go voluntarily. They were compelled to leave. I wish we could become brave and noble and courageous. It is only a coward who will say that a Muslim may not stay in India. Why can't a Muslim stay in India? If he is bad he must be reformed—not through violence but by persuasion. Why have we come to this pass that Hindus and Sikhs should live in fear in Pakistan and Muslims should live in fear in India? And yet we make the tall claims that everyone can live in our country in peace. I tell the Government that they must see that our promises are fulfilled. The army, the police and the officials have all to become good. If we behave decently we can make

[1] *Bhagavadgita*, VI. 5
[2] & [3] Omissions as in the source

progress. If not, the reins of power that have come into our hands will slip away.

I have not yet told you all that happened at the meeting of the Charkha Sangh. The charkha is the pivot of the village industries. If the charkha does not ply in the seven lakh villages of India the other village industries cannot flourish. The charkha is the sun while the other village industries are the planets revolving around it. If the sun should become extinct the planets cannot go on, for they depend on the sun. For India the sun is the wheel which you can see enshrined in the flag. It does not matter whether you see it as the Sudarshan Chakra [of Krishna] or the Dharma Chakra of Ashoka. In my eyes it is the symbol of the spinning-wheel. If that charkha goes on in the villages of India other village industries will also go on. But we shall have to see that they go on, because if they decline the charkha also will decline. There are many villages around Delhi. The villages supplied so many things. Today all those things are not procurable. Perhaps you do not know, although you should, that Delhi was full of Muslim craftsmen. They have all left. Look at Panipat. There were many Muslims there, weaving blankets and making such other things. Today their trade is ruined. If Muslim craftsmen leave India it is India's loss. What is the reason for our fighting in Kashmir? I consider it barbarous for the tribal raiders to have attacked Kashmir; we had to send an army to fight them.

Yesterday I told you that Mirabehn had taken up the work of compost-making and that the Government was helping her. We can all carry on this work in our homes. We can collect human waste, cow-dung and vegetable waste—which mix beautifully and turn out to be an excellent manure—smelling good.

The work of the Village Industries and the Charkha Sangh can go on only if the masses take it up. All the four organizations, namely, the Charkha Sangh, the Harijan Sevak Sangh, the Gramodyog Sangh and the Talimi Sangh had been formed for the masses, not for the rich. Everyone should co-operate in the work of these bodies. If we want true democracy to be established in India, we must all co-operate in furthering that work. It is only the people who can make a success of any work. The people provide the foundation on which alone we can raise a structure of any height. But if we only continue our internecine strife we shall meet with the same fate as the Yadavas did. Krishna, you will remember, belonged to the Yadava clan and yet because they strayed from the right path they took to drinking, debauchery

and fighting among themselves. The result was that they met with a sad end. If we want that India should avoid that fate we should all take in hand the activities pursued by the four organizations I have mentioned.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 226-9

223. LAWS OF HEALTH

Shri Brijlal Nehru, himself a faddist like me, has written to the Press belauding the statement of the Minister of Health that "a very great deal of our ill-health is due to our own fault" and saying that there is to his knowledge no governmental agency responsible for removing this fault. He adds:

> The attention of our Health Minister has so far been confined to the establishment of hospitals, sanatoria, clinics, dispensaries, etc., i. e., devices for the treatment of disease; no institutions have been founded for the prevention of disease by bringing home to the people the need of correct living and the methods of doing so.

He then goes on to suggest that a separate branch be established to attend to the promotion of health as distinguished from treatment of disease. This agency may be given the assistance of an advisory body of both experts and laymen so that the experts may devise their schemes with the full knowledge of the requirements of the people and the limitations under which they have to live and work.

Why does this fellow-faddist want a separate branch for this very necessary purpose? This was the fashion under the old regime which went on piling expenditure on expenditure and deluded itself and the gullible public that the greater the expense the greater the utility. I would have the Minister of Health require the doctors under her and the other staff understand that their first care must be the attainment and preservation of the health of the public whom they are paid to serve.

As a preliminary step the writer

> would have the production of a book on health laws and correct living in the conditions prevailing in India. To carry weight with the public, the book must be brought out under the authority of the Health Ministry of the Government of India. . . .[1] The duty of writing

[1] Omission as in the source

such a book may be entrusted to the Indian Medical Association, who should be required to produce it within a stated time. A transfer of emphasis from disease to health in the teaching given in our medical colleges would in itself be most desirable.

Indeed, the teaching of the laws of health should be obligatory in all schools and colleges. If the treatise recommended by Shri Brijlal Nehru is brought out, I hope the authors would be instructed to avoid the introduction of disease under the guise of preserving health such as the craze for various inoculations.

NEW DELHI, December 21, 1947
Harijan, 28-12-1947

224. COMPOST MANURE[1]

An All India Compost Conference was held in New Delhi during the month to consider the question of compost development on the widest scale possible. It was the conception of Shrimati Mirabehn and was presided over by Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Sardar Datar Singh, Dr. Acharya and other eminent men in the line took part in it. Several important resolutions were passed by it on schemes for towns and villages. A sub-committee consisting of Shrimati Mirabehn, Shri Shivakumar Sharma, Dr. B. N. Lal and Dr. K. G. Joshi (with Dr. B. N. Lal as convener) was appointed to prepare a skeleton scheme for the provinces. The resolutions emphasized the necessity of "the agricultural utilization of town sewage, sullage and sludge, the utilization of the by-products of the slaughter-house and other trade wastes (for example, wool waste, mill waste, leather waste, etc.) and for the composting of other materials like water-hyacinth, cane-trash, press mud, forest leaves, etc."

These resolutions are good and useful if they do not remain merely on paper. The chief thing is whether they would be reduced to practice throughout India. To do so will tax the resources of many Mirabehns. Given the willing co-operation of the masses of India, this country can not only drive out shortage of food, but can provide India with more than enough. This organic manure ever enriches, never impoverishes the soil. The daily waste, judiciously composted, returns to the soil in

[1] For the Gujarati article on the same subject, *vide* the following item.

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the form of golden manure causing a saving of millions of rupees and increasing manifold, the total yield of grains and pulses. In addition, the judicious use of waste keeps the surroundings clean. And cleanliness is not only next to godliness, it promotes health.

NEW DELHI, December 21, 1947
Harijan, 28-12-1947

225. COMPOST MANURE

Manure may be described as of two kinds: chemical and organic. One might ask how manure could be organic? The word "organic" is from English. Organic manure is made from human and animal excreta mixed or not mixed with grass, leaves and other such things. We do not regard plants as lifeless but we do regard iron, etc., to be so. Manure formed from such mixture is called "compost" in English. I consider such manure as valuable as gold. It keeps the soil ever fertile. It does not erode the soil and make it barren. It is said that chemical fertilizers destroy the humus of the soil as also bacteria and makes it necessary to keep the soil fallow after every few years of cultivation. Moreover organic manure prevents the breeding of pests.

Under Mirabehn's inspiration and through her efforts a Conference was called in Delhi this month to popularize such manure among the people. It was presided over by Dr. Rajendra Prasad. It was attended by Sardar Datar Singh, Dr. Acharya and others who are experts in this field. After three days of deliberation they passed several important resolutions. In these resolutions they have pointed out what should be done in cities and in the seven lakh villages. The Conference has suggested the method of mixing human and animal excreta, garbage, rags and factory waste, in rural and urban areas. For this purpose a small sub-committee has been formed.

The face of India will change if the resolutions do not remain on paper and crores of people put them into actual practice. We will be then able to save golden manure worth crores of rupees which is being wasted because of our ignorance. The soil will become fertile and we will get better crops than what we are getting. As a result we will be rid of famines, crores of people will get enough to eat and the surplus can be exported.

Today our crops are in the same poor condition as our men and animals. The fault is not of the soil but of the people. The worms of lethargy and ignorance are eating into us.

The task undertaken by Mirabehn is of immense magnitude. It will require thousands of Mirabehns. People should take up the work with zest and Government departments should be awake. Merely a few volunteers will not be able to do the work which requires crores of men. We should have an army of volunteers.

Is India so fortunate? Here India means both the parts. If the southern part takes up the work one may be sure the northern part will also take it up.

NEW DELHI, December 21, 1947

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 28-12-1947

226. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

NEW DELHI,
December 21, 1947

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I have seen your letter and the note you gave to Dr. Dinshaw and Jehangir. I like the note. It was good that you went with the gentlemen.[1] I think they are both noble, circumspect, patriotic and industrious. There is a letter from Jehangir informing me that they will be seeing me next week.

Let us hope that by God's grace the atmosphere of Kathiawar will not be vitiated.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", p. 178.

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227. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

NEW DELHI,
December 21, 1947

CHI. LILI,

I have your postcard. So you have found a place. You deserve congratulation. I deem it your good fortune that you have an opportunity to study under a man like Dr. Mangaldas Shah. You should not be put out by his severity. You should welcome it and benefit from it. If someone wants to improve us and in so doing corrects us, takes us to task in the presence of others, we should be pleased rather than annoyed. More so when the person happens to be our teacher. If a doctor makes a mistake, the patient has to pay for it—at times with his life. One should therefore look for a teacher who does not condone mistakes.

You must get rid of your tendency to worry. That the pain in your feet should persist I don't like. You must go to a doctor and find a cure for it. It will be a crime to be careless or lazy in this matter.

You must devote yourself to your studies without being impatient. You must think of nothing else for the present. Ponder and digest what you read. The student who is given to cramming is considered a fool of the first water.

I am quite well. So is everyone else.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original. Courtesy: Pyarelal

CWMG - XC

228. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

December 21, 1947

. . .[1] So long as saintliness is not of the heart, it is of no value to me. If saintliness is hypocritical it will destroy itself. I am not certain how long I shall have to be here. I must do or die. And since I am resolved to die I do pray to God that He may fulfil the wish. All of you too should make the same prayer.

In Delhi, during day-time, many incidents, small and big, keep occurring. I have been and continue to be patient beyond measure. In the end it will be as Rama commands me. Thus I dance as He pulls the strings. I am in His hands and so I am experiencing ineffable peace.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 145

229. NOTES

A Worthy Example

Shri Dilkhush Divanji of Karadi fame reports the glorious death at his post of one of his staunch workers. The late Valjibhai was the nephew of Panchakaka, the famous farmer of Karadi, who took part in the no-tax campaign of Bardoli[2]. He never wavered. He refuses even now to till his land or to pay the tax. He rightly says that there is no swaraj of his dream so long as we need the police to guard our homes and the military to protect us from ourselves. The deceased left a lucrative job and purely from a patriotic motive became a weaver. He proved worthy of his uncle and died in harness. No man can wish for a nobler death than Valjibhai's. It is to be wished that the weavers who were trained by him would multiply themselves. If India is to come to her own, she needs thousands of weavers who will weave nothing but hand-spun yarn and expects every

[1] Omission as in the source

[2] From February to August 1928

man and woman and child above six years to spin good yarn daily for at least half an hour. Such is Divanji's dream and Valjibhai died for its realization.

Stock Grain in Villages

Shri Vaikunth Lallubhai Mehta writes to say that in view of general decontrol it is imperative that there should be sufficient grain stocked in the hands, if possible of the village panchayats, not for profiteering, but as an insurance against scarcity by whatever cause induced. His original letter is in Gujarati which I have reproduced and dealt with in the Gujarati columns.[1] Here has been given the pith of his argument. I have always held that whatever may be said in favour of cash payment of taxes, its introduction injured the nation to the extent that the system of stocking grain in the villages was disturbed. The conservation of grain in the villages is needed for the reason already mentioned. The condition always must be that the growers and dealers must not be greedy or unscrupulous. When this simple honesty becomes common, the consumer cannot be cheated. There is no question of high or low prices when a nation's economics are put on a sound basis and when all parties have an income commensurate with the expenditure required for the necessaries of life.

The Gates of Somnath?

Pandit Sundarlal has contributed to the Hindustani columns an interesting article[2] on the reputed gates of Somnath. The curious must see the original. The main point made by the writer is that the gates which were taken away to Ghazni were never brought back as then stated. The gates were a fabrication and when the fraud was discovered the exhibition of the 'gates' never travelled beyond Agra. Pandit Sundarlal is anxious that by an oversight the fabrication might not be used in the projected renovation of the famous temple.

New Delhi, December 22, 1947
Harijan, 28-12-1947

[1] *Vide* the following item.

[2] Which appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 28-12-1947, under the title "Somnathka Mandir"

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230. NEED FOR STORING GRAIN IN VILLAGES

Shri Vaikunthbhai writes:

> Under the present trading system the grain produced in the villages is being sent out. Therefore in many parts of the country the villages are left with no stocks of grain. As a result the poor have to face hardships and there is a steep rise in prices during the monsoon. To save the poor from such a plight, it is desirable that some grain should be stocked in villages under the care of the *Panch*, and only the surplus should be sent out. With this end in view Shri Achyut Rao Patwardhan and I had prepared a scheme four years ago. Shri Kumarappa has also acknowledged the need for such a scheme in his plan.
>
> If the scheme meets with your approval, under the present changed circumstances you may kindly recommend it to the Provincial Governments and the villagers.

I think the suggestion has something in it. Such stocks are necessary in the economic conditions of the country. Ever since the system of collecting revenue in cash was introduced, the stocks of grain in the villages have diminished. I shall not go into the merits or demerits of the cash revenue system; but I do believe the country could have been saved from the present difficult situation if we had continued to stock grain in the villages. Now that the controls are being removed no one will suffer any hardship if the grain is stocked as suggested by Vaikunthbhai and if the villagers and the traders become honest. If the farmers and the traders get a fair margin of profit there can be no high prices for the working class and other people in the cities. What really matters is that necessaries of life should be within the reach of every one. There can then be no question of high or low prices.

New Delhi, December 22, 1947

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 28-12-1947

231. TRIBUTE TO VALJIBHAI[1]

NEW DELHI,
December 22, 1947

India, indeed the world, has had few dedicated servants like the late Valjibhai. He has proved the truth of the saying: "As the tree so the fruit, as the father, so the son." Panchakaka's pledge will remain without parallel. We have not attained true swaraj yet. At present it seems quite far away. Why is it that we have only six or seven weavers as good as Valjibhai? Can it be claimed that we have won swaraj with the power of Karadi?

M. K. GANDHI

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

232. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,
December 22, 1947

DEAR PANDITJI,

Maulana Shaheed and some other Maulanas of Delhi came to Bapu yesterday and told him that recent happenings in Delhi had well-nigh driven the local Muslims to desperation. They wanted to be told definitely and authoritatively as to whether the Government really wanted to keep them in the Indian Union or would prefer their going away. In the former case the Government's declaration of policy would need to be followed by suitable action. They suggested a joint meeting with you, the Sardar and the Maulana Sahib in Bapu's presence. Bapu has asked me to convey to you that he would be available for the purpose at any time that may suit you.[2]

Yours sincerely,
PYARELAL

Sardar Patel's Correspondence, Vol. IV, p. 410

[1] This also appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 28-12-1947. *Vide* also "A Worthy Example", under "Notes", pp. 273-4.

[2] The addressee along with Vallabhbhai Patel met Gandhiji on the evening of December 26.

233. LETTER TO DR. BANERJEE

NEW DELHI,
December 22, 1947

DEAR DR. BANERJEE,

Your letter. Have I not said every [worthy] cause carries its own blessings? The rest is superfluous.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

234. LETTER TO V. L. MEHTA

NEW DELHI,
December 22, 1947

BHAI VAIKUNTH,

I have your letter. I understand about Shamaldas. I am sending the portion regarding grain to *Harijan*.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI VAIKUNTH LALLUBHAI MEHTA
ANDHERI
BOMBAY

From the Gujarati original: V. L. Mehta Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

[1] *Vide* p. 275.

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235. LETTER TO YASHWANTKUNWARBA[1]

December 22, 1947

RESPECTED SISTER,

His Highness the Maharaja[2] informed me that you were ill and bed-ridden. I was grieved to hear it. May God give you peace of mind. Keep repeating Ramanama. I believe it to be an unfailing remedy.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 7745

236. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

December 22, 1947

CHI. KANAM[3],

I see from your letters that you are not only steadily improving your handwriting but are also becoming mature in your thinking. Continue to grow in wisdom in the same way as you grow in age.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 9524. Courtesy: Kanu Gandhi

[1] Rajmata of Kishangarh, who was suffering from cancer

[2] Of Bhavnagar, addressee's nephew, who carried this letter to the addressee

[3] Son of Ramdas Gandhi

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237. LETTER TO BACHU

NEW DELHI,
December 22, 1947

CHI. BACHU,

Of course I don't have time but since it is a Monday[1] I am writing this much. If you have appendicitis there is no cause for worry. You will soon be all right after an operation. Don't be afraid. Stop writing with a lead pencil, for the writing fades out. I hope Kumi[2] is all right. If Manu[3] has returned tell her that I got her letter. It did not call for an answer. I hope she has come back recovered. I am sure Baby is enjoying herself. Has she made any progress in reading?

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

238. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
December 22, 1947

CHI. RAMDAS,

Your letter. Someone did mention to me that you were coming. I forget who it was. I was glad that we were going to meet. But it is perfectly all right that you stayed back. What needs to be considered is whether you can rest while you are there.

It is true that I crushed my finger. I had a sharp shooting pain which gave me a reeling sensation. It was nothing to worry about. In fact I had gone to a meeting[4]. The pain subsided in a minute or two and I addressed the meeting. When I got out of the car Brijkishan slammed the door without looking around and my finger which happened to be there got crushed. I am no doubt careful but even a careful person does meet with such

[1] Gandhiji usually observed silence on Monday.
[2] Kumi Adalaja, Harilal Gandhi's wife's sister
[3] Daughter of Harilal Gandhi, married to Surendra Mashruwala
[4] Of the Constructive Works Committee on December 11

accidents. Sumi[1] has come here, along with another girl and a boy. It is about Radhakrishna. Hope all of you are well.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

239. LETTER TO SHARDA H. KOTAK

December 22, 1947

CHI. SHARDA,

I have two letters from you, one written with a lead pencil. One should not write with a lead pencil. Luckily Dada[2] is here and this will go with him. Do as he says. I shall have a talk with him in detail. Everything yours is there. Write to me from time to time. No one else need be consulted.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

240. NOTE TO MANU GANDHI

December 22, 1947

What you say is also worth considering.[3] You should tell Panditji[4]. But I see no harm in it. Even as it is what is my word worth now? And what is it to me whether my word has any worth left or not? I am certainly going to say whatever I think is true. I do not find any merit in the belief that a man can judge another man. Only the Almighty can judge us. All will be well with us if we are faithful to Him and fear Him. Instead of bothering about what would please men we should concern ourselves with what would please God. Only then will our path become easy.

Is it not enough if, instead of worrying about other people's affairs, you and I can do this? See, how badly you have caught

[1] Sumitra, addressee's daughter

[2] Lakshmidas Asar

[3] Manu Gandhi had remarked that frequent reference to the same subject by Gandhiji, Sundarlal and others would only irritate people and such utterances would become ineffective.

[4] Sundarlal

a cold. You had fever last night. You must take hot water. It does not matter if you cannot do anything else but if you learn to fulfil the duty towards the body you can do much work for me. Your heart and mind are sound, but your hands and feet are weak. See what pass India has come to because of lack of co-operation and how I am shouting for harmony. You should learn from it that however strong your heart and mind may be, if there is no strength in your hands and feet your progress will stop. And are you going to let me down?

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 153-4

241. LETTER TO KUNDANLAL FIRODIA

NEW DELHI,
December 22, 1947

BROTHER FIRODIA,

Why did you write to me in English?

I understand about Visapur. It will be desirable if we know the names and addresses of girls. It is good that you have informed me.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI KUNDANLAL FIRODIA
DODKOKERE
SIKAR
AHMEDNAGAR
BOMBAY PROVINCE

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 7917

CWMG - XC

242. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
December 22, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Some eight or ten miles from here, at Mehrauli, there is a shrine of Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Chisti. Esteemed as second only to the shrine at Ajmer, it is visited every year not only by Muslims but by thousands of non-Muslims too. Last September this shrine was subjected to the wrath of Hindu mobs. The Muslims living in the vicinity of the shrine for the last 800 years had to leave their homes. I mention this sad episode to tell you that, though Muslims love the shrine, today no Muslim can be found anywhere near it. It is the duty of the Hindus, Sikhs, the officials and the Government to open the shrine again and wash off this stain on us. The same applies to other shrines and religious places of Muslims in and around Delhi. The time has come when both India and Pakistan must unequivocally declare to the majorities in each country that they will not tolerate desecration of religious places, be they small or big. They should also undertake to repair the places damaged during riots.

Muslims have asked me whether, in view of the decision of the Muslim League in Karachi[2], members of the Muslim League should take part in the Conference called by Maulana Azad in Lucknow[3] and also whether Muslims might participate in the Conference of the Muslim League in Madras, and in any case what should be the course to be adopted by the members of the Muslim League in India. I have not the least doubt that if they receive a personal or public invitation they should attend the Conferences in Lucknow and Madras. They should fearlessly and openly declare their views at these meetings. If they have learnt

[1] As Gandhiji was observing silence, this was read out at the meeting.

[2] The Council of the All-India Muslim League had passed a resolution in Karachi on December 15, bifurcating the Muslim League into two bodies —one for Pakistan and the other for India.

[3] The Indian Union Muslims' Conference was scheduled to be held in Lucknow on December 27 and 28 under the presidentship of Abul Kalam Azad. Members of the Provincial Assemblies, the Constituent Assembly and various Muslim organizations had been invited to attend it.

anything from the 30 years of non-violent struggle they should not worry that they are in a minority in the Indian Union and that the majority in Pakistan can be of no help to them. It does not need belief in non-violence to see that a minority however small it may be has no reason to feel afraid for its honour and for the things it holds dear. If man could but know his Maker and realize that he himself is a reflection of that Maker, no power on earth can take away his self-respect. No one can take away my self-respect; I can only lose it. During my struggle against the mighty Government of the Transvaal, a dear English friend of mine in Johannesburg used to tell me, "I always like to be with a minority, for a minority as a rule does not commit mistakes, and even if it does it can be rectified. But a majority is drunk with power and it is difficult to reform it." If by majority the friend also meant one-sided armed might he was right. We know from bitter experience how a handful of Englishmen had transformed themselves into a majority through force of arms and how they dominated the whole of India. India lacked arms and, even if the arms had been there, we did not know how to use them. It is a matter of regret that Hindus and Sikhs have not learnt a lesson from the British rule in our country. The Muslims of the Union suffered from false pride in their majority in the East and the West. Today they are rid of that burden. If they now see the virtues of being a minority they will show the beauties of Islam in their own way. They must remember that the best days of Islam were the days of the Prophet Mohammed's minority in Mecca. Christianity began to decline after the time of Constantine[1]. I do not want to prolong the argument here. My advice emanates from my faith and if Muslim friends do not have this faith they are free to reject it.

In my view they should all be prepared to join the Congress. But they must not apply for entry into that body till they are sure of a hearty welcome and equality of treatment. In principle there is no question of majority and minority so far as the Congress is concerned. The Congress follows no religion unless it be a religion of humanity. It treats men and women alike. It is a purely political body in which Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsees and Jews are all equal. The Congress has not always been able to practise what it preached. This sometimes created an impression among the Muslims that it was a caste

[1] Emperor of Rome (306 A. D. to 337 A. D.) who made Christianity the State religion

Hindu organization. In any case as long as this kind of tug of war goes on Muslims should keep away with dignity. When the Congress wants their services they should come into the Congress. Till then they can be servants of the Congress as I am a servant of the Congress. Although I am not a four-anna member of the Congress I have a voice in that organization, and that is because ever since 1915 when I returned from South Africa I have been loyally serving the Congress. If every Muslim similarly serves the Congress he will find that his services are similarly appreciated.

Today every Muslim is considered a supporter of the League and therefore an enemy of the Congress. This has been the unfortunate result of the teachings of the League. Today there is no cause left any more for enmity. Four months are a very short time for getting rid of the poison of communalism. It is the misfortune of India that Hindus and Sikhs took this poison to be nectar and made themselves the enemies of the Muslim League. In returning brickbat for brickbat they brought a stain to their name and put themselves in the same category as Muslims. I appeal to the Muslim minority to raise themselves above this poisonous atmosphere, to remove the suspicion that had been created concerning them and to show that they could live in India as her honourable citizens without any deceit and dissimulation.

One consequence of partition is that the League cannot continue as a political organization. The Hindu Mahasabha, the Sikh Sabha and the Parsee Sabha similarly cannot continue as political bodies. They may well stay as religious bodies. Their task then will be internal reform of society, to search for things of religious value and to act on them. Then the atmosphere will become free of poison and these organizations will rival each other in doing good. They will have amity for each other and they will help the Government. Their political ambitions can be realized through the Congress alone whether they are in the Congress or not. If the Congress thinks only of those who are in the Congress it will become very narrow in its sphere of service. Even today there are very few people in the Congress. If no other organization can rival the Congress it is because the Congress has been trying to represent the whole of India, because it has dedicated itself to the service of the poorest and the lowliest.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 229-32

243. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

December 23, 1947

CHI. BABUDI,

I have read your postcard. Why need we discuss today what may happen after twenty-five days? I understand your impatience. If nothing happens in those days, I will agree with your view. If you are to die, I should like to see you die with your head in my lap. I see no possibility just now of such a thing happening. But how can you die before I do? The very thought is unbearable to me. You should, therefore, resolve to live and make up your mind that, after leaving the sick-bed, you will give yourself up to the service of the country. God will, then, keep you alive if He needs your services; otherwise He will take you away. Where is the cause for worry in this?

Won't you do this?

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 10081. Courtesy: Sharda G. Chokhawala

244. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

December 23, 1947

CHI. NARAHARI,

I was very happy to see your handwriting. I cannot bear the thought of your being bed-ridden.[1] But now that you are, do not be in a hurry to leave the bed. The man who survives a crisis will win his heart's desire, as the saying is. Here you should substitute the phrase 'healthy man' for "the man who survives a crisis".

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9148

[1] *Vide* p. 230.

245. LETTER TO VANAMALA PARIKH

December 23, 1947

CHI. VANUDI,

I got your letter.

All the symptoms you describe are to be observed in a case of stroke. With proper care and the right diet, the patient does recover. I believe that massage done by a masseur cannot benefit as much as massage done by you can, that is, massage done with the love and strength you possess. You do have strength, don't you? Such massage does not require much physical strength. It requires only some skill. Haven't you had experience of Dinshaw's method of massaging?

For motions, you may convey my view to the doctor that there will be no harm in administering a full enema when the bowels begin to move. I hope Mani is cheerful.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5799. Also C. W. 3022. Courtesy: Vanamala Desai

246. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

December 23, 1947

CHI. AMRITLAL[1],

Why need you worry whether or not I give my blessings? Have I the experience which you have? Even if I disapprove, you should do what you believe to be a good thing, and even with my approval you should never do what you believe to be wrong. This is what I feel. The question of my blessings, therefore, does not arise. You may unhesitatingly do what seems right to you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10817

[1] Secretary, Hindustani Prachar Sabha, Wardha

247. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

December 23, 1947

I am stuck here for now. I have no doubt that the needful should be done about the village industries. It is our misfortune, however, that I see no concerted effort in any undertaking. Of course one cannot complain if there is no unity; but what can be more painful than that such disunity should engender personal animosities? I am at the moment passing through a situation which cannot even be dreamt of. All the same I do not worry. My only prayer to God in the present situation is "one step is enough for me". God will keep me as long as He needs me. Why need I worry about it? Well, Suhrawardy is sitting opposite me, so only this much for today.

Blessings to Chi. . . .[1].She will be well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 160

248. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 23, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

A friend suggests that since it is getting cold we should begin our prayer half an hour earlier, that is, at 5 p. m. I admit it is getting to be pretty cold. Though the days will be getting longer minute by minute from now on, for today it is already the 23rd of December, still if all of you so wish we can begin the prayer at 5 p. m. from tomorrow.[2] Today I shall deal with three points.

[1] Omission as in the source

[2] Gandhiji asked those who wanted the prayers to be held earlier to raise their hands. A large number of them raised their hands. It was, therefore, decided to hold the prayers at 5 p. m.

Here is the first. You saw that yesterday people[1] arrived here from Bahawalpur. They are in great distress.[2] They say that all the Hindus and Sikhs there should be brought here for their lives are in danger. Today two friends from Bahawalpur came to see me. They said that if no steps were taken in this respect they would go and fast in front of the Governor-General's house. I told them that their fasting could neither bring here the Hindus and Sikhs left behind nor ensure their safety. That besides the Governor-General had no power except such as he derived from his Cabinet. He merely affixed his signature. If they thought that fasting before the residence of Pandit Nehru or the Sardar would do any good they were equally mistaken. They saw the point and gave up the idea of fasting. Yesterday I was observing silence and so could not say anything. The Nawab of Bahawalpur should permit all the Hindus and Sikhs to go wherever they want to. If he does not he will be failing in his duty. I cannot relate to you the things that have happened there under the very nose of the Nawab. A large number of Hindus and Sikhs were tortured and killed. It is the Sikhs who built Bahawalpur. They are a brave people. They can fight and cultivate land. They have been cultivating the land there; so have the Hindus. They have committed no crime. Their only crime is that they are Hindus or Sikhs. A large number of these innocent people were murdered and some ran away. When Hindus and Sikhs cannot live there in peace, what is the worth of anything that the Nawab may say? I appeal to the Nawab that he should do his duty. If Hindus and Sikhs cannot live there in honour he should arrange for them to leave or he should declare that none of the Hindus and Sikhs still in Bahawalpur will be touched and that they can continue to live in Bahawalpur in peace. If they are starving, food should be made available to them.

According to a report in today's *Statesman* about the refugee camps in Lahore, the Muslims in the camps are living in insanitary conditions. Epidemics like cholera and smallpox have broken out and even those who have escaped them are dying of cold and exposure. How can people live under the open sky in

[1] Who carried placards reading "Save the 70,000 Hindus and Sikhs of Bahawalpur"

[2] In the State of Bahawalpur, which had acceded to Pakistan on November 8, seventy thousand Hindus and Sikhs were awaiting evacuation. It was reported that the Pakistan authorities were not agreeing to their evacuation through the Military Evacuation Organization. The Hindus and Sikhs concentrated in camps were without adequate food or clothing.

this cold? They need shelter and clothes and food. If these three things are not available they must face death. I do not know all that is happening there. Yes, scavengers have been brought over from Sialkot who will clean the camps and remove night-soil. The officials say that they are not doing enough work. It is clear that the people there are in distress. What does it matter that they are in Pakistan? Why should human beings be so degraded? It pains me. Those people who ran away from here to escape our excesses were deprived of their hearths and homes. They are not familiar with the surroundings there and they have to suffer hardships. But why can't they keep themselves clean? I should advise all the refugees, be they in India or in Pakistan, that they should not be dependent on others for everything. They should not ask for help to cook for them or to remove their night-soil. People who were being uprooted from their homes are in no position to make such demands. It's a privilege of the rich. They may employ ten when one is enough, but not we. These are the symptoms of our degradation. The refugees in the camps in Lahore should firmly and courageously declare that they will not have scavengers from Sialkot, that they will themselves do the cleaning of their camps. The Pakistan Government and the officials concerned should also make it clear to the refugees that they will not have scavengers brought from Sialkot. They should at least do what every human being can do. And if even then there are deaths, that will be a different matter. I have said it before, and I say it again, that the refugees should conduct themselves with decency. They should do all that they can do and not become a burden on others.

And here is something good that I want to tell you. I told you once that Pyarelal had come here. You know who Pyarelal is. He is my Secretary. He had been working in Noakhali for a long time. There were others with him too. At the risk of their lives they gave support and courage to the Hindus who felt insecure there. The Muslims too very soon understood that they were their friends and servants and had gone there not to promote violence but to promote amity between the two communities.

Pyarelal has some interesting news from Noakhali: A temple had been demolished and occupied by Muslims. It became a cause of strife. Later when the Muslims expressed their desire to live in amity with the Hindus, Pyarelal pointed out that the Hindus no longer had the temple where they could go and

worship. The Muslims thereupon rebuilt the temple with their own labour and assured the Hindus that they were free to go to the temple and offer worship. Now they are all happy. The officials too co-operated. If everyone in India and Pakistan acted in this spirit the faces of the two countries would change. If we stick to our own religion and refrain from interfering with another's, it will be a great thing.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 236-8

249. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

NEW DELHI,
December 24, 1947

CHI. ANAND,

I have your letter. I write this while drinking my hot water. It is 5 a. m.

You seem to be much troubled by your ear. If that is so, go to America and see what can be done about it. If you can appreciate the blessing of not hearing, then there is no need to go anywhere. What you need to know you can know with Gangi's[1] assistance.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] Addressee's wife

CWMG-XC

250. LETTER TO GANGI A. HINGORANI

NEW DELHI,
December 24, 1947

CHI. GANGI,

I have your letter. I am writing this with great difficulty, otherwise I would have to let your letter go unanswered.

There are no facilities for your staying with me in Delhi. I am myself staying at the house of a rich man. It is difficult to keep anyone with me here. If I set up an ashram anywhere and stay there you can come. But such an opportunity is impossible in this life. Consider also that it is not your duty to leave Anand and go elsewhere. I feel that as long as Anand finds his deafness an affliction, you cannot leave him. Also Anand cannot move about by himself. What can you learn by staying with me? I consider it wrong for people to imagine that they gain anything by staying with me.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

251. LETTER TO DILKHUSH DIWANJI

NEW DELHI,
December 24, 1947

CHI. DIWANJI,

I got your letter in reply to my question. I am glad. Although the sizing is done with good speed it must still be taking up a lot of time. I understand doubling takes much less time and greatly facilitates the process of weaving. Please think over this.

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

252. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 24, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I often receive Sikh visitors. I also read newspapers sometimes. They say that I have proved an enemy of the Sikhs. They would not have minded it much but for the fact that my word seemed to carry weight with the world outside India where it is believed that India has secured its freedom through non-violent means. This had never happened before anywhere in the world. But a tree is known by its fruit, and by no other means. For man is not God, man can know a thing from its results. The fruit of independence has been that today Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs have become one another's enemies.

As I have admitted earlier I had been under the delusion that our struggle was truly non-violent. God had rendered me blind and I was misled. Because the lame, the crippled, the coward cannot be non-violent. Lame, crippled and dumb I do not mean literally, for God helps these and they are always non-violent. Even a child can stand before the world on the strength of non-violence. Prahlad was an instance. We do not know whether Prahlad was a historical character. To me he was more than a historical character, for I believe in the story. Prahlad's father[1] commanded him not to utter the name of God. But Prahlad insisted that he would continue to utter the name of God. The image of 12-year-old Prahlad remains before my eyes. Therefore I say that those who are lame and crippled at heart can never be truly non-violent. So long as the light does not shine in the heart no one can understand the beauty of non-violence. What we offered during the struggle was passive resistance which simply meant that we would not kill the British though in our hearts we wanted to kill them. But we had not the power. When the millions took up passive resistance it did bring about our freedom. The freedom we have obtained is crippled freedom. It is only partial. I therefore laugh when I see our Sikh brethren getting angry. In my eyes there is no

[1] Hiranyakashipu, the Demon-king

difference between the Hindus and the Sikhs. I have read the *Granthsaheb*. A friend chides me for not knowing anything about the *Granthsaheb*. He says I cannot understand the Sikhs and that if I did, I would not have written what I wrote about Guru Govind Singh. That was many years ago and the mistake was not mine. But he still says so because he is a friend. If I say that the Sikhs are taking to drinking and gambling it does not mean that it applies to all or only to Sikhs. Hindus too are a prey to these evils but Hindus do not have the strength that the Sikhs have. The Sikhs should not use that strength indiscriminately. They may wield the sword but only where they must. Their sword should not fall where it ought not to fall. I am a true friend of the Sikhs when I say that anyone who commits crimes or is guilty of bad conduct sins before God. He degrades his religion.

Today is the 24th. Tomorrow is Christmas. Christmas is to Christians what Diwali is to us. Really neither Diwali nor Christmas is an occasion when we should indulge in revelry and lose our heads. I do not regard Christmas as an occasion for people to indulge in drunkenness. Christmas reminds one of Jesus Christ. I offer greetings to the Christians in India and abroad. May the New Year bring them prosperity and happiness. It has never been my wish that the freedom of India should mean the ruin of the Christians here or that they should become Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs. For a Christian to become a Hindu or a Muslim is a fate worse than death. According to my view a Christian should become a better Christian, a Muslim a better Muslim and a Sikh a better Sikh. I want that all the Christians in and outside India should become free in the true sense. Let them exercise self-restraint and pursue the path of sacrifice and martyrdom shown by Jesus Christ. Let them be free and increase the area of freedom in the world. I see from the papers that the Government proposes to stop the grants made to them. The money they receive from America and England will also stop coming. It is feared that 75% of the churches in India will have to be closed down. But a religion does not prosper with the help of money. Most Christians in India are poor people. What does it matter if the Government help should stop? They should be glad that they will now be free of the curse of pecuniary assistance. Once a lot of money and presents came into the house of Hazarat Omar. This worried Omar and he told his wife that with all that wealth he was no longer certain if he would be able to retain his self-control and would not take

to pleasure. A church does not need a building. The human body is the real church. It is there that God dwells. Then we have the sky for the roof and the earth for the floor. We can utter God's name anywhere. I shall therefore say that the Christians need not feel worried. They do not really need assistance from the Government or anyone. They should follow the teachings of their religion. If they but persevere in the path of sacrifice shown by Christ, no one can take their religion away from them.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 236-8

253. LETTER TO HAMID-UD-DIN

NEW DELHI,
December 25, 1947

BHAI HAMID-UD-DIN,

I got your letter about Barwani. I have been doing what I can ever since the first telegram came. The local Muslims have some staunch Hindus for their friends. I am also in correspondence with them. They are working hard. Isn't there exaggeration in what you write? It happened in the case of Junagadh. My informants were well-placed Muslims. They had exaggerated matters to such an extent that at last they had to publicly issue a correction and apologize. I am not bothered about it but at present such exaggeration gives rise to dislike of all Muslims. And this hurts me very much. I am therefore sounding a note of caution to you. After all the Government officers have also taken some steps.

Please let me have whatever authoritative information you have.

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

254. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

December 25, 1947

No one can harm a person who is sustained by Ramanama. I believe in this principle and so I have no physical illness. It is by the grace of God that I am able to remain calm even though there is conflagration all around. Had it not been for this I would have broken down by now. That is why I proclaim at the top of my voice that I dance as Rama wills. We are in this world to do our duty. I believe that not a leaf moves without His command. And look at the pride of man; he believes he does everything. But God is magnanimous and only laughs at this abysmal ignorance. Now you will all understand where I am. You must all be well. What I write in *Harijan* shows me as I am. I am very clear about the language. In the same way I am clear about the political questions. Let us see what God wills me to do.

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 165-6

255. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

December 25, 1947

Slackness in khadi work will not do. We should understand that the more we slacken the more we shall fall behind. This fragile thread has had behind it sixty long years of work. It still remains unbroken and thanks to it we have reached our present position. Even now I am convinced that if only we had plied the wheel more vigourously, the thread would not have broken even as slightly as it has. If we do not want to preserve what we have gained, then certainly we may let the thread snap. Fragile as this thread is, it has the strength to bind not only India but the whole world. My purpose in labouring the point is simply this: If India is to live and live well there is no alternative to the constructive programme. Otherwise your fall will be quick, remember this.

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 165-6

256. LETTER TO KRISHNADAS

NEW DELHI,
December 25, 1947

CHI. KRISHNADAS,

I have your letter of December 20. Khadi Pratishthan certainly becomes uncertified. To ask for money immediately does not seem to be proper. I do not consider it right now to insert a condition which is not there in the written agreement. I do not remember now if I had said anything. If I did, surely my signature would be there.

I find a great difference between dealers in uncertified khadi and Khadi Pratishthan. Khadi Pratishthan was born for khadi and will die for it. Other dealers carry on their business for the sake of business. They also practise dishonesty. Even so I shall send your letter on to Khadi Pratishthan and ask them.[1]

Are those who deal with the Hindustani correspondence there fully familiar with Hindustani? In your letter लिखापढ़ी[2] are two words but I have seen the expression used only as one word.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 2739

257. LETTER TO HEMPRABHA DAS GUPTA

NEW DELHI,
December 25, 1947

CHI. HEMPRABHA[3],

Herewith Krishnadas's letter. Please let me know about the matter. I feel that as the rules of the Sangh[4] stand Khadi Pratishthan is an uncertified body. I enclose a copy of the letter I have written to Krishnadas. I hope Babua is well and

[1] *Vide* the following item.
[2] Written agreement, correspondence
[3] Wife of Satis Chandra Das Gupta
[4] All India Spinners' Association

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Didimoni too. Arun[1] should become perfectly fit. If he believes in nature cure, he may consult Kulranjan.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 2740

258. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 25, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You all know something of what is happening in Kashmir. But I want to draw your attention to a proposal about Kashmir. It is being said and also reported in the newspapers that we should invite someone to arbitrate between the Indian Union and Pakistan in the dispute over Kashmir. How can this be? How long can this kind of thing go on? Instead of resulting in a settlement of the dispute, this will merely introduce into it a third party. Can we not settle the issue between ourselves? There is a large preponderance of Muslims in Kashmir. Maybe they are more than 95%. Jammu does not have very many Muslims. I do not know what is the percentage of Muslims in the population but Jammu and Kashmir is one State. It cannot be partitioned. If we start the process of partitioning, where is it going to end? It is enough and more than enough that India has been partitioned into two. If we partition Kashmir, why not other States?

What is the nature of the dispute in Kashmir? It is said that the raiders are outsiders. They are aggressors and plunderers. But as time passes it looks as if it was not so. I get some Urdu newspapers. I can read Urdu a little myself and others also read them out to me. Today some bits from the *Zamindar* were read out to me. I know the editor[2] of the *Zamindar*. He has an unbridled tongue. He has issued an open invitation to all Muslims to muster for an assault on Kashmir. He has heaped abuse on the Dogras and the Sikhs. He calls the raid in Kashmir a jihad[3]. But there is always restraint about a jihad. There is nothing of the kind here. Do they want that Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims should perpetually remain divided? What is our duty if

[1] Addressee's son
[2] Maulana Zafar Ali Khan
[3] Crusade or war waged for a holy cause

Muslims start cutting up the Hindus and Sikhs? As I have been telling you every day Hindus and Sikhs must not retaliate.

The simple fact is that Pakistan has invaded Kashmir. Units of the Indian army have gone to Kashmir but not to invade Kashmir. They have been sent on the express invitation of the Maharaja and Sheikh Abdullah. Sheikh Abdullah is the real Maharaja of Kashmir. Muslims in their thousands are devoted to him. He is called the Lion of Kashmir.

One should always admit one's mistakes. The Hindus and Sikhs of Jammu or those who had gone there from outside killed Muslims there. The Maharaja of Kashmir is responsible for the happenings in his State. It was not Sheikh Abdullah who was behind these murders. He in fact went to Jammu and tried to reason with the Hindus and Sikhs. He tried to save the lives of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The Maharaja of Kashmir is a Dogra Rajput. Abuses have been heaped on him. If he has been at fault he can be removed. One can understand that. But what have the Muslims of Kashmir done? Why is jihad being carried on against them?

I want to say to the Government of Pakistan in all humility that if their claim to being the greatest Islamic power in the world is true, they should make sure that every Hindu and every Sikh in Pakistan is justly treated. They should be protected. But Pakistan presents a different picture. I shall advise Pakistan and India to sit together and decide the matter. If the two are interested in the settlement of the dispute, where is the need for an arbitrator? The Maharaja can step aside and let India and Pakistan deliberate over the matter. Sheikh Abdullah will of course be there. If they want an arbitrator they can appoint one from among themselves, but it should certainly not be a third power. They may, if they so desire, persuade the Maharaja to step down. After all he is a human being. A large number of Muslims have been killed there and Muslim women have been dishonoured. I met the Maharaja and his Prime Minister. And I told him what I had to say. The Maharaja should clearly say that he is no longer the Ruler, it is the Muslims of Kashmir who are the real rulers and they may do what they like. After the Maharaja and his Prime Minister withdraw themselves only Sheikh Abdullah remains. He can form an interim government and restore law and order. The armies can be withdrawn. If the two countries arrive at a settlement on these lines it will be good for both. It is not that India had invaded a Muslim State or had gone there to help the Maharaja. Our Government is for the people and it is in

the interest of the people that we enter into negotiations with the Princes. The Congress Government can take no other course.

I saw a couplet in an Urdu magazine today. It hurt me. I do not remember the words but the substance is this: "Today Somnath is on the tongue of everyone. If the temple is renovated it will have to be avenged. A new Ghaznavi must come from Ghazni to avenge what happened in Junagadh." It is painful to think that such a thing can issue from the pen of a Muslim. I have said that I must do or die; which means that I shall either bring about Hindu-Muslim amity or lay down my life. This sort of thing cannot affect my resolve. I cannot return evil for evil. I can only return good for evil. I tell you all this so that you may not be taken in by such things. You must not remember the wrong that Ghaznavi did. Muslims should realize and admit the wrongs perpetrated under the Islamic rule. The Hindu and Sikh rulers of Kashmir and Patiala, etc., should also admit the excesses committed in their States. There is nothing to be ashamed of in confessing one's sins, it only lightens one's guilt. If Muslims in the Indian Union teach their children that a Ghaznavi must come to avenge them and destroy the Hindus, who is going to tolerate this? If this mischievous couplet had not been published in an important magazine I would not even have mentioned it.[1]

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 239-41

259. LETTER TO G. V. MAVALANKAR

December 26, 1947

I have had your letter and the report of our conversation[2] read out to me just now (at a quarter to five in the morning). You have taken great pains over the report. I think the subject did not deserve so much labour. You have, of course, summarized

[1] The couplet appeared under the title "Mahmud Ghaznavi" in *Aligarh Urdu Magazine* published from the Aligarh University. When the attention of Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan, the Vice-Chancellor, was drawn to it, he sent a letter expressing regret for the oversight.

[2] The addressee's endeavour to establish a regional university in Gujarat had become a controversial subject. Gandhiji's article "Navin Vidyapitho", which could admit of the interpretation that he was opposed to the proposed university in Gujarat, was being quoted against it. The addressee, therefore, had a frank talk on the subject with Gandhiji on December 11.

For Gandhiji's article, *vide* Vol. LXXXIX, pp. 402-5.

my views quite well.[1] I don't feel at all like adding to or removing anything from the summary.

I learnt one new fact from you, namely, that Gujarat is the only linguistic region now left without a regional university. I must admit that this fact weakens my case. Even so, I do wish that this last regional university to be established would help in the progress of Indian civilization, which means the civilization of the country's villages. You may, if you wish, describe this desire as a form of greed or ignorant attachment on my part.

I still believe that, if the people loved the country as a whole rather than their respective regions, we should be able to bring about the establishment of linguistic provinces in a few months. You and I should, therefore, prove that your fear[2] will prove groundless and that my dream will be realized. We should exert ourselves to the utmost to that end. My regret is that I am not in a position just now to join in such an effort. I will, therefore, rest content with writing an occasional article in *Harijan* on the subject or addressing such a letter to you.

I hope you are keeping good health.

[From Gujarati]

Sansmarano, pp. 205-6

260. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 26, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am happy and also sorry to announce that we shall not be having our prayer here tomorrow. Instead I shall be going to Sambhal, where a village panchayat has been formed. It is thought that because of my visit a large number of people will gather there. We shall have the prayer there. I have never been to that village before. They say the distance is about 11 miles, maybe a mile less or more. We shall of course have our prayer the day after tomorrow.

[1] While Gandhiji accepted the principle of universities being based on regional languages, he maintained that the linguistic redistribution of provinces should first be accomplished.

[2] Namely, that the linguistic redistribution of provinces might take years

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Today I wish to tell you about the Tibbia College. Both Hindu and Muslim students joined it for studying Ayurveda which was taught there. Later, courses in Yunani, allopathy and homœopathy were added. Hakim Ajmalkhan was the founder of the college. He was a popular leader of Delhi. Today we have made ourselves enemies of Muslims. It was not so when we thought of starting this college where everyone irrespective of communal considerations could study medicine. All contributed freely. Among the donors were Hindu Rajas and Muslim Nawabs. The late Dr. Ansari worked hard to make the scheme a success. It was under the management of a Trust which had on its board Hindus and Muslims. Today some Hindu friends came to me and asked what would happen to the college now. They said it was difficult to continue it under the present circumstances. Funds had ceased to come. It would be a matter of grief and shame if such a large institution had to close down. I am trying my best to avoid this calamity. The college is situated in Karol Bagh. But Muslim boys fear to go anywhere near it. We have driven out Muslims from Panipat. It is still a moot question where they will be able to live. It is a matter of shame for us. It seems that we are doing our best to ruin ourselves. For, when we try to ruin others we ruin ourselves. This is the rule of life.

Another matter I wish to speak about is that of abducted girls. I spoke on the matter once.[1] But I must speak again and again, for only then will the people understand. It is not a question of a mere ten or twenty girls. The number could be in hundreds or even thousands. Nobody knows. Where are all those girls? Muslims have abducted Hindu and Sikh girls. We want to recover them. In Lahore some Hindu, Muslim and Sikh women met and decided to have these abducted girls recovered and restored to their homes. They decided that Muslim girls carried away by Hindus and Sikhs should also be returned. I have received a long list of girls abducted from Patiala. Some of them come from very well-to-do Muslim families. When they are recovered it will not be difficult for them to be returned to their parents. As regards Hindu girls it is still doubtful whether they will be accepted by their families. This is very bad. If a girl has lost her parents or husband it is not her fault. And yet Hindu society does not look upon such a girl with respect any more. The mistake is ours, not the girl's. Even if the girl has

[1] *Vide* pp. 191-4.

been forced into marriage by a Muslim, even if she has been violated, I would still take her back with respect. I do not want that a single Hindu or Sikh should take up the attitude that if a girl has been abducted by a Muslim she is no longer acceptable to society. We should not hate her. We should sympathize with her and take pity on her. If a girl is a Sikh, in my eyes she remains a Sikh, if a Hindu, she remains a Hindu. If my daughter has been violated by a rascal and made pregnant, must I cast her and her child away? Nor can I take the position that the child so born is Muslim by faith. Its faith can only be the faith of the mother who bore it. After the child grows up he or she will be free to take up any religion. Today we are in such an unfortunate situation that some girls say that they do not want to come back, for they know that if they return they will only face disgrace and humiliation. The parents will tell them to go away, so will the husbands. I have suggested that a sort of home should be established for such girls which should take up the responsibility for their food and shelter and education, so that they can stand on their own feet. These girls are innocent. The culprits are those—be they Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs—who have abducted them. Let the Hindus and Sikhs who have abducted Muslim girls return them. Let the Muslims who have abducted Hindu and Sikh girls return them. And let them confess publicly that they are guilty. The list I have received makes me tremble. What has happened in Kashmir? A large number of Muslims have been slaughtered. Women have been slaughtered and young girls have been abducted. If my voice can reach those guilty of this outrage, I shall ask them to return all those girls. I am told that several hundred Hindu and Sikh girls had similarly been carried away. I am also told that a certain *pir*[1] is holding in his house a large number of Hindu and Sikh girls. Those who have abducted them are reported to have said that they do not mean to harm or dishonour these girls in any way but that they will not return them so long as the abducted Muslim girls are not returned. This will be a wicked bargain. We should not act in such a way. We should behave like decent men. We must return all the abducted girls without any preconditions. If we want to retain our freedom we must learn decency of conduct.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 241-3

[1] A Muslim saint

261. LETTER TO RATHINDRA NATH TAGORE

NEW DELHI,
December 27, 1947

DEAR RATHINDRA[1],

Just after the morning prayer I see your letter.

I am glad about the notation of *Vandemataram*[2] and *Jana-gana*[3]. I suppose you know that though I talk about notations, my ignorance of the language of notation is deplorable. An ignorant man, if he is truthful, can derive joy by proxy.

Of course, wherever I am, Santiniketan is always in my heart.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 2293

262. LETTER TO B. G. KHER

December 27, 1947

BHAI KHER[4],

The bearer of this note, Sevakram[5], a silent worker of Sind, possesses qualities worthy of his name. He serves the Harijans. We have to accommodate all the Harijans from Sind in the Bombay Presidency. Please do so as far as possible.

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

[1] Son of Rabindranath Tagore

[2] *Vandemataram*, a song from Bankimchandra Chatterjee's novel *Anand Math*, one of the most popular patriotic songs during the freedom struggle

[3] *Jana-gana-mana*, a song by Rabindranath Tagore, which was adopted as the national anthem of India

[4] (1888-1957); Chief Minister, Bombay, 1937-39 and 1946-52; Member, Constituent Assembly; India's High Commissioner in Britain, 1952-54; Chairman, Official Language Commission, 1955; Chairman, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, 1956-57

[5] Literally, 'Rama in the form of a servant'. The worker later became Chairman of the Servants of the People Society.

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263. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

NEW DELHI,
December [*27*],[1] *1947*

CHI. MANI,

Sevakram who will bring this note is a dedicated servant of Harijans. All Harijans in Sind should be brought to India and rehabilitated in the Bombay State, Saurashtra, Kutch, Gujarat, Udaipur, Jodhpur and other places. The Sardar should do all he can in the matter.

SHRI MANIBEHN PATEL
C/O SARDAR PATEL
NEW DELHI

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 145

264. LETTER TO KHANDUBHAI DESAI

December 27, 1947

BHAI KHANDUBHAI,

The bearer of this note, Sevakram, will recount to you the story of the Harijans of Sind. Try to accommodate as many of them as you can in the mills. I believe that Sevakram is a first-class worker. You may make whatever use you wish of this note.

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

[1] In Pyarelal Papers the letter is found among those of this date. The book, however, has "29". *Vide* also the preceding and the following items.

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265. LETTER TO SURYAKANT

NEW DELHI,
December 27, 1947

CHI. SURYAKANT,

I have your letter. I can never ask you to give up truth; never give up obedience to your parents. Go on serving people.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

266. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SAMBHAL,
December 27, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It gives me special pleasure to hold a prayer meeting in this village. You should not thank me or give me an address of welcome or garland me. Prayer is our dharma. We pray when we get up in the morning. We should pray regularly morning and evening. In the evening at 5, or earlier in winter, we can have congregational prayer. We must utter God's name when we stand or sleep or eat. We must also remember God when at work. We should not give ourselves to selfish pursuits. We must pursue the path of service. I have too little time now to explain to you the whole significance of prayer.

Though, as I have told you, I want no addresses of welcome and garlands, still since you have given me these I thank you for the honour. You speak in your address of the greatness of truth and non-violence. But if our conduct is not in conformity with truth and non-violence, talking of them is hypocritical. I do not like this. Ever since I came to India from South Africa I had been travelling all over the country. I have traversed India many times and seen thousands of villages. People talk of truth and non-violence but they do not act accordingly. They think in one way, speak in another and act in yet another way. It is a matter of shame for us that in

India Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs should be slaughtering one another. Mercifully there have been no riots here in and around your village because the number of Muslims here is small and they can do no harm. If we want to behave as enemies of one another, let us at any rate stop talking of ahimsa. Let us be truthful to this extent. We have not become free in order to slaughter one another. Freedom means that we should voluntarily do what is good. We have become free to do good, not to do evil. We never pray to God to let us utter falsehoods. If we do that it would be surrender to Satan.

It is a good thing you have formed a panchayat. But if it does not function properly and is a panchayat only in name, it will do no good. In former times there used to be real panchayats in the villages of India. Even I have not seen them. But travellers from China and Greece have reported about them. These travellers were not paid by anyone. They were not even invited. They came on their own undergoing great hardships. They came in order to gain knowledge. They write that there were at the time no thefts anywhere in India; there were no locks on the doors. All this was not what happened thousands of years ago. Our history does not go back to thousands of years.

Formerly there were four *varnas*[1]. Today these have grown into a large number. It becomes meaningless to call them *varnas*. It is a great responsibility you have assumed in forming a panchayat. The cows yield so little milk that many people say that they should be slaughtered. Muslims no doubt slaughter cows. But no one in the world slaughters as many cows as the Hindus do. Hindus do not treat the cows well. They do not know how to look after them. This amounts to slowly killing the cows. It is much better to kill them all at once. We worship cows and yet treat them most cruelly. I shall say your panchayat has done something if at the end of the year the cows that today give three seers of milk give six.

Similarly you should produce twice the present amount of foodgrain. You can do so by giving to the land the nourishment that it needs. Mirabehn had called a conference which was attended by a large number of people. They came to the conclusion that all the cow-dung, human faeces and vegetable-waste available in villages could be turned into rich manure. It requires not expenditure but a little labour and it increases the fertility of the soil.

[1] *Viz.*, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra

I do not know how clean you keep your village. But it is your paramount duty to make yourselves strong. You must keep yourselves clean externally and internally. Your village should be free of dirt and dung in every way. And it should be free from foul smells. You should follow the rules of sanitation.

Why do you need a cinema here? Instead of this, you can perform the various plays and stage dramas known to us. The cinema will only make you spend money. Then you will also learn to gamble and fall into other evil habits. Those addicted to alcohol, *ganja*[1] and *bhang*[2] should give up these addictions. Then I shall feel that your Panchayat has done some good work. Then people will come from Delhi to see your village. You must forget untouchability. If you will realize that Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Parsis are all brothers you will show what free India means. May God give you the strength to accomplish all this.

Please do not clap your hands. What I have said is a part of the prayer. I want your blessings and if you do all that I have told you, you will have given me all I need.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II pp. 243-6

267. MESSAGE TO INDONESIA[3]

[Before *December 28, 1947*][4]

Success is at your door although the situation does not look bright at present. India fought for 30 years without sympathy from outside.

Mahatma Gandhi advised Indonesia to take every opportunity to establish closer relations with other Asian peoples.

He was also reported to have told an Indonesian Women's League delegation attending the All-India Women's Conference[5] in Madras:

Don't waver. Victory is in sight.

The Hindu, 29-12-1947

[1] Hemp

[2] Hemp flowers

[3&4] This was given to a correspondent of *Merdeka*, a daily of the Batavia Republic and appeared under the date-line "Batavia, December 28".

[5] Held on December 29

268. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

December 28, 1947

CHI. VALJI,

I went through your articles in the early hours of the morning. You will be surprised to learn that I did not find even one of them worth publishing. The article about villages does not apply to our conditions. A few selected paragraphs from it may be published. There does not appear to be much in the one about the fox and the hare. It seems you have not seen Dacca. The stopping of races there will have no effect in Calcutta. There can be no comparison between Hiroshima and our conditions in regard to building new houses. You should go deeper into the subjects on which you write.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 7509. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

269. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR N. MORARJEE

NEW DELHI,
December 28, 1947

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

I don't think it necessary to publish your letter after the reply that Kumarappa[1] has given.

I got your letter regarding Mahadev[2]. It will be published in *Harijan* as suggested by you.[3]

[1] Reviewing the Government scheme for shipping, J. C. Kumarappa in his article, "A Rudderless Shipping Programme", wrote that the scheme was not well-conceived and lacked proper thought and appreciation of organization. He suggested that the question needed to be handled with care, deep thought and tact, and that the Government should take into confidence the various interests affected by the industry, while drafting a workable scheme.

[2] The Mahadev Desai Memorial Trust. The addressee was one of the three Trustees nominated by Gandhiji.

[3] The article entitled "Mahadev Desai (Bombay) Memorial Trust" appeared in *Harijan*, 9-5-1948.

In regard to the two parts about which you have sought my opinion, it is "yes".

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 4741. Courtesy: Shantikumar N. Morarjee

270. ADDRESS TO CLOTH MERCHANTS[1]

DELHI,
December 28, 1947

BROTHERS,

If you will be quiet you will be able to hear me. I have come here only for one thing and that is to say a few words about the controls. I feel that the control imposed on foodgrain is bad. It cannot do any good to India. Control on cloth should also go. When ours is a free country, why should we have controls? Jawaharlal, Sardar Patel and others are the servants of the people. They cannot do anything against the wishes of the people. They cannot hold their offices if we ask them to step down. They themselves are not keen to stay on. They always say that they want to work for the people and that they are the servants of the people. It is also true. We fought the British for thirty-two years and in that we have shown how true democracy functions. Our strength is not like that of the British. They could have summoned armed forces from England. We do not have all that. But our Ministers have greater force than the armed force. Jawaharlal, Sardar Patel and others have the might of public opinion at their back which is greater than the might of an army or a police.

Why was it necessary to impose controls? The controls became necessary because of the fear of dishonesty and profiteering on the part of the traders. Why should a trader get more for his labour than a labourer gets for his? He should not take more. If the traders realize this we shall not have the difficulties which we are facing today in the matter of food and clothing. If we all refuse to put up with controls, they will have to go. If you and I are honest these controls cannot

[1] The meeting convened by the Cloth and Yarn Merchants' Association was held at the Hardinge Library in the afternoon.

remain. But if we are not honest, removal of controls will kill India. The traders' associations and mill-owners should meet each other and remove the suspicion which people have against them and thus strengthen each other's hands. The *Gita* says: "Cherish the gods thus and let the gods cherish you."[1] The gods are not to be found up in the sky. Just as our girls are regarded as goddesses so are we gods. But it is good that no one calls himself a god. That is man's humility. We should become and remain as pure as gods and live happily. Then our poverty, starvation and nakedness will disappear.

As far as cloth especially is concerned people in the villages themselves can, indeed must, produce the cloth they require. When our womenfolk begin spinning the yarn with their own pure hands, crores of rupees will go into the pockets of our villagers. We should take up such pure business. I consider myself a peasant, a Bhangi and a trader. You should learn from me how to carry on an honest trade. I know how to do business. After all I have been a lawyer. Is not legal practice a kind of trade? Today when I serve others I am pursuing a trade. Trade does not mean earning money anyhow. If you want to get the controls removed for the sake of the people and not for your own, they will certainly go. You have displayed the slogan that the prosperity and freedom of India lie in decontrol. If that is true you have to be very honest and brave in your business dealings.

I have a letter which says that import of foreign cloth is on the increase in India. It also says that our cloth is being exported. In my opinion both these things are wrong. You will next start saying that you will not marry Indian women but import women from outside. What kind of trade will that be? My mother is my mother. Shall I choose for mother another woman more beautiful than she? In the same way you should not get beautiful clothes from outside.

These days businessmen import cloth in order to make money. But why should we import foreign cloth and export our cloth? We should make do with whatever cloth we produce here. We may export whatever remains after our need is fulfilled. You may export mill-cloth but only after we have produced the required quantity of khadi in the country. Control on cloth should go but at the same time control on petrol, firewood and other things should also go.

[1] III. 11

Here you have a sign saying "Beware of the mill-owners' tricks". Then you have to beware of the traders' tricks and my tricks also. You will have to cut my throat if I deceive you or if I serve my interest in the name of service. If the mill-owners or businessmen serve their own interests, then you have to boycott them.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 4-1-1948

271. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 28, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today I was at a meeting of cloth merchants[1], where they told me that cloth too should be decontrolled as so many other things had been. I have no doubt that control on cloth should be lifted. You will see from the papers what happened at the meeting. One thing the traders told me was that, even without the control on cloth being lifted, the prices of cloth had begun to decline. The reason, they say, is that now my voice is raised for decontrol and the Government listens to me, and hence it is expected that cloth will soon be decontrolled. This has led to the hoarded cloth being brought out into the open market and so the prices have registered a decline. The same was the case with sugar. People tell me that wherever one goes one sees large stocks of sugar. It is being sold at one rupee a seer. I am told that people are even able to bargain and buy it for 15 as. or even 14 as. I am receiving telegrams from all quarters reporting much relief among people as a consequence of decontrol. Blessings are showered on me for having brought about decontrol. But it is not I who should be blessed, but the masses, for it is their voice that I have taken up. And that is why my voice was heard, otherwise who would listen to me? My own voice counts for nothing.

I say we should not treat Muslims as enemies. But people turn away from me. They say I am mad. I must say that if the masses do not listen to me they will be doing harm to their dharma. I say nothing improper. Tulsidas says that compassion is the essence of religion. You may say that Tulsidas was mad but no other book is as popular in the country as his *Ramayana*. It is not only in Bihar or in Delhi where it is popular, it is read

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

everywhere. I only repeated what Tulsidas said. Why then do they say that I am mad?

I don't understand the control over firewood. It is not something you can eat. If it is freely available, will anyone eat it or burn it all up? They will burn only as much as is necessary. Why then should there be control over it? I shall not be satisfied till control on firewood is lifted. Today it has become so scarce that the poor suffer.

People ask me to press for decontrol of petrol also. I must say that control over petrol should be lifted and the sooner the better. We shall only gain thereby. There will be more motor vehicles on the roads which will only be for the good of the masses. Of course if there were more trains plying there would be no need for so much petrol. But laying more railway lines involves expenditure running into crores. We must make the best use of what we have. We have for the present all the railways we need. There are enough roads for going from one place to another. Only there is no petrol. What we need today is not rail transport but motor transport. I am sure that if petrol is decontrolled motor transport will increase. Lifting of controls is leading everywhere to lowering of prices. No decontrolled article has shown a rise in price. If this had not been so I would not be getting all these telegrams. Decontrol of petrol and increase in road transport will facilitate the movement of food and cloth in the country. Salt too will be more easily available.

It is the price of salt that needs to be cut down the most. The tax on salt has been withdrawn, but the price of salt has increased, which is wrong. We have not learnt to make salt. We have a vast sea coast and we should have no shortage of salt. Even a child can make salt out of sea-water. If I bring a little sea-water from the Bay of Bengal, I can easily convert it into salt. It is a pity that one has to pay so much for this commodity and take so much trouble. The reason is that salt is not being easily transported from where it is manufactured. I know a mistake has been made in this regard in appointing contractors to transport salt. They have become dishonest and are making a lot of money. Others cannot transport salt. This contract system should be changed and the control over salt should be lifted. Two things are important, the change in the contract system and the organization of road transport. That will do for today.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 247-9

272. MATTER WELL PLACED

Compost is matter well placed, whereas rubbish and excreta, solid and liquid, are matter misplaced when they are allowed to lie anyhow to the discomfort of the public and detriment to their health. It is a criminal waste depriving mother earth of her precious food. Thus says Shrimati Mirabehn in her leaflet reproduced in full[1] in the *Harijan*, 23-11-'47, pp. 428-9:

> We do not treat our Mother Earth properly. She does her best to feed us all, but we do not feed her in return. How can she sustain us, her children, if we do not serve her as dutiful children should serve a revered mother? Year after year we plough, sow and reap harvests from the fields, but very rarely do we give any manure to the soil, and even what we give is usually half-*kachcha*[2] rubbish. Just as we need well-cooked food, so does the soil need well-prepared manure.

The curious may get a copy of the leaflet from her at the Kisan Ashram, Rishikesh, near Haridwar.[3]

NEW DELHI, December 29, 1947
Harijan, 4-1-1948

273. "DHAN" OF DUST

I could have given the heading "*Dhan* from Dust". But I have chosen "*Dhan* of Dust".

The process of sifting the grains from dust means obtaining *dhan* from dust. Similarly the industrious people of China collect gold dust by washing mud or sand. This too I would call *dhan* from dust. This is a transformation of the dust and much more so of the grains. Normally we use the term *dhan* for food-grain. But when we use the word *dhan* for the grains of gold in dust, is it not a great transformation? Here *dhan* means some useful object whose value can be determined.

But when we say "wealth of dust" it implies a chemical transformation of dust. For instance, when we convert the dust,

[1] Under the title "How to Grow More Food"
[2] Imperfect
[3] According to a "Note" in *Harijan*, 8-2-1948, her correct address was: Ashram Pashulok, Rishikesh, Dehradun, U. P.

that is, earth into grains, we have converted the dust into wealth. When we sow the seeds in the earth and water them properly, it produces grain. I would call this creating *dhan* from dust. Our language has not become precise because we have neglected it.

Let me now come to the main point. I consider "compost" *dhan* of dust. Compost means the gold-like manure made from a proper mixture of such matter as cow-dung, faeces, droppings of birds and animals, grass, chaff, refuse, urine, etc. If we mix such manure with the earth in the field and then sow the seeds, it will yield at least double the crop and yet the soil will not lose its fertility.

Mirabehn is working hard in this direction. She has set up an ashram at Rishikesh. There she expects to carry on the work which she had begun in Delhi. She has started issuing small pamphlets on this subject. These pamphlets can be obtained from her. Her pamphlet is published in Urdu. She writes it in English as she does not have sufficient knowledge of Hindustani and people working under her render it into Urdu.

NEW DELHI, December 29, 1947

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 4-1-1948

274. "URDU HARIJAN"

Readers know that two editions of *Harijan* in identical language are brought out every week—one in the Devanagari script and the other in the Urdu script. One which is printed in the Urdu script is called the *Urdu Harijan.* Shri Jivanji writes about its steadily dwindling circulation.[1]

I have always been of the opinion that no newspaper should be published at a loss. People should subscribe to the paper they want. I do not regard a journal self-supporting which meets its expenses out of advertisements. I allowed the Urdu edition to continue at a loss so long only because *Harijan* on the whole with all its language editions did not incur any loss. However there should be a limit to that also. My views on Hindustani and the two scripts remain unchanged. So for some time the Urdu edition will come out as usual. In the mean time the

[1] The letter is not reproduced here. Jivanji Desai had stated that the circulation of the *Urdu Harijan* had fallen to 250 copies from 1,800 copies and that it was running at a loss of Rs. 20,000 per year.

readers of the Gujarati edition and others should decide whether they would like to have the Urdu edition. If they want it they should help to enrol subscribers till the circulation reaches at least two thousand. Along with this they should also give thought to another point. It will become my duty to close down the Devanagari *Harijan*[1] also if people show an aversion to the Urdu script and the Urdu edition has to be stopped. I do not consider it right to bring out *Harijan* exclusively in the Devanagari. As a reformer it is my duty to bring out the paper either in both the scripts or in neither.

Much has been written on why the language is called "Hindustani" and not "Hindi" and why it should be written in both the Devanagari and Urdu scripts. I cannot think of any new arguments. My intention in writing this is to discuss how the *Harijan* in the Urdu script may be kept going. I feel confident that my hope will be realized.

NEW DELHI, December 29, 1947
[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 4-1-1948

275. LETTER TO PYARELAL[2]

December 29, 1947

CHI. PYARELAL,

Please make the attempt.

Remember this: If you have assimilated my message, as long as you are free go on teaching the people to protect themselves. If death comes in the course of your mission of non-violence, you will embrace it. If they throw you into prison, you may fast unto death. Those who have this strength may stay on in Noakhali and face death, undeterred by what may befall the women. One ought not to run away in fear. Ask me again if you wish.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] *Harijan Sevak*

[2] The addressee had asked what Gandhiji would expect the workers in Noakhali to do in the event of a war between the two Dominions and whether planned evacuation could be arranged for the women from there.

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276. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

BIRLA HOUSE,
December 29, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

. . .[1] met me only yesterday. He said he did not know you were going to Jammu, nor did he know that the Jamsaheb[2] accompanied you. He also said that if he had known, he would perhaps have made suggestions or sent a letter. Is this correct?

After meeting Randhawa[3] I felt that it would save your time if I could write direct to him. Would that be in order?

Blessings from
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
1 AURANGZEB ROAD
NEW DELHI

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 377

277. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

December 29, 1947

. . .[4] Religion makes for peace, love and joy in the world. But man is an animal and possessing an intellect he goes on committing greater and greater sins. Therefore if we look at it in the right way science and religion are complementary to each other.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 193

[1] Omission as in the source
[2] Of Saurashtra
[3] Deputy Commissioner of Delhi
[4] Omission as in the source

CWMG - XC

278. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

December 29, 1947

Medical science too has been much abused. Doctors and vaidyas have been exploiting it for fleecing their patients. In many instances they have even killed their patients. Through advertisements of drugs making false claims, people are made to pay at times even with their lives. But only the abuse needs to be stopped. From this it does not follow that medical science has been intended as a way of cheating and fleecing people.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 193

279. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
December 29, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Yesterday was the death anniversary of Hakim Ajmal Khan. Hakim Ajmal Khan belonged to all—Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Jews. He was a devout Muslim. But he served everyone with equal devotion. The finest memorial to his labours was the famous Tibbia College and hospital at Delhi. All classes of students studied unani, ayurvedic and allopathic systems of medicine there. The communal poison, for which there was no place in this institution, has forced it to close down. I think the sole reason for this is that its founder Hakim Ajmal Khan was a Muslim, however good and however respected. If the memory of that great patriot cannot bury the communal strife let it at least give a new life to this college.

I mentioned earlier that it would be good to have our meetings in the open air under the canopy of the sky. If the habit grows we will have to make suitable arrangements for the

[1] As Gandhiji was observing silence, his written speech was read out after the prayers.

site, etc., accordingly. In towns big and small we will have to have open space for the purpose. We will have to change our habits. We will have to learn to be quiet rather than noisy and we will have to learn to sit in an orderly way. We must learn also to speak only when we must and at a pitch that is sufficient for the occasion, neither too high nor too low. We should respect the right of our neighbour and not come in the way of others, individually or in groups. We should not interfere with other people's business. This will require on many occasions extreme self-restraint. In such an order of things the dirt and noise we find in the busiest areas of Delhi will no longer be there and however large the crowds there will be no pushing and jostling and no confusion. We must not think that we can never reach that goal. Some group or other will have to take the initiative and work for this sincerely. Just think how much saving it will mean in energy and expenditure.

I have been severely reprimanded for what I said concerning Kashmir and its Maharaja[1]. It seems to me that those who upbraid me have not really read attentively what I said. The advice I gave is the kind of advice the humblest man may give. Occasionally it becomes one's duty to offer such advice. If the Maharaja had acted on my advice he would have risen very high in his own eyes and in the eyes of the world. Today his own plight and the plight of his State are not enviable. Kashmir is a Hindu State, the majority of its people being Muslims. The raiders called their raids a jihad. They say that the Muslims of Kashmir are being ground down under the tyranny of Hindu raj and that they have come for their succour.

The Maharaja has invited Sheikh Abdullah at just the right time. The task is new for Sheikh Abdullah. But if the Maharaja thinks the Sheikh can shoulder the burden he should be encouraged in every way. It seems obvious to me, as it should seem obvious to others outside, that if Sheikh Abdullah cannot carry with him the minority as well as the majority, Kashmir cannot be saved by military might alone. Both the Maharaja and the Sheikh asked India for armed assistance.

My advice to the Maharaja is that he should be a constitutional sovereign like the King of England and run his government and use the Dogra army[2] according to the advice of Sheikh Abdullah and his Interim Cabinet. What is there so strange

[1] *Vide* p. 298.

[2] The Jammu and Kashmir State Forces

about this? The terms of the State's accession to the Union remain as before. They confer certain rights on the rulers. I have ventured to advise the Maharaja that he should voluntarily relinquish or limit these rights and play his constitutional role as a Hindu ruler.

If the reports I get are inaccurate they should be put right. If my views regarding Hinduism and the duties of a Hindu ruler are erroneous, there is no question of any weight being given to my advice. If the Sheikh as the Chief of the Emergency Administration or as a true Muslim is found wanting in doing his duty he should remove himself from the scene and hand over the reins of administration to a better man. Today Hinduism and Islam are being tested on the soil of Kashmir. If the right thing is done and the right direction given to the process the chief actors will win fame. It is my prayer that in the present darkness in the country Kashmir may become the star that provides light.

So much for the Maharaja and Sheikh Saheb. Will not the Governments of Pakistan and the Union come together and decide the issue with the help of impartial Indians? Is there no one in India who is impartial? I am sure we have not become bankrupt to that extent.

A lady from Mathura has sent Rs. 50 by M. O. for buying blankets for the refugees. She does not disclose her name even to me. She wants me to acknowledge receipt in my prayer speech. I accordingly do so.

It is surprising that people of the States whose rulers have expressed a desire to accede to India are sending me telegrams full of complaints. If a raja or a jagirdar feels that he cannot carry on the administration all by himself, who can force him to keep his State as a separate entity? Those who spend money on these telegrams would be better advised to save their money. It seems to me those behind these telegrams have some axe to grind. They should go to the Home Secretary for advice.

Several Muslims especially in the Post and Telegraph Department say that they had earlier declared their willingness to stay in the Union for propaganda purposes and that they now want to change their option. There are also Muslims who have been dismissed from service. I think the reason for this can only be that they are suspected of being anti-Hindu. I sympathize with them. But I feel that however unjustified the suspicion may be in individual instances it should be forgiven and they should not give way to anger. I can only offer my well-tried prescription. Very few people can get into Government jobs. It should never be one's

aim in life to secure a Government job. One's aim in life should only be to live honestly. If a man is willing to use his hands he will always find scope to make an honest living. I think that if Muslims want to retain their self-respect they should not run after Government jobs to the extent of going to Pakistan for them. Power comes from true service. Often power becomes a cause for one's downfall. To fight for it is unseemly. At the same time it is the duty of the Government to create opportunities of employment for the large number of unemployed men and women. If the task is handled with skill it can bring benefits to the Government instead of being a strain. I assume here that those for whom work has to be found will be of sound health and will be willing workers, not shirkers.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 249-53

280. LETTER TO HOSA RASHID[1]

December 30, 1947

DEAR DAUGHTER[2],

You are silly. I would have welcomed your Hindustani however imperfect it would have been. As it is, I can hardly decipher your signature. Of this more when we meet. Do come with your friend and stay with me if you wish and will stand discomfort.

Amtul Salaam writes to me often enough. I am sending her your letter. She will be pleased.

Love.

BAPU

BEGUM RASHID
17 YASHWANT NIVAS ROAD
INDORE

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] Widow of Abdul Rashid Khan, brother of Amtussalaam
[2] The superscription is in Hindi.

281. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

December 30, 1947

CHI. MUNNALAL,

If you can free yourself from the work there, you may come over whenever you wish.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 7225. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

282. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

December 30, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI,

I am sending very little English material this time. The Gujarati matter, I feel, is sufficient. I am sending Sundarlal's Hindi and English articles. You may, if you wish, break up both into instalments. If I feel like it, I may send something more tomorrow.

You will see what I have done in regard to the *Urdu* [*Harijan*].[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9990. Also C. W. 6964. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

[1] *Vide* pp. 314-5.

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283. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

December 30, 1947

CHI. BABUDI,

You must not be impatient. Follow Sushila's[1] instructions. Having placed oneself in the hands of a doctor, it is best to do what he says. Nobody can truly foretell the future. One can do no more than guess. That being so, persistence in one course is the best remedy. Do nothing unwillingly or under anybody's pressure. Give up all worry.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 10082. Courtesy: Sharda G. Chokhawala

284. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

December 30, 1947

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I have fixed Rs. 50,000 for the Hindustani Prachar [Sabha]. Hand over the amount to Nanavati[2]. I expect you know that he has now been appointed Secretary.

Let us see what happens in Sharda's case. Sushila who is going there will take the decision.

In the case of Champa[3], I leave [the decision] to you. I think it is best that she should quit the Ashram. The burden, however, is to be borne by you. Hence if you find it too heavy, harden your heart and tell her clearly 'No'. You may take it that it is for the good of all that the decision may not be taken by me.

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

[1] Dr. Sushila Nayyar
[2] Amritlal T. Nanavati, Secretary, Hindustani Prachar Sabha, Wardha
[3] Champa R. Mehta

285. LETTER TO MORARJI DESAI

December 30, 1947

BHAI MORARJI,

Herewith Balubhai's letter and a cutting. Please do what is needed and write to me if you have anything to say. If the information given in the letter is correct there is some substance in the complaint.

Isn't it proper that food control has been lifted if only in the urban areas? Another letter suggesting this is from Shrilal, which also I am enclosing.

The third letter is from Boriavi. This is about milk. Please look into that, too. Please return the letters after you have made use of them.

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

286. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

December 30, 1947

CHI. RAMDAS,

This, a casual one. May you all progress in your spirit of service. That will be as good as doing all [that you should]. And for that too your health must be all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

287. LETTER TO HARSHADRAM

December 30, 1947

BHAI HARSHADRAM,

I have both your letters, one to Dr. Mehta, dated the 21st and another to me, dated the 24th. Bulsaria also writes what you say. I have not been able to know who among those who write to me is looking after the work of Vachchharaj. Do you

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all work as a team or separately? You should not work separately. In the case of voluntary service all the workers should be comrades. I cannot know from here how much rent you should take from Vallabhram. That is why I must have used 'reasonable' or some such expression.

I cannot recollect having got a letter earlier.

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

288. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

December 30, 1947

The notion that our own religion alone is true and all others are false is instilled in children right from their infancy. So they develop the attitude that what they believe alone is true.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 195

289. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

December 30, 1947

DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM,

You will be glad to read this letter. I have given you permission to come. The Maharaja of Patiala saw me. I told him about your family. Let us see what happens.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 593

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290. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

December 30, 1947

I hold that self-government is not an end, but only a means to good government. And true democracy is what promotes the welfare of the people. The test of a good government lies in the largest good of the people with the minimum of controls. The test of autocracy, socialism, capitalism, etc., is also people's welfare or good government. In themselves they are of no value. Any system of government can fail if people do not have honesty and a feeling of brotherhood. There may be work, there may be men to do the work and tools with which to do it, yet in my view a system that admits of poverty and unemployment is not fit to survive even for a day.

How are you all? I myself am quite fit. I have to do or die here. Manu is ill. She has been having high fever for the last two days. This girl has learnt much but she neglects her health. Unless she has high fever she goes on working. She inflicts much brutality and violence on her body. Doctors suspect typhoid. We shall see. Even though sick she goes on doing me acts of service. I have just put her to sleep.

Blessings to all the children.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 196

291. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 30, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I told you yesterday in my written message and I also mentioned earlier that we should all know our respective places. We must know when to speak and when to keep silent and how to conduct ourselves, so that even if millions are there there should be no disturbance and no feeling of crowding. This is

what happens with armies. They maintain an external discipline. What happens internally is another matter. We have not had this kind of training. I have often noticed that, when after the prayer I rise to go, people want to take a peep at me from all around and crowd round me. Good manners demand that after the prayer meeting is over everyone should quietly remove himself. Each one should ponder on whatever good things I may have said and go home.

I have a letter from Bahawalpur. I once spoke about Bahawalpur to you.[1] The people there liked what I said. They want me to mention the matter again and repeat that all the Hindus and Sikhs who are still there and who want to leave the place should be allowed to do so. All those who want to come have not been able to come. There are still a large number of people there. They want that no obstacle should be placed in their way and they should not be subjected to any assaults. Whether my saying anything on the subject will have any effect God alone knows. But one must make an effort whatever the effectiveness of one's effort might be. Of course the Nawab has said that Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs are equal in his eyes. And he is equally interested in the welfare of all his subjects. When he says so, who am I to question his motives? Still I can plead with him and his officials that those Hindus and Sikhs who do not want to stay there should be allowed to leave. It is his duty to put them on a train and have them safely escorted to the border. But even if he cannot do so he can at any rate allow them to leave on their own, taking away such of their property as they can. It will be a matter of thankfulness if he can do this much. But I do not want to limit myself to only making a plea to the Nawab. I want to tell Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and his Government that today it has become impossible for a Hindu or any non-Muslim to live peaceably in Sind. Those Hindus who are called untouchables are particularly harassed there and they have no means of livelihood. They at least should not be subjected to indignities. Those who are not happy living there should be allowed to leave. If their conditions of life are made easy even those who have left Sind will go back there, seeing that Sind has regained its former state. But at present that is not the case. Even their schools have been taken over for the use of refugees who have gone there from Kathiawar. They say that the needs of the refugees are the first priority. How can Hindus live in Sind under such

[1] *Vide* p. 288.

conditions? It will only mean that Pakistan has become Islamistan where no non-Muslim may live or where he can live only as a slave. I think no one will like to be a slave. This sort of thing is in no one's interest. I have many other things to say and only fifteen minutes to say them.

I had spoken to you about Pandharpur.[1] There is a temple there of Lord Vithoba. It is the largest temple in Maharashtra. I have visited it. I had suggested that it should be opened to Harijans. Afterwards the trustees of the temple also supported my demand. When I got the news that the temple had been opened to the Harijans I had told you of it. Everyone seemed content and no voice was raised in opposition. Now they say that a large number of Brahmin priests are unhappy over this because the temple is visited by many Harijans every day. Some of the priests seem to have gone on a fast. This has distressed me. I have received this wire only today, and since I cannot reach there in any other way I think I should make a mention of the matter here and maybe my voice will reach Pandharpur. I want to say in all humility and sincerity that those who have resorted to the fast and still call themselves priests are really not priests. They are serving neither themselves nor Hinduism. The image in the temple is the image of Vithoba, i. e., of Krishna or Vishnu. It could not be the will of Vishnu that some should have His glimpse and others may not. In my view as long as the Harijans were barred from the temple it had not been really consecrated. Why should these people now fast? A Bill has been passed concerning Harijans' entry into temples. Even the lawmakers are Hindus. When millions of Hindus say that the temple should be opened to Harijans, how can they say that it should remain closed? I see no merit in the fast. I think it is sinful and should be given up. I think the priests should relent and say they were mistaken and their eyes have now been opened. It cannot be that in the temple of God one man should be admitted and another kept out. It is believed that visiting a temple cleanses the sinner of his sins in the same way as bathing in the Ganga does. I personally do not support the view that the water from the Ganga washes away the sins but it is a belief widely held. And maybe it does good to one who bathes in the Ganga in the faith that his sins will be washed away. Besides who can say that Harijans are all sinners? There are among Harijans persons of great merit as well as sinners.

[1] *Vide* Vol. LXXXIX, p. 478.

A complaint has been sent to me pertaining to Bombay. It may be true of other places too. The complaint is that very little rice is supplied to card-holders in Bombay, perhaps half a seer in a week. This is wholly inadequate and will encourage black-marketing. I will say that control should go. Some people argue that rationing has brought much relief to cities. I think it should be removed from the cities too. If everyone conducts himself honestly there will be no need for controls.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 254-5

292. TATYASAHEB KELKAR

Friends have more than once asked me why I have not noticed the death of so great a patriot as Tatyasaheb Kelkar[1], especially because he was a political opponent and more so because I am much misunderstood among a school of Maharashtrians. These reasons made no appeal to me: the very reasons which according to my critics should have prompted my notice.

I conceive it to be very unseemly to notice *pro forma* such a serious event as death. But I must do so now, though it is late, because of the importunity of one of my oldest friends—Haribhau Phatak.

I would at once admit that if it was usual for the *Harijan* to notice important deaths and births then Tatyasaheb's death should be among the first to merit notice. But industrious readers will have noticed that the *Harijan* has not followed any such practice. Notice has depended upon my whim of the moment and leisure. For some time past I have been unable to read newspapers regularly.

Whatever may be said to the contrary, Tatyasaheb, though a political opponent, I had always counted as a friend whose criticism was profitable. I knew and honoured him as the late Lokamanya's[2] valued follower. It was, I fancy, in 1919 that

[1] N. C. Kelkar who died on October 4, 1947

[2] Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920); nationalist leader, scholar and writer; one of the founders of the Deccan Education Society, *Kesari* and *Mahratta*; was sentenced to six years' deportation in 1908; launched the Home Rule Movement along with Annie Besant in 1916; started the Congress Democratic Party in 1920; author of *The Orion*, *The Arctic Home of the Vedas* and *Gitarahasya*

I pleaded at an A. I. C. C. meeting for a constitution for the Congress[1] and said that if the Lokamanya gave me Tatyasaheb and the Deshbandhu[2], Shri [I. B.][3] Sen, I would undertake to draw up one for submission to the Congress. Be it said to the credit of both the collaborators that though I submitted my draft to them in time, they never interfered with it. At the Committee that sat to consider the draft Tatyasaheb always offered helpful criticism. It was again at my suggestion that he was invariably appointed a member of the Working Committee. I do not remember an occasion when his criticism though sometimes bitter was not constructive. He was fearless but polite and friendly.

I had early learnt that he was a scholarly writer of Marathi. It has been my regret that I never got the time to learn Marathi sufficiently to drink deep of the wisdom of the modern Marathi writers like Tatyasaheb and the late Hari Narayan Apte. It would be churlish on my part to ignore the death of so great a star like Shri Narasopant Chintaman Kelkar in the Indian firmament.

NEW DELHI, December 31, 1947
Harijan, 4-1-1948

293. LETTER TO VALLABHRAM

December 31, 1947

BHAI VALLABHRAM,

I got your letter. Do go to Panchgani again when you are in a position to do so.

I had tried *bhilama*[4] under the supervision of a vaidya of Poona named Joshi, after my release from jail. He had told me that it benefited only if it was consumed in the proper manner. Need I tell you this? I wish you to cultivate ideal health of body and mind.

[1] In December 1919, at Amritsar the A. I. C. C. had appointed a subcommittee, consisting of Gandhiji, N. C. Kelkar, I. B. Sen, A. Rangaswami Iyengar and Vithalbhai Patel to consider the constitution of the Congress. *Vide* Vol. XVI, pp. 374 and 463-4.

[2] C. R. Das (1870-1925); was elected President of Indian National Congress at Gaya, 1922, but resigned thereafter and organized Swarajya Party; Mayor of Calcutta, 1924 and 1925

[3] The source has "Nishith", obviously a slip.

[4] *Semicarpus anacardium*

I am not unaware of the chaos at Panchgani. But I find myself helpless. Things were all right when Vachchharaj was alive. His brother doesn't have his capacity. You did well, however, in drawing my attention. When you go again now, you may use your loving influence and get the necessary reforms introduced.

I have been convinced for a long time of the truth of what you say, namely, that if the Indian vaidyas don't see their dharma and act accordingly, they have no future.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 2922. Courtesy: Vallabhram

294. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

[*December 31, 1947*][1]

CHI. BABUDI,

I got your letter yesterday. I have already sent one through Sushila. You are a wise girl and hence I expect you will not worry on account of your health or anything else. One must acquire the faith that God will keep one as He wishes. If one gains this faith there can be no question of weeping either secretly or openly.

I do get news of your health from some source or other. I hear that the doctor there who looks after you is a very noble lady, persevering and efficient. It is all right whether you are cured under her treatment or you succumb to your illness. Therefore, so long as the doctor does not wash her hands off you, you had better stay where you are.

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

[1] The letter is placed in the source among those of this date.

CWMG - XC

295. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

December 31, 1947

We used to find the struggle against the British a hard task. But today it seems to me that that fight was a comparatively simple matter. The struggle today is much more difficult. We could make a mountain out of a mole-hill during the British regime. Today we are cutting at our own roots. When duty calls we run away from it. We cannot establish good government without purification. We have deserved the present regime because we have not purified ourselves. This, in my view, is not swaraj. Swaraj means that under our own government one will live and let others live a simple life.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 201

296. A LETTER

December 31, 1947

BHAI SHAHEED,

I read in the newspapers that you had fallen ill and therefore could not go to Lucknow.[1] What is this? How are you now?

Dinshaw and Jehangir Patel came here and have gone back.

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

[1] For the Indian Union Muslims' Conference

CWMG-XC

297. LETTER TO HOSHIARI

[*December 31, 1947*][1]

CHI. HOSHIARI,

I wrote you a letter which you must have received. It pains me that you are not keeping good health. It is our duty to be able to face any situation. If we grow like that there will be no reason for worry. Do come over here if it is necessary. You must keep Gajaraj there; he ought to remain there, he should have the strength to live by himself. Perhaps this is what I have already written.

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

298. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

NEW DELHI,
December 31, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your letter. I have already written a letter to you and along with it to Hoshiari also. You must have got it by now. It might be good for Hoshiari to come here. So she may as well come. Gajaraj is to stay on there, I suppose, and he is now used to living alone. I understand what you say about Sharda. I take a detached view. It is all right if she passes away. Well and good if she survives. If she dies she will be released from pain and have a new body. That is no small matter. And if she recovers and lives she will render service. Now Sushila is there for a couple of days; she will discuss everything.

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

[1] The letter is placed in the source among those of this date.

299. TALK WITH SUBHADRA GUPTA AND OTHERS[1]

December 31, 1947

How can they (the refugees) have any confidence in you or respect for you when you go among them like up-to-date eves decked out in silks? And then you tell them to wear self-spun khadi and do the cleaning. . . . I do not care if only half a dozen of you go. If there is simplicity, sincerity and purity within and without, your work will flourish. After doing full justice to your overloaded breakfast tables in your spacious bungalows you alight from posh cars dangling your stylish vanity bags, while those you are supposed to serve cannot even afford the luxury of a bath for lack of a change of clothes. Do you ever care to think that you are going to see people who had to leave behind properties worth thousands? . . . Social service these days has become a means for getting on in the world. Many socialites have consequently taken to this profitable hobby. There are of course exceptions but they are few and far between. I want women workers who would set an example in self-help, simplicity and dignity of labour.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 683, and *Dilhiman Gandhiji*—II, pp. 201-2

300. A MESSAGE[2]

NEW DELHI,
December 31, 1947

I am certain that no sin or guilt can be imputed to those Hindu and Sikh sisters who have been abducted, molested or converted by Muslims. They should be received with open arms and given the same place which they occupied before in society.

The saintly poet Tulsidas once said: "Compassion is the root of religion." If we do not show regard to those sisters of ours, we cease to have any religion at all.

The Hindu, 1-1-1948

[1] The report in *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase* has been collated with the Gujarati version in *Dilhiman Gandhiji*.

[2] The message, addressed to the refugees, was released through the Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation.

301. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
December 31, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Here are a few questions. Let me see how many of them I can deal with.

A friend writes to ask how, when Hindus and Sikhs cannot live peacefully in Sind, the Hindus from Punjab can be asked to go back. Has there been some significant change of heart? I think the correspondent could not have asked the question if he had known the whole situation. What I had told the Punjab Hindus was after a meeting I had with some Muslim friends.[1] I cannot yet definitely advise the Punjab refugees to go back. It is right that so long as Hindus and Sikhs cannot live happily in Sind I cannot have any hopes as regards the Punjab either. At present the complaints I am receiving from all sides seem to be as to why Hindus and Sikhs from other places in Pakistan are not being allowed to come.

A few men from Chitral and Swat came to see me. They say there are still 251 Hindus in those places. I said that this was not a very large number. In Sind there are Hindus and Sikhs in much greater numbers and when they cannot come how can you expect the few in Swat and Chitral to be allowed to leave? The Government is doing what it can and so long as all the Hindus and Sikhs stranded in Pakistan do not arrive here it will not rest. I shall therefore not speak of the refugees returning to Pakistan till there is a change of heart. I know that if there is a change of heart in one place the same thing will happen at other places. If we have a change of heart here there will be a change of heart in Pakistan. It will take some effort no doubt but there will be a change. After all madness seized us only after it had seized people in Pakistan. I shall not go into the various stages and degrees of madness. If sanity does not return we shall lose both India and Pakistan. There will be a war. The present state cannot last. People say that the required change in the situation has already taken place, that Hindus and Sikhs have come to India and Muslims from India have gone to

[1] *Vide* pp. 212-3.

Pakistan. They point out that transfer of populations of such magnitude cannot be reversed. I do not hold this view. Even if I am the only one to say it I shall still say that so long as people do not go back to their homes there will be no peace in the two countries. All the comforts you can provide to the Sikh and Hindu refugees are not going to heal the wounds they have suffered. It will be a matter of perpetual distress to them that they have lost their hearths and homes and if there is a war in fifty years' time or a hundred years' time, they are going to remember this. Such things are not forgotten.

A friend asks if the refugee camps cannot be made centres of training in handicrafts. This is certainly possible if even a single refugee wants it. It will not be necessary for me to bring any pressure on the Government to do this. It will readily agree to do what will save them the enormous expenditure they incur at present in running these camps. This will also enable the refugees to earn their livelihood without losing self-respect. I suggested that the friend should campaign for this and create an atmosphere where the refugees will themselves ask that they should be taught handicrafts. This will raise India higher and arrest the rot that has set in in India.

A lady has just given me this note. She is I think a Hindu from Pakistan. She says she had gone out for a short period and when she returned she found the lock of her house broken and some Sikhs occupying the house. She went to the police and had them arrested. One of them escaped. Now she wants to know what she should do—whether she should leave the house? I would not advise her to leave. I did not advise even those coming from Pakistan to leave their houses. But what is my advice worth? People will not be ready to lay down their lives on my saying so. I shall advise the lady not to leave her house. Why did the Sikh friends forcibly enter her house? The refugees should declare that they will not force themselves on anyone, nor enter anyone's house without permission. They should live on what little money they get.

A lady has written to me a beautiful letter. She does not give her name and address. She says she listens to my speeches every day on the radio, but that the hymns and *bhajans* sung at the meeting are not relayed. She suggests that if not every day at least once every third or fourth day the prayer should be broadcast; that my speeches are only of mundane significance, while prayers are something spiritual. My speeches are recorded by the radio people and then relayed. I have no hand in

this. Maybe they think that what I say will make for public good. I do not know what is possible for the radio people to do. But I think the *bhajans* sung here, however badly sung they may be, should be relayed. I respect the sister for what she has written. I must however disagree with her when she separates the prayer from the prayer speech. I have told you that what I say after the prayer is part of the prayer. I cannot sing it to you and my voice has no sweetness. Besides, I have grown so old that I would not be able to sing even if I wanted. So the girls sing and sing well. Whatever therefore is said or sung here is a prayer addressed to God. I should advise people to understand this.

Now about Junagadh and Ajmer. I spoke to you about the telegrams from Junagadh. Now I have a telegram about Ajmer. I know the story concerning Ajmer. What happened there was pretty grim. But the telegram exaggerates it. Such exaggeration only annoys people and provokes them. There is already so much poison in Delhi; but to say that Muslim property there is being plundered and their houses burnt, and that the shrine is in danger, is not right. The fact is that no one is going to touch the shrine. Why then do they send me such telegrams? There certainly have been instances of looting there. There also have been cases of arson and killings too. This is not to be denied. But exaggerating it only makes it smaller. I appeal to everyone to compare the report with the events. Only then can we ensure the justice which we seek. If we cannot confine ourselves to facts we are doomed.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy : All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 255-8

302. TALK WITH ENGLISH FRIENDS[1]

December 31, 1947[2]

No human being or religious institution is perfect in this imperfect world. Religious institutions are an answer to the challenge of the age and the particular circumstances prevailing at the time. Today we worship Christ but the Christ in the flesh we crucified. Stoning prophets and erecting churches to their

[1] Who, accompanied by Amrit Kaur, met Gandhiji in the evening
[2] From *Dilhiman Gandhiji*

memory afterwards has been the way of the world through the ages. They in the past could at least plead in mitigation that they did not know what they were doing. We can offer no such defence. And as the Confucian saying goes, "To know what is right and not to do it is cowardice."

In theory, a perfect religion is possible. But mankind has not known any so far just as no man can claim to have seen God. It is this that has been the goal of my aspiration and striving for the last sixty years. I cannot claim to have attained complete success but I feel I am coming closer to it every day and that is enough for me.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 697

303. LETTER TO KARL STRUVE[1]

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,
January 1, 1948

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter of 11th November[2] which I have just received.

I have not seen the report you refer to. In any case, whatever I have said does not refer in any way to the failure of ahimsa, but it refers to my failure to recognize, until it was too late, that what I had mistaken for ahimsa was not ahimsa, but passive resistance of the weak, which can never be called ahimsa even in the remotest sense. The internecine feud that is going on today in India is the direct outcome of the energy that was set free during the thirty years' action of the weak. Hence, the proper way to view the present outburst of violence throughout the world is to recognize that the technique of unconquerable non-violence of the strong has not been discovered as yet. Not an ounce of non-violent strength is ever wasted. I must not, therefore, flatter myself with the belief nor allow friends like you to entertain the belief that I have exhibited any heroic and demonstrable non-violence in myself as yet. All I can claim is that I am sailing in that direction without a moment's stoppage. This confession

[1] This, along with the addressee's letter, appeared in *Harijan* under the title "Ahimsa Never Fails".

[2] *Vide* Appendix III.

should strengthen your belief in non-violence and spur you and friends like you to action along the path of non-violence.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

KARL STRUVE, ESQ.
WENTERF BEI REINBEK

From a photostat: G. N. 860

304. LETTER TO PRAGJI K. NAYAK

NEW DELHI,
January 1, 1948

BHAI PRAGJI,

I have your letter.

I am pained by such ignorance on the part of an eminent person like you. And why all this hatred of the Muslims?

If we do not prefix *Shri* to a man's name we should then use Mr. If not that, then *ji* for a Hindu, and *saheb* for a Muslim—what is improper about this?

Serve the people where you are, that will be much better than coming to me.

BAPU

PRAGJIBHAI KALYANJI NAYAK, ENGINEER
MAMA'S POLE
BARODA

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

305. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER[1]

January 1, 1948

So your brother has departed. I had not even known that he was ill. We must be thankful that God has relieved him of his suffering. One day all of us—you, I and our near and dear ones—have to go. Now all over the country hundreds are dying every day. Many have left behind orphans with no one to support them. Many others have lost innocent children of tender age. You must consider the plight of the country and console yourself. It is selfish to think only of one's own sorrow.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 206

[1] This was addressed to a woman.

306. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 1, 1948

Blind imitation is evidence of paralysis of the mind. How can we apply the rule of measure for measure to something that is bad and imitate it? It betrays meanness to talk about the number of Muslims killed in India or the number of Hindus killed in Pakistan. May God grant good sense to all. Today I am sustained only by this prayer.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 210

307. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 1, 1948

In my opinion there is no improvement in the situation here. For the present I am here but I am not sure what it will be possible to do. If there is peace in the city it is only from fear of the police. There is fire in people's hearts. That fire must either consume me or must be extinguished. No third way seems likely at the moment.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 206

308. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 1, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today is New Year's Day according to the English calendar. I am happy to see such a large number of people gathered here. I regret that it took no less than 7 minutes for us to make room for the women to sit. Even one minute lost at such a meeting is hundreds of thousands of minutes lost to hundreds of thousands of people. Our brothers should learn to offer first place to the

sisters. The country where women are not honoured is not really civilized. According to Manu[1] men and women should both understand their own limits. We should learn to behave with added restraint now that we are free. I hope the audience attending the prayer meetings will be even larger in future. But all those that come should come with prayer in their hearts, for prayer is the food for the heart. We cannot get anywhere else such food as we get from God. I also hope that the audience will maintain silence and will return to their homes in silence.

Recently there was a Harijan conference in U. P., at which it is reported, a minister preached to the Harijans that they should give up their unclean habits, unclean living and unclean clothes and abstain from alcohol. A Harijan countered that the Government could burn up the unclean clothes just as it could have palm trees cut down and wine shops closed. I admire the courage of the Harijan friend. I for one make *gur* from palm. I shall advise the Harijan brethren that the cure is in their own hands. Even if liquor is sold in shops they should keep away from it as they would from poison. In fact liquor is worse than poison. Labourers drink in order to forget their domestic worries. Poison can only kill the body. Liquor can kill even the soul. One loses the ability to control one's action. I would advise the Government to close down liquor shops and to replace them by eating-houses where people could get pure and light food. Here they should distribute books from which people could learn something and they should provide to them some harmless entertainment. But there should be no place for cinema. This will help people to give up alcohol. I say this from my experience of many countries. I have seen this in India and I had seen it also in South Africa. I am quite sure that giving up alcohol increases both the physical vigour of man and his capacity to earn. It is for this reason that prohibition has been a part of the Congress programme since 1920. Now that we are free the Government should redeem its pledge and give up the unholy excise revenue. It is not a real loss, for it will bring enormous good to the people. This is the way to our prosperity. We should achieve this through our own effort.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 258-9

[1] Codifier of Hindu Law, author of *Manavadharmashastra*, generally known as *Manusmriti*

309. A NOTE[1]

[After *January 1, 1948*][2]

I didn't see the pen at all. I even inquired about it. If you had told me, I would certainly have written. Now from tomorrow after you have finished other things go for a bath.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8731

310. WANTED ACCURACY

A correspondent from Malabar writes:[3]

> The confidence with which Shri Dev Prakash Nayyar has written on the "Intellectual Content of the *Takli*" in the *Harijan* of 21-12-'47 takes one's breath away. He has made out that all knowledge is contained in the *takli* or can be derived from it or it is the quintessence of knowledge. . . . No doubt, the *takli*, charkha and spinning have a place in the proper scheme of education, especially, Nayee Talim, but to say that the *takli* naturally takes you to mathematics, physics, economics, etc., is but " sentimental nonsense ". The *takli*-enthusiasts need not carry their arguments in favour of spinning to a ridiculous extent. The cause of spinning cannot be advanced that way.

The correspondent evidently has not read as carefully as necessary Shri Dev Prakash Nayyar's contribution on the *takli*. As I read it, he has advanced no such claim as the correspondent imagines. The author has not said that "all knowledge is contained in" or that "it is derived from" the *takli*, nor has he said that it is "the quintessence of knowledge". His thesis simply is that much knowledge that we derive from the books can be better given by competent teachers through crafts. The fact that the correspondent who is a practised spinner of long standing is "shocked" at Shri Dev Prakash Nayyar's claim and calls it "sentimental nonsense" proves that education does not reside in the *takli*, but it does in an educationist who, like Shri Dev Prakash Nayyar, having tested the possibilities of the *takli* is entitled to make the claim above mentioned.

[1&2] This was scribbled on a letter from Nrisimhaprasad K. Bhatt dated January 1.

[3] Only extracts from the letter are reproduced here.

I fear I must deprive the correspondent of the smug satisfaction that not even I have attributed to the innocent-looking *takli* more than "economic and moral virtues". Even the modest claim, I am sorry, has not found universal acceptance. I was probably the first in India to ascribe what may be termed extravagant virtue to the *takli* and the like. Practical teachers along the line have found many more possibilities in handicrafts than I had mentioned. All honour to them for it.

I would strongly advise the correspondent humbly to accept Shri Dev Prakash Nayyar's cautious claim and seek more information from him as to how in the course of his giving his pupils lessons in Nayee Talim, he came upon his discovery. If the discovery is only imaginary, the correspondent will soon find out to Shri Dev Prakash Nayyar's discomfiture. The fall of an apple from its branch is said to have enabled Newton's rich mind to discover the law of gravitation.

NEW DELHI, January 2, 1948
Harijan, 11-1-1948

311. LETTER TO D. G. TENDULKAR

NEW DELHI,
January 2, 1948

MY DEAR TENDULKAR[1],

Here are the addresses which I was able to correct between yesterday and this morning under severe stress. I have removed the inverted commas commencing with each paragraph. I hope you will understand all the corrections and that I have not been too late.[2]

Yours,
BAPU

D. G. TENDULKAR
407 KALBADEVI ROAD
BOMBAY

From a facsimile: *Mahatma*, Vol. I, p. VII

[1] Author of *Mahatma : Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, which was published in eight volumes

[2] Gandhiji took a keen interest in the addressee's venture and on January 22, 1948, discussed with him "the smallest details" about the format, the type, illustrations, standardization of spelling and so on.

312. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER[1]

January 2, 1948

The *Gita* rightly says that action without knowledge is of no worth. I have had experience of this many times and many others too will have had the experience. If action is informed by knowledge devotion comes on its own. To do this one must always take one's stand on truth. If one has come to realize truth nothing else remains to be done. As we look into a mirror and discover the lightest spots on our faces, so must we look into our hearts. Only afterwards may we criticize others. Hardly anyone can claim perfection for himself. It is my humble advice to you that rather than observe the faults of . . . you should observe your own. . . . should follow my advice only if he finds it good. Otherwise he may reject it.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 212-3

313. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

January 2, 1948

I find myself here in a fiery pit. It is difficult to say what will happen. Maybe we shall know soon. Manu is completely exhausted. Her condition has reached a stage where it causes worry. The fault is perhaps as much mine as hers. I have made her work eighteen hours at a stretch. And I have subjected her to an equal or even greater mental strain. After all she is only a young girl of sixteen or seventeen years. Still I am convinced that if she only has Ramanama inscribed in her heart she will suffer no physical enfeeblement. But how can I measure this? So long as her condition does not improve it must remain a cause of worry to me. In this *yajna* her part is of no small significance. So many girls come to me. But in the matter of service Manu, considering her age, surpasses all the others. And if I had not sent for her, I would have carried the guilt of having done her injustice. Now my only wish is to see her restored to health.

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

I cannot say how long I shall have to stay here. I have to do or die. There is no third way.

How is your health ? I hope you are not continuing the dietetic experiments. Manu will write the rest. I am well. It is God's mercy that under the present strain I am able to keep myself fit.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 213

314. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 2, 1948

Man today is afraid of man, afraid of his neighbour. How can I then talk about national issues? We deliberately bring suffering on ourselves, deceive ourselves. No one can harm another. In my view man is himself the cause of his sufferings. This city which is the metropolis of the country has the appearance of a dead city. No one trusts anyone. Such peace as one finds is to be attributed to the fear of the police. Why is it that the freedom achieved through non-violence is sought to be sustained by violence? I have been searching my heart. I find despair there. Maybe it was the will of God that I should witness this day. Now I have to do or die. Let us see how much I have yet to overcome to reach the state of *sthitaprajna*. I thank God that he woke me up at last.

Manu is seriously ill. The girl has tremendous energy but she has become weak in the body. I admit that I have treated her harshly and this is the result of that. After all how much can her poor body bear? I have extracted much physical work from her and even more mental work. But I have the satisfaction that she has lost nothing. I have trained her well. If only I could bring her back to health now! She is careless about her health. She forgets everything in serving me. You should not worry. I am much concerned about her health. Typhoid is suspected.

How are you all? The situation in Bihar is difficult, but the fate of Delhi today will be the fate of the country. . . .[1]

[From Hindi]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 211-2

[1] Omission as in the source

315. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 2, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Tomorrow we may have to hold the prayer meeting at the Wavell Canteen, where many refugees are living. I have been there once and I was asked then to hold the prayer meeting there, but I could not stay on. Today someone from the camp came and requested me and I have agreed to go there tomorrow. So if it does not rain tomorrow I shall hold the prayer there. But if it rains it may not be possible to have the prayer there. In that case we shall have it here. In any case the prayer meeting will be held. Thus it is a little uncertain about tomorrow. Of course if you wish, you may come here and if there is no prayer, you can go back.

I saw you laugh at my little umbrella[1]. It is a beautiful thing. It costs nothing. It was given to me free of cost not because I am a Mahatma. The fact is that when I was touring in Noakhali,[2] it was very hot and some people took pity on me and gave me this. They put it on also when it rains. Mostly people have to work in the fields, they cannot do so in the heat of the sun without putting this on. Muslims live there in large numbers. There are Hindus too, but mostly they carry on business. Everyone has this kind of umbrella. There was a Muslim friend there because after all every Muslim did not consider me his enemy and later they had all understood that I had not gone there to plunder them or to prepare a case against them, but I had gone there only to give such solace as I could to the Hindus. So they gave me this umbrella. I did not really need it much there because I did not do more than an hour of walking each day. They also gave one to Nirmal Babu[3]. When I left Noakhali Manu suggested that I should take along this umbrella because I would have to do a lot of walking in the sun and it would be a good covering for the head. This can be made anywhere. It can be made even here. The other kind of

[1] A broad straw hat which Gandhiji used as an umbrella

[2] From November 6, 1946 to March 1947

[3] Nirmal Kumar Bose, a professor of Calcutta University, who accompanied Gandhiji as his interpreter on his walking tour of Noakhali

umbrella needs a handle while this has no handle. When it is windy we can tie the string attached to it round the face.

The *bhajan* that was sung today, though well sung, is really a morning *bhajan*. In this *bhajan* we pray to God to wake up. But God is always awake. He never sleeps. But there is a belief in Hinduism that when dawn breaks everyone must wake up. The devout go round calling everyone to arise. We have *bhajans* for the morning, *bhajans* for the noon, *bhajans* for the evening and *bhajans* for the night. Only musicologists know all the subtle distinctions. I do not know much but since some *bhajan* or other is sung here every day I have come to have some idea.

I have a long letter apparently written by a Hindu. He says I have learnt nothing and am still friendly with Muslims, though I have been repeatedly told how stupid it is to imagine that any Muslim can be our brother or be loyal to the Indian Union. If there are any such, he says, I should keep them and send the rest away. If I did not do so, what would happen, he asks, in case, God forbid, a war broke out between India and Pakistan. Do I imagine that the several crores of Muslims in India will be loyal to India and fight against Pakistan? It is easy to pose such questions but difficult to answer them. All that I can say is: Wherever we may choose to live, if we want to live as men we must not assume anyone to be bad till he has been proved to be bad. If you read newspapers you will know that recently about one lakh of Muslims had gathered in Lucknow.[1] One cannot believe that there was not a single Muslim Leaguer among them. There must have been some, even if there had been no League leaders. If later they betray you, you can shoot them. You may shoot one or two or a certain number. Everyone will not be disloyal. Nowhere in the world can everyone be disloyal. Therefore the correspondent writes out of ignorance. But today he is angry. The barbarities the Muslims have committed are on his brain. He wants all Muslims to be driven out. If similarly Pakistan says that Hindus have committed barbarities here and they should be driven out, I shall say it is foolish to say so. It will be the limit of folly. It is this attitude that was responsible for the partition of the country. If you want to bring the two together,

[1] At the Indian Union Muslims' Conference, which met on December 27 and 28, Abul Kalam Azad called for the winding up of the Muslim League in India. The Conference unanimously adopted a resolution asking Muslims in India to dissolve all communal and political organizations and advising them to join the Congress.

that can be done only if we become good. Only the good and the noble can be brave. Stupid people can never be brave. Today the poison around us is only increasing. Kashmir has added more poison. If there is a war both countries are going to bleed. I do not wish to be alive to see that. I do not wish to be a witness to that carnage. I can only pray to God and ask you all to join in the prayer that He may take me away. Why should we not so conduct ourselves that any conflict between India and Pakistan becomes impossible? We must be brave and trust the Muslims. If later they violate the trust you can cut off their heads. But you cannot say that if anyone refuses to go to Pakistan his head should be cut off. This means cutting off millions of heads on both sides of the border which would be the limit of madness. There are now perhaps thirty or thirty-five millions of Muslims in India. If we harass them we shall not survive as a nation nor can our Hinduism. I pray to God that He may cure us of this folly and this madness so that our country which has advanced may continue to make progress. Today we seem to be falling and the sort of letter that the correspondent has written gives further impetus to the fall. The note is written in English. He writes English quite well, but I cannot praise him for that.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 260-1

316. IS IT DESERVED?

NEW DELHI,
January 3, 1948

In the course of a long letter which Reverend Dr. John Haynes Holmes[1] had written to me before leaving the hospitable shores of India, he writes:

> Of course you have been sad, well-nigh overborne, by the tragedies of recent months, but you must never feel that this involves any breakdown of your life-work. Human nature cannot bear too much—it cracks under too great strain—and the strain in this case was as terrific as it was sudden. But your teaching remained as true and your leadership as sound

[1] (1879-1964); a pacifist, founder of a non-sectarian community church in New York; Editor of *Unity* in which Gandhiji's *Autobiography* was first published in America; author of *My Gandhi*

Dr. Haynes Holmes came to India on October 5, 1947 as Tagore Memorial Professor at the Banaras Hindu University under the auspices of the Watumul Foundation. He met Gandhiji on October 12, 1947.

as ever. Single-handed you saved the situation, and brought victory out of what seemed for the moment to be defeat. I count these last few months to be the crown and climax of your unparalleled career. You were never so great as in these dark hours.

I wonder if the claim can be proved. That much more than Dr. Holmes observed can be proved of ahimsa, I have not the slightest doubt. My difficulty is fundamental. Have I attained the requisite qualifications for exhibiting the virtues of ahimsa, even as Dr. Holmes has said? Knowing as I do the working of ahimsa, however imperfectly, I see every reason for the utmost caution in advancing claims that cannot be proved beyond a doubt.

M. K. G.

From a photostat: C. W. 10971. Courtesy: Rogers W. Holmes. Also *Harijan*, 11-1-1948

317. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER[1]

January 3, 1948

I have your angry letter. How can I tolerate your being so angry? When iron is heated sparks fly from it. But however much one may strike it with a hammer, the hammer does not become hot. If you can only make yourself like a hammer everything will come about as you desire. For the rest, if the sea catches fire what can anyone say?

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 218

318. LETTER TO SAVITRI BAJAJ

January 3, 1948

CHI. SAVITRI[2],

Kamalnayan told me that you have had a baby and that you had afterwards developed a fever. I hope by now it is gone and you are both well.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 3062

[1] This was addressed to a woman.
[2] Wife of Kamalnayan Bajaj, son of Jamnalal Bajaj

319. LETTER TO HEMPRABHA DAS GUPTA

NEW DELHI,
January 3, 1948

CHI. HEMPRABHA,

I have your letter. What do we lose if we do not get a certificate from the Charkha Sangh? In my opinion we only gain as our aim is to serve khadi and thus the Charkha Sangh.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 2741

320. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 3, 1948

It does not appear likely that I shall be able to get out of here. I have to do or die. You may think there is peace in Delhi. But that peace is not the peace of the hearts. It is imposed by arms. I am waiting for the call from within. I have here three or four girls in attendance. I am living in the palatial Birla House. But I find no rest. The girls are serving me well. For the time being I do not feel the need to call upon your services. Of course the girls can leave whenever they want with my permission. Only Manu has a part in this *yajna*. The rest of the girls are here only accidentally. They can go as they came. I have to admit that Manu's service in this *yajna* has been significant. Only, she has been neglecting her body.

How are you all? How is Khadi Pratishthan doing? How many people are there in the Ashram? Ashrams should not depend on outside help. About Sevagram I have come to the conclusion that it should either become self-supporting or it should be closed down. The Ashram has become like a *pinjrapole*[1].

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 218-9

[1] A shelter for old and sick cattle

321. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 3, 1948

I am nowhere near realizing Rama yet, but I am striving. When I have the realization, the glow of my ahimsa will spread all around.

The situation here is extremely perilous. About Kashmir Mountbatten is doing all he can. Whatever may happen, Bengal and Bihar must be spared the conflagration. If there is the slightest disturbance there you will not find me alive. Let everyone have this message of mine.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 217

322. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 3, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am happy to be able to fulfil the promise I made to you to visit the camp and speak a few words to you. I am also happy to observe that there are almost as many women in the camp as there are men. First of all I shall request you to join me in the prayer that peace and love may again be established in India and the world and all men may become brothers. Today there is no peace to be seen anywhere in the world. Peace cannot be established with the help of money. So long as there is no peace in the heart there can be no peace outside. Only when peace issues from within the heart and is expressed through the eyes, words and actions of men can we say that peace has been established. A man of peace can live happily even in a mud hut and has no thought of the morrow, for it is only God who knows what will happen on the morrow. Shri Ramachandra, who was a man like us, had no idea when he was about to be installed on the throne that he would have to go into exile. But he realized only too well that

[1] Held at Wavell Canteen Refugee Camp

securing peace was not the same thing as securing a throne and that peace was not dependent on external conditions. Therefore when he knew that he had to go to the forest his peace was not ruffled. If Hindus and Sikhs could have that realization the madness that has seized them would have been cured and, whatever the actions of the Muslims, they themselves would have remained calm. If Hindus and Sikhs even now realize this, I am sure it will have the most desirable effect on the Muslims.

I am told that this camp is being very well managed. I cannot accept this assurance fully till I know that the refugees too fully participate in keeping the camp clean and that they co-operate with the officials in every way. I know how dirty the streets of Delhi are. One can only say that the camp is well managed when it is made to look at least cleaner than the roads of Delhi. I know the sufferings you have had to bear. Some of you have come from well-to-do homes. You must not hope here for the comforts you had in the past. You must learn to adapt yourselves to the new situation and try with patient labour to improve your conditions.

I remember how on the eve of the Boer War in 1899 Englishmen had left the Transvaal for Natal. They knew how to face hardships. They all lived the same way. One of them was an engineer and worked with me as a carpenter. We have been a slave country for centuries and we have not learnt this virtue. Now that we are free—and freedom is a precious thing —I hope our refugee brothers and sisters will learn something from their sufferings and make this an ideal camp so that people, if not from all over the world, least from all over India, can come and visit it and take pride in it. The hymn that has been sung in the prayer just now means that we should surrender to God all that we possess and take from it only the barest minimum for our needs. If we act in conformity with this hymn, not only this camp but the whole of Delhi will breathe a new life and all our hearts will be filled with an inner joy.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy : All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 261-2

323. QUESTION BOX[1]

Q. It does not matter whether the lingua franca be called Hindi or Hindustani; in any case the common language in actual use will remain Hindustani. It cannot, however, be gainsaid that in advanced literature and science certain words will be necessary which can only be derived from Sanskrit. Where is the harm in making this clear to the public?

A. The first part of the question would be correct provided the name adopted were accepted by all in the same light. The controversy arises not over the name but what it is meant to convey. In advanced literature and science we should not draw exclusively from Sanskrit. A small committee can be appointed to prepare a dictionary of current words irrespective of their original source.

Q. With regard to the script, it would be burdensome to have to use two scripts in the conduct of the affairs of the nation. Why not then adopt the Nagari script which is current in all provinces? Does the two-script proposal mean that the Central Government should use both the scripts in its correspondence and publications? Would telegraph and other offices also have to use both the scripts?

I do not subscribe to the view often put forward that the two-script proposal is meant to appease the Muslims. Our concern should be to select the script which might be advantageous to the nation as a whole without wishing any injustice. It would not be correct to hold that the adoption of the Nagari script would be harmful to Muslim interests. As far as I can see, it would be necessary to adopt both the scripts, but only as a temporary measure—ultimately one script should be acceptable to all. How can this be disputed?

A. With the adoption of the two scripts, the easier one will ultimately survive. All that is wanted is that the Urdu script should not be boycotted, as such boycott would imply discrimination. A controversy arose over such discrimination and this has now been accentuated. With this background, we who believe in unity and are opposed to civil strife are bound to adopt both the scripts. Again we cannot forget that many Hindus and Sikhs are ignorant of the Nagari script. There is

[1] A Hindi version of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 11-1-1948. The questions were sent by Rameshchandra of Shillong; *vide* p. 360.

no question of all people having to learn both the scripts, but only of those liable to serve outside their province. Nor is it suggested that all notices should be issued by the Central Government in both the scripts—but only those meant for all.

Having regard to the present communal antagonism, the boycott of the Urdu script would be regarded as an anti-democratic measure.

The question whether telegraph and other offices would also have to use both the scripts is a minor one. When we get rid of the incubus of the English language and the Roman script, our minds will be clearer and we shall realize the futility of such controversies.

While we must always refrain from an improper course with the object of appeasing others, there is no harm in conciliating when the course itself is intrinsically proper. If all accepted our script willingly, it would be so good, but even to achieve this end it is necessary to retain both the scripts at present.

NEW DELHI, January 4, 1948

Harijan, 11-1-1948

324. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 4, 1948

Who knows what will happen tomorrow? Everything about me is uncertain. But I am moving towards light. Your leucorrhoea must be cured. You should abstain from salt. Pulses in this disease are as poison. So are spices. Hip-baths, mud-packs on the stomach and rest are necessary. Had you been here I would have made you fast. But I have full faith that if you resort to these external remedies and recite Ramanama with your whole heart, you will certainly be cured of the disease. In India 75 per cent of the women suffer from this ailment. The main reason is the feeling of shame associated with it, total ignorance about the matter and unnatural eating and living. It will not be wrong to say that our sisters do not have any idea of how terrible and painful this disease is. I have made up my mind that if I can extricate myself from my present involvements my first task will be to tackle all these diseases of women through nature cure. But today this seems fanciful.

Chand is not yet fully restored. Her disease is more of the mind than of the body. Abha and Manu are well. Sushila is

due here today from Bombay. I write this in the early morning. Even if I can write to you only occasionally, you should write to me regularly. The rest from Manu.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 225-6

325. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER[1]

January 4, 1948

Children should not write in pencil. They should not use a fountain-pen. Writing with a reed pen improves the handwriting. I hope you help your mother with domestic chores and regularly spin half an hour every day. You should do physical exercises and make your body strong. I hope you have learnt to make *chapatis* and cook vegetables. Anyway you will tell me when we meet. Be cheerful and happy. Manu will write the rest.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 225

326. LETTER TO M. B. GODBOLE[2]

NEW DELHI,
January 4, 1948

BHAI GODBOLE,

I have your letter. The first book was a translation of Dr. Lindlahr's book, was it not? Are there any other books by him?

I no longer hold the view I had held earlier. Greater experience has convinced me that Dr. Lindlahr's book is quite ordinary. His book has gained very little currency in America. Anyway you may send me your book. I would like to see it

[1] This was addressed to a young girl.

[2] This was in reply to the addressee's letter dated December 30, 1947 requesting Gandhiji to send a foreword for his translation of Dr. Lindlahr's *Practice of Nature Cure*.

CWMG-XC

when I have some leisure. The publication of the book should not be held up for the sake of my foreword.

I feel grateful that you have agreed to render some help at Uruli. You should go there and see things for yourself. It has a trust of which Dr. Mehta is one of the trustees. There is no harm in doing that. I am writing to the Secretary of the Trust about your letter.

From the Hindi original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

327. LETTER TO RAJA OF AUNDH

NEW DELHI,
January 4, 1948

RAJA SAHEB[1],

I have your letter.[2] You are doing good work. May God grant you success.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

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

328. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 4, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I have been a little late today because it had been raining and I was told that I should be in no hurry for I might not find many people here. But I said that no matter how small the audience, it was my duty to be present. There was also some other business to attend to and this took a few minutes. I thank you for having come in spite of the rain and it gives me much satisfaction that there are so many of you. It shows that you are keen on the prayer. If you have come merely out of curiosity then it has no value.

[1] The addressee was the first to introduce full responsible government in the State in 1939. Aundh was one of the eight States which made up the United Deccan State formed on December 20, 1947, at Miraj.

[2] For details, *vide* p. 374.

Today there is talk of war everywhere. Everyone fears a war breaking out between the two countries. If that happens it will be a calamity both for India and for Pakistan. India has written to the U. N. because whenever there is a fear of conflict anywhere the U. N. is asked to promote a settlement and to stop fighting from breaking out. India therefore wrote to the U. N. O. However trivial the issue may appear to be, it could lead to a war between the two countries. It is a long memorandum and it has been cabled.[1] Pakistan's Zafarullah Khan[2] and Liaquat Ali Khan[3] have since issued long statements. I would take leave to say that their argument does not appeal to me. You may ask if I approve of the Union Government approaching the U. N. O. I may say that I both approve and do not approve of what they did. I approve of it, because after all what else are they to do? They are convinced that what they are doing is right. If there are raids from outside the frontier of Kashmir, the obvious conclusion is that it must be with the connivance of Pakistan. Pakistan can deny it. But the denial does not settle the matter. Kashmir has acceded to India. And India has accepted the accession upon certain conditions. If Pakistan harasses Kashmir and if Sheikh Abdullah who is the leader of Kashmir asks the Indian Union for help, the latter is bound to send help. Such help therefore was sent to Kashmir. At the same time Pakistan is being requested to get out of Kashmir and to arrive at a settlement with India over the question through bilateral negotiations. If no settlement can be

[1] On January 1, 1948, the Government of India submitted a formal complaint to the Security Council. *Vide* Appendix IV.

[2] At a Press conference at Karachi, on January 1, Mohammad Zafarullah Khan, Pakistan Foreign Minister, denying Pakistan's complicity in the attack on Kashmir had stated: "Kashmir on all sides was surrounded by predominantly Muslim areas and realizing that something was to be done to help the Kashmir Muslims in their plight, individual Muslims from the surrounding areas did whatever they could to bring help."

[3] Denying the charges of aggression and looting, the Prime Minister of Pakistan had, among other things, stated on January 3: "There are some who are helping the forces of the Azad Kashmir Government, who have come from tribal areas because of the reports . . . of the general massacre of Muslims that had been going on in Kashmir by armed bands of Hindus, Sikhs and troops of the Maharaja." He claimed that "the conspiracy and plans for the occupation of Kashmir by Indian troops were laid well in advance and the excuse that India sent her troops because of the so-called invaders having entered Kashmir territory, was only intended to deceive the world." He further said that "we made it clear that we had no control over the forces of the Provisional Government of Kashmir or the tribesmen, engaged in fight."

reached in this way then a war is inevitable. It is to avoid the possibility of war that the Union Government has taken the step it did. Whether they are right in doing so or not God alone knows.

Whatever might have been the attitude of Pakistan, if I had my way I would have invited Pakistan's representatives to India and we could have met, discussed the matter and worked out some settlement. They keep saying that they want an amicable settlement but they do nothing to create the conditions for such a settlement. I shall therefore humbly say to the responsible leaders of Pakistan that though we are now two countries—which is a thing I never wanted—we should at least try to arrive at an agreement so that we could live as peaceful neighbours. Let us grant for the sake of argument that all Indians are bad, but Pakistan at least is a new-born nation which has moreover come into being in the name of religion and it should at least keep itself clean. But they themselves make no such claim. It is not their argument that Muslims have committed no atrocities in Pakistan. I shall therefore suggest that it is now their duty, as far as possible, to arrive at an amicable understanding with India and live in harmony with her. Mistakes were made on both sides. Of this I have no doubt. But this does not mean that we should persist in those mistakes, for then in the end we shall only destroy ourselves in a war and the whole of the sub-continent will pass into the hands of some third power. That will be the worst imaginable fate for us. I shudder to think of it. Therefore the two Dominions should come together with God as witness and find a settlement. The matter is now before the U. N. O. It cannot be withdrawn from there. But if India and Pakistan come to a settlement the big powers in the U. N. O. will have to endorse that settlement. They will not object to the settlement. They themselves can only say that they will do their best to see that the two countries arrive at an understanding through mutual discussions. Let us pray to God that He may spare us the threatened strife, but not at any price. All that we may pray to God is to grant that we may either learn to live in amity with each other or if we must fight to let us fight to the very end. That may be folly, but sooner or later it will purify us.

Now a few words about Delhi. I came to know of the incidents which took place last evening through Brijkishan. I had gone to the Camp[1] for the evening prayer. I came away after the

[1] Wavell Canteen Refugee Camp

prayer but he had stayed over to talk to the people in the Camp. There are some Muslim houses at a little distance from the Camp. About four or five hundred inmates of the Camp—mostly women and children but also some men—issued out of the Camp to take possession of the houses. I am told they did not indulge in any kind of violence. Some of the houses were vacant. Some were occupied by the owners. They tried to take possession even of the latter. The police were near at hand. They immediately went to the spot and brought the situation under control at about 9 O'clock according to the newspapers but about 11 O'clock according to the information I have. The police have stayed on there. I understand they had to use tear gas. Tear gas does not kill but it can be pretty painful. I am told that something has happened today again.

All I can say is that it is a matter of great shame for us. Have not the refugees learnt even from their immense suffering that they have to exercise some restraint? It is highly improper to go and occupy other people's houses. It is for the Government to find them shelter or whatever else they need. Today the Government is our own. But if we defy our own Government and defy the police and forcibly occupy houses the Government is not likely to continue for long. It is still worse that such things should happen in the capital city of India where there are so many ambassadors from all over the world. Do we want to show them the spectacle of people occupying whatever they can? It is all the more regrettable that women and children were used as a shield. It is inhuman. It is like Muslim rulers keeping a herd of cows in the vanguard of their armies to make sure that the Hindus would not fight. It is uncivilized, barbaric behaviour. It is still more barbaric to put women and children in front to provide against the police making a lathi charge. It is abuse of womanhood. I must humbly ask all the refugees—women and children—not to behave in this way. Let them settle down. If they don't, then apart from a war between India and Pakistan, we may kill ourselves in mutual strife. We may lose Delhi and make ourselves the laughing-stock of the world. If we want to keep India a free country, we must stop the things that are at present going on.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy : All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 263-7

329. LETTER TO R. R. DIWAKAR

[*January 4/5, 1948*][1]

BHAI DIWAKAR[2],

I wrote something about what you had written [to me]. Why is it not possible to follow my suggestion? Such things do hold up the work.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

330. LETTER TO MAHMUD

[*January 4/5, 1948*]

BHAI MAHMUD,

What is this?

Do return to me the certificate I had given for that person, if you have not already torn it up.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] In the source this and the following two letters are placed between those of January 4 and 5, 1948.

[2] The addressee was a member of the Congress Constitution Committee appointed by the A. I. C. C. for revising the constitution of the Congress. *Vide* Appendix I (7).

CWMG - XC

331. LETTER TO RAMESHCHANDRA

[*January 4/5, 1948*]

BHAI RAMESHCHANDRA,

I am sorry that I could not meet you. The answers to your questions I am forwarding to *Harijan Sevak* and you will find them there.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

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

332. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

January 5, 1948

CHI. JIVANJI,

What I have sent this time is worth thinking over. The Gujarati items need not be translated into English there, nor the English into Gujarati or Hindustani. Some of the Hindustani items will have to be translated into Gujarati there. We try to send reports of my daily speeches in Hindustani, in such language as I actually use but with some revisions, and it is not, therefore, necessary to translate the speeches from English into Gujarati. It will do even if you give only summaries from the Hindustani reports. This will mean that the editions of *Harijan* in all the three languages will be self-contained and independent of one another. It remains to be seen whether we can attain this ideal. I cannot say how long I shall be able to cope with the work involved. Let us try, however.

A good many Hindustani articles by Sundarlal have accumulated. I think it is high time they are taken up. I exact pretty hard work from him. His Hindustani seems to be the real thing and of excellent quality. It is the speech of ordinary people in North India.

[1] *Vide* pp. 352-3.

Please let me know if you have any comments to make on this.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]
Will it be all right if I send the final instalment on Wednesday ?

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9991

333. LETTER TO VIJAYA M. PANCHOLI

NEW DELHI,
January 5, 1948

CHI. VIJAYA[1],

Are both of you all right? If the mind is cheerful there is no danger of the body getting ill.

It is now time for the prayer and, therefore, I must stop here.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 7153. Also C. W. 4645. Courtesy: Vijaya M. Pancholi

334. LETTER TO NRISIMHAPRASAD K. BHATT

NEW DELHI,
January 5, 1948

CHI. NANABHAI,

I got today your letter dated the 1st. Your birthday falls on the 7th. Now tell me how my blessings in writing can reach you [in time]. Even a telegram may not. These days a telegram takes four days. You of course have my blessings in spirit, because it is my own work that you are doing. And my blessings are always with any work that is mine.

You will certainly come personally when you can.

How is your health these days?

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] Wife of Manubhai Pancholi

CWMG - XC

335. NOTE TO MUSLIMS[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 5, 1948

It would be more helpful if you could supply some proof in its support. Moreover I have been receiving complaints that Muslims too have arms in plenty in their possession. Therefore, first you should persuade the Muslim brothers and get the arms from them and hand them over to me. And then if the Government fails to provide protection to them I will die first, before letting them die.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 323

336. NOTE TO SUBHADRA GUPTA[2]

NEW DELHI,
January 5, 1948

If a girl like you had not come to me with such a complaint and instead if I were to hear that Subhadra had been killed, while trying to save Muslims from Hindus, I would dance for joy. I feel that only when Hindu men and women thus bravely sacrifice their lives will this conflict end.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 233

[1] Who had come with the complaint that Hindus harassed Muslims living in Hindu localities and that they were armed as well

[2] The addressee had mentioned the harassment of the Muslims at the hands of Hindus.

CWMG - XC

337. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 5, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am being flooded with letters and telegrams congratulating me on the lifting of controls on most things and pleading that the controls which still remain should be lifted. I give below the substance of an English letter, written by a successful businessman. The letter says:

> As desired by you I give below the comparative prices of white sugar, jaggery, brown sugar and other articles of food before and after lifting of controls.

Current rates		Rates in November before lifting of controls
Sugar	Rs. 37-8 a maund	Rs. 80 to 85 a maund
Jaggery	Rs. 13 to 15 ,, ,,	Rs. 30 to 32 ,, ,,
Brown Sugar	Rs. 14 to 18 ,, ,,	Rs. 37 to 45 ,, ,,
Sugar Cubes	11 As. a packet	Rs. 1-8 to Rs. 1-12 a packet
Sugar *deshi*	Rs. 30 to 35 a maund	Rs. 78 to 80 per maund

It will be noticed that prices of sugar have fallen by 50 p. c.

Wheat	Rs. 18 to 20 a maund	Rs. 40 to 50 a maund
Rice Basmati	Rs. 25 ,, ,,	Rs. 40 to 45 ,, ,,
Maize	Rs. 15 to 17 ,, ,,	Rs. 30 to 35 ,, ,,
Gram	Rs. 16 to 18 ,, ,,	Rs. 38 to 40 ,, ,,
Mung	Rs. 23 ,, ,,	Rs. 35 to 38 ,, ,,
Urad	Rs. 23 ,, ,,	Rs. 34 to 37 ,, ,,
Arhar	Rs. 22 ,, ,,	Rs. 32 ,, ,,
Pulses :		
Gram	Rs. 20 ,, ,,	Rs. 30 ,, ,,
Mung	Rs. 26 ,, ,,	Rs. 39 ,, ,,
Urad	Rs. 26 ,, ,,	Rs. 37 ,, ,,
Arhar	Rs. 22 ,, ,,	Rs. 32 ,, ,,
Oil :		
Mustard	Rs. 65 ,, ,,	Rs. 75 ,, ,,

> Following lifting of controls the market is inundated with woollen and silken textiles. Their prices have fallen by 50 p. c. and at some places by 66 p. c.

[1] As Gandhiji was observing silence, this was read out after the prayer.

CWMG - XC

In the expectation that control on cotton textiles will be lifted their prices are slowly falling. If the control is lifted then the prices are likely to fall by 60 p. c. This will lead to competition among the various mills and make cloth more easily available. But if control on cotton textile is lifted the export of cloth from India should be banned for at least three years. In Government offices they merely play mysterious games with the figures of statistics. They should not hinder the implementation of decontrol. Presumably petrol was controlled on account of the exigencies of war and can now be decontrolled. The truth is that control on petrol has benefited only a few transport companies which have now a vested interest in keeping the control. It does not benefit the masses. It need hardly be pointed out that a single bus or truck which has a permit to ply on one particular stretch of road will be able to make Rs. 15,000 a month. If the control on petrol is lifted one cannot earn more than Rs. 300 a month out of one vehicle. Today petrol permits are freely being sold. A petrol permit for one lorry can easily be sold to a transport magnate for as much as Rs. 10,000. If control is lifted the various problems before the country such as food, housing and so on will be solved by themselves. Please try to have the control on petrol lifted and help the masses who are suffering on account of control. A free India should have no use for controls.

It seems to me that there is not much one can say when faced with these figures. Maybe I am ignorant, those with more knowledge should correct me.[1] When people by and large want a thing there is no room left for any hesitation in a democracy.

It is said that India consumes merely one per cent of the amount of petrol produced in the world. There is no cause for despair in this. After all our road transport does go on. But does it mean that because we are not a warlike people we do not need more petrol? Or if we need more, will there be shortage for the rest of the world? Let not the learned laugh at my ignorance. I seek light. If I hide the darkness I cannot get light. The question is: If so little petrol falls to our share, how is it that huge stocks of petrol are available in the black market?

If the situation described by the correspondent really prevails it is shocking. It means that controls are a boon to the rich and a bane for the poor. And yet it is in the name of the poor that the controls are imposed. If that is how monopoly

[1] Commenting on this, A. D. Gorawala, former President of Commodities Prices Board, said in Bombay that the prices quoted before decontrol were black-market prices and that "reports from various areas of Bombay showed that after decontrol prices had risen from 50 to 100 per cent above the controlled rates" for wheat and sugar.

CWMG - XC

functions it should be done away with without a moment's thought.

As for cloth, if we have not forgotten khadi which has been described as "the livery of freedom"[1] there is no possible argument for continuing the control over it. We have enough cotton and we have innumerable hands which can work the looms and the wheels in the villages. We can thus produce without difficulty enough cloth for ourselves. It needs neither the noise of the cities nor motor transport. In former times the railways first served the need of the army. Its second task was to carry cotton to the ports and carry cloth into the interior from the ports. Now our calico is khadi. It is made in villages and is consumed in villages. There is therefore no need of centralization here. Let us not ruin our villages out of our indolence or our ignorance.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy : All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 267-70

338. KHADI CAN REMOVE CLOTH SHORTAGE

A friend writes that khadi can help to remove the shortage of cloth in a matter of six months. For this two conditions will be necessary, viz., (1) that the Central and Provincial Governments should adopt the policy of encouraging spinning and weaving in every village, and (2) that provincial and all-India leaders should put forth greater efforts to popularize khadi.

In my opinion it should be worth while and it is the duty of the Congress to fulfil these conditions for the sake of remedying cloth shortage. Our undoubted indifference in this respect shows that we have failed in our duty. The price of cloth having risen so high, the present is the most opportune time to get over this indifference. This can be done by the example and conduct as well as the wisdom of those who have unshakable faith in khadi. When the Government adopts the policy of promoting the cause of khadi, control over cloth and other commodities will automatically go. Meanwhile also, cloth should be decontrolled in the interests of the poor.

NEW DELHI, January 6, 1948

Harijan, 11-1-1948

[1] By Jawaharlal Nehru. *Vide* Vol. LXV, pp. 446 and 473.

339. CERTIFIED AND UNCERTIFIED KHADI[1]

The same friend, who suggests that khadi can remove cloth shortage, writes that India having attained independence, there is little difference now between certified and uncertified khadi, mill-cloth and foreign cloth. Khadi may have significance for him who spins and weaves to clothe himself, but people are unable to do so or even to spin the minimum quota of yarn prescribed for the purchase of khadi from the bhandars. No improvement is noticeable in the quality of pure khadi, while many useful varieties of uncertified khadi are available. Moreover, it is difficult nowadays to give what can be termed a living wage in the khadi industry. On these grounds the writer observes that the purchase of uncertified khadi should be permitted. He proceeds to argue that having regard to the acute shortage of cloth all over the country and to the fact that the Union Government itself imports foreign cloth, there should be no objection to the purchase of such cloth either.

That such questions can be raised shows the change in the times. My answer is that only "certified khadi" should be used. Let me indicate the meaning of this term. Even the Charkha Sangh's definition is incomplete. The term really implies that a reasonable wage is given to spinners and weavers and the price of khadi fixed with an eye on public good and not with a profit motive. Certification of such khadi by the Charkha Sangh becomes necessary, as people have as a rule, to fall back upon the purchase of khadi in addition to self-made (स्वावलंबी) khadi. Any other khadi is uncertified and open to objection and should not, therefore, be used. It is open to the public to suggest improvements in the conditions presented for the certification of khadi, but it would be definitely wrong to abolish the distinction between certified and uncertified khadi.

Again, how can one shut one's eyes to the distinction between khadi, mill-cloth and foreign cloth, or justify the import of foreign cloth because foreign rule has ended? We must remember that we opposed foreign rule because it involved the

[1] A Hindi version of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak* under the date-line "New Delhi, 5-1-1948".

economic ruin of the country. The first fruit of freedom should, therefore, be to put an end to this curse.

In fine it follows that pure khadi alone has place in swaraj: in it lies the well-being of the people as well as true equality.

NEW DELHI, January 6, 1948
Harijan, 11-1-1948

340. HARIJANS IN HOSTELS[1]

Apropos the recent legislation enacted by the Government of Bombay extending to the Harijans the right of admission to temples, wells, dharmashalas, schools, hostels, etc., Shri Parikshitlal writes that though this automatically covers undenominational hostels as well, school and college hostels have not in actual practice been thrown open to the Harijan students. His experience has been that the school and college authorities have not adapted themselves to the spirit of the times to the extent the hostel students have. As the academic year will soon be over and fresh admissions will be made shortly, he has advised the authorities to do the needful before the Harijan students are forced to assert their legal right in the matter and has also suggested to me to recommend the throwing open of the hostels in Bhavnagar and other Kathiawar States to the Harijan students.

I endorse his suggestion and would add that if the students in the hostels are sincere, they are sure to succeed in the matter. In the present age the autocratic will of the managing committees cannot prevail, particularly when, as in this case, they are in the wrong and the students are in the right. Be that as it may, the Harijan students should unquestionably be admitted to hostels with honour.

NEW DELHI, January 6, 1948
Harijan, 11-1-1948

[1] A Gujarati version of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 11-1-1948 under the date-line "New Delhi, 4-1-1948".

341. LETTER TO SITA GANDHI

4.30 a.m., January 6, 1948

CHI. SITA,

I have your letter. The previous one was long and I could not cope with it. I am writing this immediately after prayers.

It is good that you have decided to go to Phœnix. When you go there you will be able to form your own ideas. Your dream of helping Manilal will also materialize to some extent. Who knows what is in store?

It is good news that Vasant and the baby boy are well. Nowadays they look for names from novels or from the Sanskrit plays. I would know nothing about it. What is in a name? It seldom happens that a person comes to have qualities worthy of his name. As the poet says, "Fondly was the infant given the name of Hari but in infancy did it die."

Pass on the accompanying [letters].

Blessings from
BAPU

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

342. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
4.30 a. m., January 6, 1948

CHI. SUSHILA,

I have had two letters from you, one of which is lying in the heap. The one to which I am replying was received yesterday.

I am glad that Sita is going there. I should not be glad but there is a reason for it.

Your duty seems clear. You must give all possible help to Manilal in his work, forgetting everything else. Ordinarily I would not give such advice, but in this case I have reason for doing so. Since Manilal is engaged in public service, I feel that it would be a great thing if you could identify yourself with him. The statement that ordinarily I would not give such advice refers to cases in which the husband tries to tempt his wife to pleasure.

I should like you to retain only one attachment, giving up all others, and I have explained to you what that is. I am not asking you to look after the children carefully because they are yours, but since they are under your charge you ought to protect them. That would have been your duty even if they had not been your own children. I have tried to follow this rule from a very young age. Manilal knows about it. For you service of the country will be where Manilal lives.

You may do whatever you can to help the struggle there without getting involved in it.

I am glad that you have succeeded in persuading Manilal to take milk and curds. He must be free from all disease.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5021

343. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
5 a.m., January 6, 1948

CHI. MANILAL,

I could get no time at all before now to write to you. I got the mail yesterday and so am writing this letter.

I am forced to the conclusion that your health has suffered because of lack of curds and milk in your diet. In the wide vegetable kingdom nothing has been discovered so far which can serve as a substitute for milk. As long as one keeps fit, one does not feel the need for animal foods, but once the health goes down it cannot be rebuilt without such foods.

Now that Sita is going there, you will get all the help you need. I agree that her studies will suffer there. But she will certainly learn what I believe she ought to learn, namely, whatever she can while helping her parents in their work under their own guidance. This is real economics. I have no time just now to explain why. Probably you don't even need an explanation.

Do what you can in connection with the struggle there which is going to be a difficult one.

I have so far maintained my health in spite of the great pressure of work. God will do as He wills. Sushila[1] was to

[1] Dr. Sushila Nayyar

proceed to America in a few days for further experience. But now those people have on their own put off the visit. Let us see what happens. According to me, what we cannot get in our own country will be of no use to us. But I am not able to convince anybody about this.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5020

344. LETTER TO ILA GANDHI

5.15 a.m., January 6, 1948

CHI. ILA[1],

I suppose you are too busy to spare time to write to me.

Do you still talk a lot? How nice it would be if you took a vow of silence!

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5019

345. LETTER TO ARUN GANDHI

5.30 a. m., January 6, 1948

CHI. ARUN[2],

Yes, I think I did get a note from you.

Build up fine health. Your real education will be what you learn from Manilal. To which school do you go? Do not forget your Gujarati.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5018

[1] & [2] Daughter and son of Manilal Gandhi

CWMG - XC

346. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

NEW DELHI,
January 6, 1948

CHI. ANAND,

I have your letter.

Losing money means being freed of a curse, as the poet sings in the following *bhajan*:

He who has by good fortune found Rama
is blessed with three things:
First, he loses kine, kin, wife,
his wraps and shawls,
his elephants and horses
and is made destitute of all resources.
Second, he is humiliated by the world,
and loses all respect,
he counts for nothing among his kinsmen
and has no friend left.
Third, he suffers bodily affliction.
Day and night he is sickly.
His eyes cannot glimpse happiness.
His life is spent in pain.
In three ways thus he is a pauper.
But he thinks only of Him,
And is ever alight with the knowledge,
That all things are yoked to the Nameless God.
He who does not know these three things,
has really attained nothing.
It is only after suffering many a birth and old age,
That Tukdo has attained to that state.

Why grieve that you cannot hear? The advantages are clear. You have seen my three preceptors—the three monkeys I keep before me. One of them has his hands over his ears. What more shall I say?

Your handwriting is good.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

347. LETTER TO MAHADEV A. HINGORANI

NEW DELHI,
January 6, 1948

CHI. MAHADEV[1],

I was glad to have your letter. To me you were only born yesterday. It does not even occur to me that fifteen years have passed since. Why do you want to meet me? We all meet in thought, indeed. Live long and serve for a long time.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

348. LETTER TO GANGI A. HINGORANI

NEW DELHI,
January 6, 1948

CHI. GANGI,

I have your letter and Anand's also. What do you want to do living alone with me? You must understand that your duty is to live with Anand and living with him to do what service you can.

It cannot be said that you are fully recovered. Get well soon.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

[1] Son of Anand T. Hingorani by his first wife, Vidya

349. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 6, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I hear that even today people have been trying to get into the Muslim houses. The police have been doing their duty and trying to stop them. After all what can the police do? They can only resort to tear gas. I am told that that was what they did. There is plenty of room here. One cannot say that Delhi lacks space. There is no doubt that refugees are in a bad plight. It is not right that they should have to live under the open sky. When it rains it is not enough that they should have only a cloth between them and the sky. Therefore, in distress they resort to anything. But it does not seem right that they should single out only Muslim houses. I told one of them that this was a pretty big house, a large number of men could be accommodated here. They could throw me out and also throw out the ailing woman with me and afterwards the owner. He said that it was easy for me to find accommodation but who would give the refugees any accommodation? I would understand what they are doing if every other recourse had failed and if the people of Delhi had also failed them. But it is not good—it will do us no good to occupy the houses of those we have scared away or driven out.

The police today offered the refugees a few houses which they refused. Let them say clearly that they do not want any Muslims here. It would not be decent but at least it would have the virtue of being a straightforward course. They may say that since the Muslims have killed Hindus in Pakistan they shall kill the Muslims in India or that they do not trust them. But what is happening today is sheer madness.

Our present misfortune is that people unthinkingly indulge in meaningless rowdyism. The mentality seems to be that now that we are a free country we can do what we like. A report from Bombay says that the Government there is in a great difficulty. Dock workers have gone on a strike.[1] Such strikes are

[1] The workers of the engineering department of the Bombay Port Trust were demanding speedy implementation of the Pay Commission's recommendations.

going to be our undoing, to say nothing of the fact that they can bring no benefit to the workers whichever the party behind the strike may be, Congress or Socialist or Communist or any other. Our country today is passing through a critical phase. Our effort should be to tide over the present situation and survive.

I have a letter from the Maharaja of Aundh, a small State in Maharashtra.[1] He had even when the British rule was still strong in India handed over the reins of the government to the people of his State. He and his son felt that they should serve the people. They devised a constitution, had a body elected and made it responsible for the administration. The Maharaja writes that the feeling among the other Rulers is that whatever he may do he should only do along with the other Rulers and that he should not act all by himself. He has almost decided to merge his State with India but he still continues to be the Raja, though only as a servant of his people. He will accept whatever is sanctioned to him by his people. Sardar Saheb feels that the Rulers should be given pensions, unconditionally, whether they functioned as such or not. He has started the process with Orissa.[2] I do not consider it right that the Maharaja of Aundh should be pensioned off. Only he should not interfere in the administration because the State now has responsible Government. But he has been told that the nature of administration in his State cannot be different from what it is in other States that have merged with India. It cannot have separate laws. But I say there is no need for any laws. When the power has been handed over to the people it does not mean that the administration should be conducted from Delhi. If there is a representative government it will have villagers on it. Such a body should run the administration. There should be no need to interfere with its work. Nor can any law be made for interfering with it. Otherwise it would not be popular rule. Popular rule cannot be established by the sword.

A friend writes that only a happy country can be said to have Ramarajya, that we may import goods from outside, but only as much as we can export, so that the trade is balanced. He says this has not been the case with us. We have always been debtors. Lately we have become creditors. But how long can we remain creditors if we keep up the present rate of

[1] *Vide* p. 355.

[2] The administration of the 25 Orissa States was taken over by the Government of India on January 1 and they were merged with the Orissa Province.

spending? What we should do is to have the very minimum of imports and the very maximum of exports. Only then can we have a surplus of foreign exchange.

The fact is that what we import from outside is only our raw material converted into consumer goods. Our aim should be that we should have no need for importing anything or if we import anything it should only be to help other countries. If some country needs money and asks us for it we should be able to send the money. The correspondent is right in saying that so far America alone is such a country. We do not want to be like America but at least we can reduce our imports to match our exports.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 271-4

350. A LETTER

January 7, 1948

The news from Sind causes anxiety.[1] I of course want to go to Sind but with what face can I go? To try to quench the flames elsewhere while one's own house is burning will only make the flames rage more furiously. The better course would be to try and extinguish the fire at home. If one succeeds in that it will also help elsewhere.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 244

[1] On January 6, 184 Sikh refugees from upper Sind had arrived in Karachi in the morning by train. While proceeding in open carriages to the Gurdwara at Ratan Talao, they were followed by a Muslim mob and stoned all the way. Nearly 8,000 Muslims surrounded the Gurdwara, scaled its walls and pounced upon the refugees. The trouble spread through the city and nearly 2,000 shops and tenements, mostly belonging to Hindus, were broken open and property worth one crore was looted. Over 120 Hindus and Sikhs were reported to have been killed.

The authorities, unable to control the situation, called in the troops at 2 p. m. and a curfew was imposed.

CWMG - XC

351. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 7, 1948

To entertain enmity against the shark while living in the sea is not bravery but only folly. Therefore, if you are unable to abide by the rules of the Ashram, you can by all means stay outside and carry on various activities of public service. I have no time to write more.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 244

352. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER[1]

January 7, 1948

. . . Had to go without sleep today. For a while attended to Manu and looked through the post. The pressure of work here is so great that I can cope with the post to some extent only if I attend to it early in the morning immediately after the prayer. Afterwards the rush of visitors begins. I must achieve something or die in the attempt. I cannot say what will happen. I seek light. I can glimpse some rays in the darkness. Only when I attain enlightenment in full, shall heart-unity in Delhi be enduring.

Well, I have managed to write this with great difficulty. How are you all? How is your health? You must keep writing to Manu. She will write the rest. I have not succeeded in bringing her back to health. She wrecked her body in serving me in Noakhali. If she can regain her strength I shall be immensely relieved. If she could follow my advice and give herself rest for a couple of months and be cheerful, I would see about the outward treatment. Today this is not possible. I cannot give her my full attention. If I can bring matters here to some conclusion, my next task will be to make Manu strong as a wrestler. Or else she may well die. . . . This of course I write in jest.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 244-5

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

353. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 7, 1948

I am hoping that we shall be able to achieve something here in a few days. Right now there is a conflagration raging here. Today we have forgotten our humanity. God will show the path He wills us to take. We must not give up the effort.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 244

354. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 7, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I have here several notes and I shall try to deal with as many as I can within 15 minutes.

A friend writes that he has gone on an indefinite fast. All that I can say is that it is not right for him to fast. To resort to a fast thus is a sin. While I am alive I should be consulted because I have much experience of fasting. I shall not go into the matter further.

I am told that students are about to go on a strike. The date set is the 9th. I must say that it will be a wrong step. As I pointed out yesterday, to resort to strikes to gain one's end is not a good thing. I have no doubt in my mind that it is not non-violence. I have conducted many non-violent strikes. It cannot be said that every strike is non-violent and every strike is legitimate. Students should confine themselves to studies and keep away from strikes. I hope they will listen to me. I may again mention that I have had a long experience spanning some fifty years of non-violent strikes. I carried it on successfully not in India but in South Africa. I do not remember any instance when it failed me in anything I had undertaken. It cannot fail. If your cause is just and if what you are doing is the only course open to you, you are bound to succeed.

Today I received visitors from the Punjab, Sind, the Frontier Province and other places—all in Pakistan. They described to

me their sufferings and asked me why I was not doing anything in the matter. How can they know all that I am trying to do? The only reason I am staying on here is that I may be able to get something done somehow for these people. Today I have become weak. Time was when what I said went home. Today it is not the case. Then I was the General of non-violence. Now that time is past. Today mine is a cry in the wilderness. But even if I am alone I must say what is right. People say that the Government is manned by persons who are my co-workers and that they will do whatever I say. It is true that they are my co-workers, but why should they do whatever I say? They will only do what seems right to them. I can plead with them and argue with them. If they see the point, well and good; if not, I am helpless. They might tell me that running a government is full of complications and difficulties, and that if I were in the Government I would find out that I could not do as I pleased. If the Ministers who are my friends, their secretaries and the police, for I am no one's enemy, were all to go by what I said all would be well. The Government can always say that they have not the right type of officials and staff. They are the same people who were there during the British rule. They cannot be turned out either. Whatever the reasons, I cannot make the Government today do all that I want. I am as helpless as any one of you. I am not God. I do only what my strength permits.

But what are the people to do? They have to have shelter, clothing and food. When I myself have all those things, why should anyone be deprived of them? After all they have not committed any crime like assault or murder. They have been hounded out from their homes. They are our brothers and sisters. They have been subjected to indignities and injustice and if even on coming here they cannot live in peace they have the right to turn round and demand why they should be deprived of the necessities of life when they are freely available to others. I admit this is unjust. But I have told them what they can do. The way is not for them to get into anyone's house and occupy it. Their attack should be non-violent. I have also told them which houses are thus to be attacked.

They must also agree to do any kind of work assigned to them to the extent that they can. For instance you may not assign writing work to a man who cannot write. But if you give a pickaxe to a man he should not say that he can only wield a pen. Similarly they should live in any shelter that is given to them, be it a tent or a room. All that is necessary is that

there should be a roof overhead and it should not matter if it is only a thatched roof. Similarly they do not need any cots. One can sleep on straw very comfortably. I know from experience that straw can be as warm as any cotton mattress. Let us accept as a blessing from God anything we can get. If people can learn contentment the few lakhs of refugees can be made reasonably happy. There is plenty of room here. Only their hearts should be clean. Unfortunately the case is the very reverse.

You saw what has happened in Karachi.[1] People used to say that such things could not happen in Sind. I always said that Hindus could not live in peace in Sind. And not only Hindus, even others. That was proved yesterday. They had assembled in a Gurdwara awaiting evacuation. The Gurdwara was attacked. A few were killed, some were injured. The Government says that the situation was brought under control as soon as possible. But in the first place such a thing should not have happened at all. I must tell the Pakistan Government to see that such things do not happen or else they should quit the Government. Maybe if there is no government there will be plunder and looting for a few days. But later the situation will improve. I have the same thing to say to the Government in India. I shall not listen to the Government saying that people cannot be persuaded. If the people cannot be persuaded they must give up the pretext of governing. Both the Governments are the same in my eyes. If the Pakistan Government allows the people to be murdered in this way, the Government will not last long. To you, brothers, I shall only say, do not let yourselves become mad. You must swallow your anger. You must not answer anger with anger and say, 'We will destroy the mosques, occupy them and kill the Muslims.' This will not be just. Such personal vengeance will put an end to the rule of law. Certainly we should provide all reasonable facilities to the refugees. It will be shameful if we do not. We should not be afraid or upset or angry over what has happened in Karachi. In return we on our part should live peacefully. If we can conduct ourselves decently, if we let the Muslims stay on, and if the refugees behave with civility, we shall soon overcome the present painful situation.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 275-9

[1] *Vide* footnote to "A Letter", p. 375.

355. LETTER TO SHANTA NERULKAR

5.45 a. m., January 8, 1948

CHI. SHANTA[1],

I have your letter and also the list sent by you.

I have signed the budget.

I would like the Talimi Sangh to take over everything.[2] It will be a test for you all. If you do not master the art of taking work from other institutions it will be the end of all work. If you are complacent and depend on my help you are likely to repent it. How long can I live? If you have the grace of God you have everything. And I have already defined the condition for obtaining that grace.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

356. LETTER TO E. W. ARYANAYAKUM

5.50 a. m., January 8, 1948

CHI. ARYAM,

I have your two letters. You should find some time and improve your Hindustani and both the scripts. If Asha is not there you should take the help of others who know Hindustani. Why not Meetu's[3] help?

I would like the Talimi Sangh to take up the work of the K. G. N. M. Trust as well. It may be said that I am running a risk here. It is for you, it is your duty, to see whether you can shoulder all the responsibility. The co-operation of all the institutions and people depends upon your tact and friendliness. I can but obtain it for you; it is for you to carry it through and to develop it. Do you understand what I am saying?

[1] Member, Hindustani Talimi Sangh

[2] The reference is to the unification and co-ordination of the four Sanghs as suggested by Gandhiji. *Vide* pp. 222-3.

[3] Addressee's daughter

Ask me if you don't. You could even have written to me in Bengali.

I understand what you say about Ramachandran. I am writing to him.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

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

357. LETTER TO AMINA G. QURESHI

January 8, 1948

CHI. AMINA,

I find your letter very sweet. I think it was no less than your good luck that you could serve Totaram[2]. You are absolutely right that after the late Imam Saheb he was the lone elder in the Ashram. Parikshitbhai had sent me a telegram. Wahid[3] has indeed risen high. If he works hard he is sure to forge ahead as you say. Take care of your health. If you make the proper changes in your diet you will get rid of the redundant fat. Which college does Hamid[4] go to? What is Sultana[5] doing?

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

358. LETTER TO KRISHNADAS GANDHI

January 8, 1948

CHI. KRISHNADAS[6],

It is quite correct that you should write in Hindustani. I am, however, replying in Gujarati.

I am very glad that Manojna[7] co-operates with you. Seek more help from her if you can. She can speedily improve her knowledge of Hindustani and of the two scripts. Then why can't

[1] The letter is not traceable.
[2] Totaram Sanadhya; *vide* pp. 404-5.
[3], [4] & [5] Addressee's children
[6] Son of Chhaganlal Gandhi
[7] Addressee's wife

we devote our entire attention to it? All our [dealings] needs must be in Hindustani, not in Hindi or Urdu. Hence I would not regard the expression *nirvachit*, which has been used in the resolution that we have passed, as Hindustani. There must be a simpler equivalent for it. If *nirvachit* means 'one who has been elected' why can't we say *chuna hua*? This is only by way of an illustration. Why should the letter-heads be in English any more? My point was that it never ought to have been. Anyway now we surely cannot have it, so all such letter-heads should be utilized in some other way. You can cut off the part carrying the print and get a rubber-stamp for the name and address, or have them reprinted. A third way is to score out the printed portions. But that is a method I myself do not like.

Why should our constitution be in English? It should be in beautiful Hindustani. Even now we should have it rendered into Hindustani.[1]

Now about Khadi Pratishthan. An ordinary uncertified khadi bhandar defies us and carries on its business. It competes with us. What Khadi Pratishthan does is not with a view to competing with us; rather, whatever policy it adopts should help us to learn something. If we look at it from this point of view I see a very great difference. Even then we don't propose to act in haste.

I am forwarding your letter to Hemprabhadevi.

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

[1] A committee was later appointed to translate the Constitution into Hindi. It consisted of Ghanshyam Singh Gupta (President), Raghuvira, Kamalapati Tripathi and Haribhau Upadhyaya.

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359. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 8, 1948

Kakasaheb has been here for the last two days. It was with the greatest difficulty that I could find time to talk to him about Hindustani and other things. If he had not himself spoken he might have stayed on for weeks and I might not have found time to talk to him. Innumerable people—men and women—visit me during the day. There is a huge pile of letters to be attended to. The work connected with *Harijan* has to be done. There is not a moment to spare. Usually Manu shaves me. But today I have taken away this work from her. I am lying in the bath, plying the razor and dictating this letter to Manu.

I am not as fit as I should be, which shows weakness of my faith in Ramanama. . . .[1]should go to Rajkot. By staying here he will only deceive himself and others. Man is his own enemy. No one can be the enemy of another. Similarly, no one in the world can harm anyone.

You should give up the craving to live in the Ashram. I have told the few people who are still there to stay there only if they can stand on their own feet.

I had never doubted that the removal of rationing would bring the relief it has brought. The Government hesitated because they were afraid of hurting the vested interests. But can a government be carried on in this way? Nothing is certain about me. There is still much fire smouldering here. One cannot say when it may not leap into flames.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 250-1

[1] Omission as in the source

360. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 8, 1948

I had your letter written in English. First, I must apologize for the delay in answering it. I have not a moment's leisure. Even now I am lying in the bath shaving. Usually Manu performs this service, but today I am doing it myself and I am dictating this to Manu. Such is my plight.

The Bahawalpur situation has got out of hand.[1] Who will mend matters? I am full of anxiety. Panditji[2] comes at least once a day. I shall speak to him. My going there will serve no purpose. If I can achieve something here it will have an impact on the whole of India. Running about from one place to another will achieve nothing. I have to do or die here. Even if I can die bravely it will do a lot of good. Let us see what God wills. We are all in His hands.

You must not rush here, abandoning the people. Even if you die there courageously, it will be well for Bahawalpur.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 251

361. LETTER TO GOVIND BALLABH PANT

January 8, 1948

BHAI GOVIND BALLABH PANT,

Read the enclosed and do whatever is proper.

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

[1] *Vide* pp. 288-9.

[2] Jawaharlal Nehru

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362. LETTER TO MANGAL SINGH

January 8, 1948

SARDARJI,

I got your letter written in English. Why did you write in English instead of in Hindustani? It appears that you have sent copies of the letter to others as well. As I had already replied to it, you would not, I suppose, expect another reply from me. I am already doing what I can with whatever strength I have. I do not hold the reins of the Government.

SARDAR MANGAL SINGH, EX-M.L.A. (CENTRAL)
SHIROMANI AKALI DAL
AMRITSAR

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

363. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 8, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

A correspondent refers to what I had said about the Harijans and drinking.[1] As a matter of fact it was not only Harijans I had mentioned but all others. He asks if only Harijans should give up drinking, what about the soldiers and rich people? It is a silly question. If the rich do not give up drinking, does it mean that others too should not give it up? Even if there is no prohibition drinking does not become a virtue. Does it mean that if others sin we should also sin? Since he has asked me I would tell him that all those who drink should give up the habit. Since the Harijans and the labour class cannot be persuaded the law must persuade them. They take to drink because they are deprived of other comforts of life. They want to drown their poverty in drink. But what reason can there be for the rich and the soldiers to drink? It is not that all the soldiers drink. Even among the English there

[1] *Vide* p. 340.

are many who do not drink. Everyone should give up drinking. The law will apply to all. It will not make any exception in favour of the rich.

I shall speak now of the students' strike. I understand that students who are Congress supporters will not join the strike. It seems the strike was organized by the Communist students. There are all types of students—Communist, Socialist and Congress supporters. I am not concerned with that. I am addressing them all. If the Congress students are not taking part in the strike they deserve to be complimented. I shall advise all the students not to go on strike. It pains me that Communist students are taking this step. Communists are clever people. They too want to serve the country. But this is not the way to serve the country. And why should the students support any particular party? The students form a party themselves. Their job is to study not merely for themselves but for the service of the country. So long as one is a student one is not a Communist, or a Socialist, or a Congressman. One is merely a student devoted wholly to studies. Strike for them will be fatal.

I have a question here. It is a good question. I am asked why I who have been advising everyone to give up evil things don't offer the same advice to Pakistan, why I do not go there and resort to satyagraha. I have answered the question except for the satyagraha part. How can I go to Pakistan so long as we are behaving here as they do in Pakistan? I can only go to Pakistan after India has cleansed herself. I will do or die here. Hindus and Sikhs of Delhi have gone mad. They want all the Muslims here to be driven out. A large number have already gone. They want the rest also to go. There are Sikhs and Hindus in Pakistan who want to come away. But what is the use of satyagraha today? There is no satyagraha and no ahimsa left now. Everyone has become a votary of violence. They want the help of the army and can be happy only when they have such help. Today armed force has replaced God. Today even our newspapers are spreading filth. If people would listen to me, the newspapers would present a very different picture. The correspondent asks: "Since Hindus and Sikhs in such large numbers have been thrown out of Pakistan, where is the place for the Muslims to live? And so long as the same number of Muslims do not leave India, where is the place for the refugees to occupy?" I think that the number of Muslims who have already left equals the number of Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistan. It is madness to demand that the rest

of them should also go because attempts are being made to drive out from Pakistan the Hindus and Sikhs still left there. We still have large numbers of Muslims in India. I am told that the meeting called by Maulana Azad in Lucknow was attended by 70,000 Muslims. It was the largest number of Muslims who attended a meeting in recent times. Must we kill all those Muslims or send them away to Pakistan, and why? I shall never give such shameful advice. There is no bravery in it.

A number of people from Bahawalpur came to see me today. A few persons from Mirpur-Kashmir also came. They are obviously in great difficulty. While they were still talking Panditji dropped in. I asked him to hear what the visitors had to say. The representatives of Mirpur had a talk with Panditji and I hope something will be done. I do not say that all that they want will be done. Although it is not yet a formal war, it is something very similar. In the circumstances it will be difficult to find a way of bringing over all the people marooned there. I am sure the Government will do what it can. But if there are still some people left there who cannot be helped, there is nothing much we can do about it. We do not have enough trains and buses. The Kashmir road is not yet fit for transporting millions of people. It is too narrow.

The Bahawalpur refugees told me that the other refugees could have their names registered for jobs and send in applications, but that all the applications of those coming from Bahawalpur were not being entertained. They asked why there should be such discrimination. They were very polite and reasonable. They said that people coming from the Frontier Province, the Punjab and Sind could apply and were eligible for jobs. I said this could not be true and if there was such discrimination against the refugees from Bahawalpur it must be a mistake. The Sardar has said that there would not be any discrimination. However, I shall find out.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 279-83

364. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

January 9, 1948

CHI. NARANDAS,

The Ashram and [I] are sorry for Chi. Navin[1]. I have to be a mute spectator of whatever happens. Everyone follows his own nature; how can Navin be an exception? I am totally indifferent about this marriage. What could have been your idea in writing to me? How can there be any blessings from me?

I am glad that you undertook the journey.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

365. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 9, 1948

Today this capital city is under a kind of siege. Although India is free the capital of India is protected by the army and the police and I can do nothing but sit here and watch. Votaries of non-violence today have had to put their trust in the weapons of violence. What a severe test it is going to be for us. If this is God's will, what strange design does it hide? But I have to do or die. Those who believe that arms can save Delhi are greatly mistaken. Whether it be Delhi or the world only one thing can save us and that is heart amity.

I have no time at all. There is a heap of letters to be answered. So only this much for today.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 257

[1] Son of Vrajlal Gandhi

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366. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

NEW DELHI,
January 9 [1948][1]

CHI. AMRITA LAL,

I have your letter. I am glad that you wrote it in Hindustani in the Bengali script.

I think Dhiren is committing a mistake. It is a good thing that the marriage is still far away. He has a perfect right to act as he wants. Blessings are unnecessary when the cause is good; they become a curse when the cause is bad.

I have read your letter about Kanaiyo.[2] I am writing to him. My thoughts are firm and clear and I am conveying them to him. It will be good if you read his letters.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C. W. 10425. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

367. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

January 9, 1948

DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM,

Your letter is full of anger. Anger seems to be the food on which you subsist. My simplest statement seems crooked to you. Let it be. Can one help one's nature?

I have never felt that you are a Muslim and I am a Hindu. The only feeling I have is that you are A. S. and I am Gandhi. Where our *atmans* are concerned we are one.

I hold that it is your duty to go to Borkamta. No other question arises if you too believe the same. It is imperative that you go to Borkamta soon. In my view you are the moving spirit behind whatever has been achieved there. It was and still

[1] The source has "1947", evidently a slip, for the addressee's letter under reply was dated December 27, 1947.

[2] Kanu Gandhi and the addressee had expressed their disapproval of Gandhiji's experiment in *brahmacharya* and Abha Gandhi's participation in it.

is your most significant work. Only you can sustain it. At present no one but you can accomplish that work. If you do not ask me for money, that too would be in your interest. Nothing belongs to me; everything belongs to one or the other trust. Wherever you stand you stand in the capacity of my daughter, do you not?

What can be done if you hold a different view despite Bari's and my opinion that you should forget all about Patiala?

Blessings from
BAPU

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

368. TRIBUTE TO BHAURAO PATIL

NEW DELHI,
January 9, 1948

The services of Shri Bhaurao Patil are in themselves a true tribute to him. Yet the activity taken up by the students is worthy of praise. May Shri Bhaurao continue for long to render service.

M. K. GANDHI

G. J. SALUNKE
PRESIDENT, BHAURAO PATIL FELICITATION FUND COMMITTEE
SATARA

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

369. TALK WITH SAURASHTRA DELEGATION[1]

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,
January 9, 1948

What I want is that you should have Nanabhai as your counsellor, even as sage Vashishtha was in Ramarajya. He will not shine more by being the Chief Minister. When there is friction

[1] Which included Manubhai Pancholi, Balwantrai Mehta, Mohanbhai Motichand Gadhadawala and others. They expressed the view that Nrisinhaprasad Kalidas Bhatt should be made Chief Minister in the popular government at Bhavnagar.

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between the ruler and the subjects he can bring them together. He should not transfer his institution[1] to the city. He should continue it in Ambla. I do not feel that Nanabhai will say no. He will not fit too well in the seat of power. His place can only be in the field of education. If everyone becomes Chief Minister, who will make up the subjects? Just as the ministers should be educated so also the people should be educated. Only if the people are educated will they keep the ministers on their toes. Only an educated people can discern the path to freedom. My own view is that Balwantrai should be made Chief Minister. He served the old Bhavnagar State for many years. The qualities that Balwantrai has are not to be found in Nanabhai. And Nanabhai's qualities Balwantrai does not possess. Dhebar alone cannot tackle the problems of Kathiawar. If the entire Kathiawar has only these two I shall have no worry. We cannot burden Dhebar alone with the responsibility of the whole of Kathiawar. In the ceremony Pattani[2] should be kept in the forefront. This is my considered view. But if you invite him only to censure him, then you should not invite him. If we start with prejudices of any kind we shall only frustrate our purpose. You must learn from him. There will be occasions when the State will be able to find a way through difficulties through his experience alone. I am giving my opinion unsought. If you do not like it you can reject it. You should not think that you have to accept it because I say it. If you do anything just to please me, it will not please me but it will harm us both.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 259-60

370. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 9, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I want to say something about a Hindu temple in Bahawalpur. It is still there but is no more in the possession of the Hindus. The chief priest of the temple came to see me today. His name is Bhagwandas. He saw with his own eyes how the temple was attacked and how the Hindus ran for their lives

[1] Gram Dakshinamurty
[2] Anantrai Pattani

by the backdoor. The chief priest also ran away with them. He described to me how he was able to save some women. He could not save them all but quite a number were rescued. He wants me to find a way of bringing over the Hindus still stranded there. I told him that I was doing all that a single individual could do. The Government was trying to do something but it was not easy because one Government should not interfere in the affairs of another. I have said it before and I say it again that what is required at the present juncture is patience. We should not fear death. We must fear dishonour and indignity. To save one's honour one must lay down one's life. If someone is asked to embrace Islam or be prepared to die, he must choose death. Death is inevitable and cannot be avoided for ever. This of course does not mean that we should not do what we can to save ourselves but our ultimate trust should be in God.

A refugee came to see me today. He was not a beggar, nor a poor man. He has known prosperity. He lives in a bungalow nearby. The bungalow belonged to a Muslim who ran away. The refugee friend was a friend of that Muslim. He comes from the place where the Muslim has gone to settle. He told him to go and live in his bungalow. Now he says he has received a notice from the Government asking him to vacate the bungalow which is required for public purposes. I have no doubt that the Government would requisition the house. There are many people, ambassadors and others coming from outside and the Government would want to provide them proper accommodation. After all the Government cannot put up new houses by magic. It is said that sages had this power in former times. It is related in the *Ramayana* how the sage Bharadwaja had made a whole city appear from nowhere with the power of his *mantra*. Today I know of no such *mantra*. I therefore can understand it if the Government requisitions houses when it wants them but it should then provide alternative accommodation to the people living there. If the Government just pushes out the occupants, where are they to go ? I am sure the Government cannot act thus. But if such a notice has been received I cannot really hold out any assurance of help. I myself do not have a house of my own. I am living in another's house. The affected person should approach the Government. I still think that what he says is not correct but if it is, it is a painful matter. I know that anyone lawfully residing in a house cannot be served with such a notice.

I have several other letters. A correspondent attributes to me the statement that in Bombay everyone was allowed to draw one seer of rice per day as his rationed quota. So far as I remember I never said this. In the present conditions of scarcity one seer of rice per day per head would be too liberal an allowance. Still I shall see what I had said.[1] He says the quota is a quarter seer per head, per day. This means one seer in four days. This is not too bad. But in fact I recollect it was only one seer in seven days. But if I had said that the allowance was one seer per head per day it should be taken as incorrect.

There are so many notes and letters that I find it difficult to decide which one to take up. One says that I am staying here in Birla House where poor people cannot enter; formerly when I was in Bhangi Colony poor people could approach me. What he says is true and I like it. I think I had referred to this the first time I came here.[2] I came here at a time when Delhi was in the grip of communal rioting. The town looked like a graveyard. Bhangi Colony had also become crowded with refugees and it was feared that anything might happen anywhere. So the Sardar said that he would not allow me to live there. So they moved me to Birla House. I did not object because after all I cannot make do with a room. There had to be an office and a kitchen, and moreover there are many people living with me. Here I am also within easy reach of the ministers. They do not send for me. They themselves come to me. It is their kindness. It takes them only two minutes to come here. It took them 10 to 16 minutes to go to Bhangi Colony. The Muslim brethren also find it easy to come here while they are scared of going to Bhangi Colony. It will be a great thing if we can save such of them as are left. Today goondaism rules the streets. Anyone going on a bicycle is pulled down and his money or watch is snatched away. Even those travelling in cars are stopped and looted. Such is our present plight. It is a matter of great shame.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 283-5

[1] *Vide* p. 328.
[2] *Vide* Vol. LXXXIX, pp. 167-8.

371. LETTER TO VIJAYA M. PANCHOLI

January 9, 1948

CHI. VIJAYA,

It is after a long time that you seem to have found occasion to write to me. I often think of you.

The answer to your question is the verse which we sing every day at the morning prayer. The prayer, in its entirety, is meant not only to be recited but to be acted upon. This is what the verse means: "Our misfortunes are not real misfortunes, nor are our good fortunes so in fact. Real misfortune is the forgetting of Vishnu, and the highest wealth consists in constantly thinking of Him and trying to see Him in one's heart." Think over this and shed your weakness. Why need one who feels Rama in his heart, bemoan massacres or lose his reason because of them? And, moreover, what about the inhuman conduct we were guilty of on our side? Hence did Narasimha sing: "Let not thy mind be affected by suffering or happiness, for they were created with the body." Think over this. I don't like your being weak. You should go to Panchgani. Accommodation is available there now. Uruli also is a fine place. You should find some time for rest.

Nanabhai must have received my letter.[1]

I have written this letter in great hurry, having put off going to bed for a while.

Look after the children with great care.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7154. Also C. W. 4646. Courtesy: Vijaya M. Pancholi

[1] *Vide* p. 361.

372. LETTER TO SHARDA H. KOTAK

January 10, 1948

CHI. SHARDA,

Harjivan having passed away, your highest good lies in acknowledging your faults when they are pointed out by others. One may only praise the departed for his good qualities. How can Dada[1] realize that even when I was finding fault with you I was only admiring your good qualities? However, irrespective of what I did or did not tell him let me tell you one thing, that I greatly appreciate your strength of character, and as for Harjivan he was simply devoted to you. He believed that whatever *brahmacharya* he could observe he did with the help of your strength of character. He did not look upon it as a great achievement on his part. It was therefore you who succumbed to his entreaties. Thus you fell and brought him down with you. If you never had any respect for *brahmacharya*, raising a family would have been regarded as the normal thing for you as for anyone else. Only he can fall who has risen high. I write all this so that you can be strong in future and may not feel dejected. You should now devote yourself cheerfully to your own work and your own dharma, and conduct yourself as Dada advises.

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

373. LETTER TO GANGADHARRAO DESHPANDE

January 10, 1948

BHAI GANGADHARRAO,

I have your letter. I have always believed in the unification of Karnataka and have loved the idea. I interpret Panditji's statement[2] only to mean that the Central Government cannot

[1] Lakshmidas Asar

[2] Replying to a question on November 27, 1947, in the Parliament, Jawaharlal Nehru said that "the creation of the provinces of Maharashtra and Karnataka raised greater difficulties, as any marked change would probably affect the structure and economy of the provinces concerned. It must be remembered that creation of new provinces would require careful consideration in all its bearings, so that any decision taken would be acceptable to the neighbouring provinces concerned. Every decision must be considered from the point of view of the country as a whole."

take the initiative in determining the boundary. But if the concerned provinces reach a mutual understanding and ask for the Centre's approval, there will be no harm in it. I am keeping well.

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

374. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 10, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It is shocking to see how we have fallen today. Those who pretend to be *sadhus* and boast of self-control and their recitation of the *Gita*, show no self-control at all.[1] But generally these days the prayer meetings are quiet and well-ordered, which is a good thing.

I had been warned that the Bahawalpur refugees would create a disturbance today and would keep on shouting through the meeting.[2] I said it could not be true. I know their sufferings. I assure them that all the Hindus and Sikhs stranded there will be brought over. The Nawab has given the assurance—although I do not know how much one can depend on the assurances of Rajas and Nawabs—that from now on Hindus and Sikhs there will not be subjected to any harassment, that those who want to leave will be allowed to leave under proper arrangements and those remaining will not be asked to embrace Islam. It may be that they are all safe there. The Government too are seized of the matter. You may demand that they should be brought over right now. But you must understand that, though formerly we were one country, we are now two countries and enemies of each other. We try to do what we can. There are seventy thousand Hindus and Sikhs there. In Sind the number is much larger. They are not safe there. I have a telegram from Karachi which says that the situation is

[1] A man wearing a saffron robe had got up and insisted on reading out his letter to Gandhiji. It was with great difficulty that he was made to sit down.

[2] As Gandhiji walked to the prayer ground, the refugees from Bahawalpur staged a demonstration and shouted slogans asking for help for the 70,000 Hindus and Sikhs stranded there. They became perfectly peaceful when Gandhiji sat down for prayers.

much worse than it was described in the newspapers and that the damage done was much greater. The times are such that we must maintain the utmost self-possession and patience. If we lose patience we shall lose the battle. Defeat is a word that should find no place in our dictionary. For this it is necessary not to be provoked into anger. We have to think calmly what we must do.

Today the Iranian Ambassador came to see me. He is a guest of the Government. He said, "Iran and India have always been friends. Both Iranians and Indians come of Aryan stock." He is right. If we look at the *Zend Avesta*, we shall find many Sanskrit words in it. We have also had dealings with each other. The Ambassador said that India was the largest nation in Asia and that Iran sincerely wanted friendship with India. Gurudev[1] had once paid a visit to Iran and he was very satisfied with the visit. The Ambassador told me that the relations between Iran and India ought not to be allowed to deteriorate. I asked him how that could be. Then he referred to an incident involving an Iranian in Bombay. There are many Iranians in Bombay. They run tea-shops there, which are visited by large numbers of Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians. There seems to have been some rioting there. I do not know anything about it. I am told some Iranians were killed. Iranians are after all Muslims. So the rioters must have decided that it was quite all right to kill them. I asked him if he had any complaint to make about the way the Government handled the situation. He said he had none and that the Government had quickly brought the situation under control. He says the Government here too is good, that it has posted armed guards for the protection of the Muslims who are here. He says in Iran Hindu, Sikh and Muslim traders lived together in amity. Exaggerated reports from India are always going there. What may happen in future nobody knows. But the Government in Iran is keeping itself vigilant, and it does not want to weaken its friendship with India for whatever cause.

I still have two minutes, so I take up a letter. The correspondent says that, though some people are happy that the controls on articles of food have been lifted, he would like to warn me that lifting of controls has not been a very good thing and that I have only been getting one-sided information. But when I receive so many wires and letters congratulating me, what

[1] Rabindranath Tagore

am I to say? I cannot reject them saying that they present only one view. I cannot know the opinions of all and I cannot see everything that is happening in the world because I am not gifted with divine sight. The millions of people in India are my eyes and ears, hands and feet. I also want to know the other side. Do not believe in anything simply because I say it. Believe only what your eyes see. You will learn from your mistakes. Do what appears to you right. Only then will you be able to keep your freedom and deserve it.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 285-7

375. "URDU HARIJAN"

Two weeks ago I hinted in the Gujarati columns that the *Harijan* printed in the Urdu script was likely to be stopped as its sale was steadily dwindling. Apart even from financial considerations, I saw no meaning in publishing it, if there was no demand for it. The dwindle to me was a sign of resentment against its publication. I would be foolish if I failed to profit by it.

My view remains unalterable especially at this critical juncture in our history. It is wrong to ruffle Muslim or any other person's feeling when there is no question of ethics. Those who take the trouble of learning the Urdu script in addition to the Nagari, will surely lose nothing. They will gain a knowledge of the Urdu script, which many of our countrymen know. If it was not for cussedness, this proposition will be admitted without any argument. The limitations of this script in terms of perfection are many. But for elegance and grace it will equal any script in the world. It will not die so long at least as Arabic and Persian live, though it has achieved a status all its own without outside aid. With a little adaptation it can serve the purpose of shorthand. As a national script, if it is set free from the bondage of orthodoxy, it is capable of improvement so as to enable one to transcribe Sanskrit verses without the slightest difficulty.

Lastly, those who in anger boycott the Urdu script, put a wanton affront upon the Muslims of the Union who, in the eyes of many Hindus, have become aliens in their own land. This is copying the bad manners of Pakistan with a vengeance. I invite every inhabitant of India to join me in a stern refusal

to copy bad manners. If they will enter the heart of what I have written, they will prevent the impending collapse of the Nagari and Urdu editions of the *Harijan*. Will Muslim friends rise to the occasion and do two things—subscribe to the Urdu edition and diligently learn the Nagari script and enrich their intellectual capital?

NEW DELHI, January 11, 1948
Harijan, 18-1-1948

376. HOW DEMOCRACY WORKS

A valued correspondent has written to me two letters, one issuing a timely warning about the ill effects of hasty decontrol and the other about the possibility of an outbreak of Hindu-Muslim riots. I have dealt with both the letters in a letter which has become unexpectedly argumentative and gives my view of democracy which can only come out of non-violent mass action. I, therefore, reproduce the letter below without giving at the same time the letters to which it is in answer. There is enough in the answer to enable the reader to know the purport of the two letters. I have purposely refrained from giving the name of my correspondent and the scene of action, not because the letters are confidential, but because nothing is to be gained from disclosing either:

> You still write as if you had the slave mind, though the slavery of us all is abolished. If decontrol has produced the effect you attribute to it, you should raise your voice, even though you may be alone in doing so and your voice may be feeble. As a matter of fact you have many companions and your voice is by no means feeble unless intoxication of power has enfeebled it. Personally, the bogey of the shooting up of prices by reason of decontrol does not frighten me. If we have many sharks and we do not know how to combat them, we shall deserve to be eaten up by them. Then we shall know how to carry ourselves in the teeth of adversity. Real democracy people learn not from books, not from the government who are in name and in reality their servants. Hard experience is the most efficient teacher in democracy. The days of appeals to me are gone. The cloak of non-violence which we had put on during the British regime is no longer now necessary. Therefore, violence faces us in its terrible nakedness. Have you also succumbed or you too never had non-violence? This letter is

not to warn you against writing to me and giving me your view of the picture, but it is intended to tell you why I would swear by decontrol even if mine was a solitary voice.

Your second letter about Hindu-Muslim tension is more to the point than the first. Here too you should raise your voice openly against any soft handling of the situation or smug satisfaction. I shall do my part but I am painfully conscious of my limitations. Formerly I could afford to be the monarch of all I surveyed. Today I have many fellow-monarchs, if I may still count myself as such. If I can, I am the least among them. The first days of democracy are discordant notes which jar on the ear and give you many headaches. If democracy is to live in spite of these killing notes, sweet concord has to rise out of this seemingly discordant necessary lesson. How I wish that you would be one of the masters who would contribute to the production of concord out of discord!

You will not make the mistake of thinking that your duty is finished when you have apprised me of the situation in your part of the country.

NEW DELHI, January 11, 1948
Harijan, 18-1-1948

377. HOW TO INCREASE YIELDS?

Bhai Harilal Bawabhai Patel of Gram Dakshinamurty writes:[1]

There is nothing new in Bhai Harilal's suggestion. Nevertheless, those who hold the reins of the country are no farmers. So what has been said above can be of help. Let us find time from political activities and engage ourselves in constructive work, give proper importance to agricultural reforms, teach the farmers as much as possible and learn from them what we can.

If we use farmyard manure or compost it is not necessary to keep the fields fallow. This manure keeps the soil ever fresh. It also does not have to be carried from place to place. After a little experience, such manure can be produced in every village. But these things cannot be done mechanically. Let us glean what knowledge we can find in writings such as above and provide right education to the farmers by carrying on original experiments, and thus benefit them.

NEW DELHI, January 11, 1948
[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 18-1-1948

[1] The letter is not translated here.

CWMG - XC

378. A NOTE

Sunday, January 11, 1948

All natural remedies, i. e., the use of water, air, light, earth and the open sky are to be included. The book will tell people how to keep well and be stronger by the adoption of the natural laws.

From a photostat: G. N. 7833. Also C. W. 4197. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur

379. LETTER TO PRABHAKAR

January 11, 1948

CHI. PRABHAKAR,

I have your letter. What point have I not answered?

It was not good that the man died; but he was released and it has been a test for us.

I do not like the idea of leaving out the Sanskrit *shlokas*. I see no need for the reading to be done in English. Have . . .[1] translated into Hindi and read it.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9042. Also C. W. 9166. Courtesy : Prabhakar

[1] One word is illegible here.

380. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 11, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Only yesterday I complimented you on the calm you maintained in the meeting. But if boys and girls continue to whisper or if women bring children who cry it is not good education for them.[1] If they cannot keep the children quiet they should not bring them to the meeting. I shall request all my brothers and sisters to have the decency to keep quiet and also to keep the children quiet. Continuous conversation during prayer obstructs it. They should realize that God is omnipotent and omnipresent. He hears everything. We must not abuse His silence and mercy.

I have to refer to a painful matter. It concerns Andhra. I have two letters from Andhra. One of them is from an elderly gentleman[2] whom I know and who does not write as a rule. The other is from a young man whom I do not know. There is no use telling you the names because you do not know them. Both say that after August 15, all fear has vanished from people's minds. The British who were feared are gone. There is no fear of punishment and also no fear of God. In Andhra people are of robust health and when they feel that they are free they lose all self-control. Now they do nothing but what will further their self-interest. One of the correspondents bewails the fact that all the sacrifices made by the Congress to see India free has resulted in this. The Congress today is falling. Everyone in the Congress today wants to become an M. L. A. Those who succeed do not work for the country but only for themselves. An M. L. A. gets quite a sizable salary—I do not recollect how much—but it is quite adequate for one's necessities. The correspondent says that the M. L. A.s nevertheless are corrupt and they harass civil servants and try to browbeat them into doing their bidding. In this way both suffer morally—

[1] It being a Sunday, a large number of people attended the prayer meeting.

[2] Konda Venkatappayya; *vide* pp. 405 and 410-1.

civil servants as well as those who call themselves our representatives. The elder correspondent suggests that I should go and live in Andhra and see how things are. But I have lived not only among Andhras but among all classes of people. To me people of every province are Indians even if they speak different languages. If someone says that he belongs to Andhra and has nothing to do with the rest of the country, I too shall have nothing to do with him. He says the rot is spreading amongst us. The more people we return to the assemblies, the greater the amount of filth. The fewer there are the less filth there will be. He therefore suggests that we should reduce the number of M. L. A.s because they do not in any case represent the people. They go into the assemblies to serve their self-interest. They even try to capture the Congress. Then there are others who call themselves Communists or Socialists. They also feel all-important and talk about capturing the whole of India. But who will control India? Socialists and Communists and Congressmen are all Indians. Let us not say that India is ours. Let us rather say that we belong to India. If we make India our own, we must do so not to further our self-interest, not to enrich our relatives or to provide them jobs but to serve.

The women are talking. This is very bad. If you must talk, then come to the dais and make a speech from here. Maybe they do not hear a word of what I am saying. They do not come here to listen. They come here because they have nothing else to do.

A few Muslims came to see me today. They say they have been and still are nationalist Muslims and Congressmen. They say formerly Congressmen had great regard for them but now they have fallen in their eyes. If the Congressmen think so little of them, they should ask them to go and they will go. Let the Government say so, too. In that way they will be spared the assaults and the humiliation that are their lot. Those who met me did not speak only for themselves. They represented all the Muslims. I advised them to keep calm and assured them that the Government was doing all it could. We would see what to do if it failed. Today we must forget that we are Hindus or Sikhs or Muslims or Parsis. If we want to conduct the affairs of India properly we must be only Indians. It is of no consequence by what name we call God in our homes. In the work of the nation, all Indians of all faiths are one. If Hindus say that they will kill Muslims or will not permit them to live in India they will be committing suicide and the Muslims will

be spared the trouble of killing the Hindus. We cannot commit suicide. We are Indians and we must lay down our lives in protecting Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs and all others.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 288-90

381. RACING AND BETTING

A correspondent from Madras writes a pathetic letter on the subject of betting on the race-course and holds that the two go together. If betting went, horse-racing probably would fall flat. It is wholly unnecessary for the sake of the love of horse flesh to have horse races and all their attendant excitement. They pander to the vices of humanity and mean a waste of good cultivable soil and good money. Who has not witnessed as I have, the ruin of fine men caused by the gamble on the race-courses? It is time to leave alone the vices of the West and to strive to adopt the best that it has to give.

NEW DELHI, January 12, 1948

Harijan, 18-1-1948

382. THE LATE TOTARAM SANADHYA

Totaramji has passed away at a ripe old age without requiring any nursing. He was a jewel of the Sabarmati Ashram. Though not a scholar, he had wisdom. He had a treasure of devotional songs and yet he was not an accomplished singer. He used to delight the Ashram by his *ektara*[1] and his devotional songs. His wife was exactly like him. She departed before Totaramji.

Where people live in groups there are bound to be some conflicts. I do not remember any occasion when this couple might have been a party to any such conflict or the cause of one. Totaramji loved the soil. Farming was his very life. He came to the Ashram years ago and never left it. Men and women, young and old, always sought his guidance. He brought unfailing solace to them.

He was an orthodox Hindu. But, he held Hindus, Muslims and people of other religions in equal regard. There was

[1] A one-stringed instrument

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no trace of the feeling of untouchability in him. He had no vices.

He never took part in politics, and yet his love for the country was so great that it could be compared with the best of its kind. Renunciation came to him naturally. He added lustre to it.

This good man had gone to Fiji as an indentured labourer. He was the discovery of Deenabandhu Andrews. The credit for having brought him to the Ashram goes to Benarsidas Chaturvedi.

Till the end of his life it was Amina, Ghulam Rasool Qureshi's wife and Imam Saheb's daughter, who rendered him what service she could.

"Great men live for others" was literally true in the case of Totaramji.

NEW DELHI, January 12, 1948

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 18-1-1948

383. LETTER TO KONDA VENKATAPPAYYA

NEW DELHI,
January 12, 1948

DEAR DESHABHAKTA,

It is refreshing to get a fairly long letter from you. I referred to it yesterday in my prayer speech.[1] What you say is too shocking for words.[2] I cannot move out of Delhi.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 3233

[1] *Vide* pp. 402-3.
[2] *Vide* pp. 410-1.

CWMG - XC

384. LETTER TO PARTHASARATHY

NEW DELHI,
January 12, 1948

DEAR PARTHASARATHY,

Go on as you are doing calmly, patiently and politely.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

385. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

January 12, 1948

CHI. BABUDI,

I have your letter. I should like you not to lose your peace of mind even when nearing death. He or she who has Rama in his or her heart even while lying on sick-bed is in fact serving the people. Goodwill for others is in itself a form of service. To such a person life and death are the same thing. I want you to cultivate such a state of mind.

The rest Sushila will write.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 10083. Courtesy: Sharda G. Chokhawala

CWMG - XC

386. LETTER TO SARAIYA

NEW DELHI,
January 12, 1948

BHAI SARAIYA,

In your article you seem to have missed the point altogether or I have failed to understand it. If a single new coin is offered in exchange for three rupees, don't you think it shows an utterly absurd situation?

What can we say about the innocent?

Blessings from
BAPU

SWASTIK COURT
QUEEN'S ROAD
BAND STAND
BOMBAY

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

387. LETTER TO KEDARNATH SAHNI

NEW DELHI,
January 12, 1948

BHAI KEDARNATH,

I got your letter. Your wife has departed in peace. Hence, there can be no cause for grief. Anyway, the body is destined to perish some day or the other, some now, some later.

It was almost impossible for me to go there yesterday, it was sufficient that Dr. Sushila went.

Blessings from
M. K. GANDHI

KEDARNATH SAHNI
MAGISTRATE
KARNAL

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

388. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 12, 1948

One fasts for health's sake under laws governing health or fasts as a penance for a wrong done and felt as such. In these fasts, the fasting one need not believe in ahimsa. There is, however, a fast which a votary of non-violence sometimes feels impelled to undertake by way of protest against some wrong done by society and this he does when he, as a votary of ahimsa, has no other remedy left.

Such an occasion has come my way. When on September 9 I returned to Delhi from Calcutta, I was to proceed to West Punjab. But that was not to be. Gay Delhi looked a city of the dead. As I alighted from the train I observed gloom on every face. I saw even the Sardar, whom humour and the joy that humour gives never desert, was no exception this time.

The cause of it I did not know. He was on the platform to receive me. He lost no time in giving me the sad news of the disturbances that had taken place in the metropolis of the Union. At once I saw that I had to be in Delhi and do or die.

There is apparent calm brought about by prompt military and police action. But there is storm within the breast. It may burst forth any day. This I count as no fulfilment of the vow to "do" which alone can keep me from death, the incomparable friend. I yearn for heart friendship between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. It subsisted between them the other day. Today it is non-existent. It is a state that no Indian patriot worthy of the name can contemplate with equanimity.

Though the voice within has been beckoning for a long time, I have been shutting my ears to it lest it might be the voice of Satan, otherwise called my weakness. I never like to feel resourceless; a satyagrahi never should. Fasting is his last resort in the place of the sword—his or others.

I have no answer to return to the Muslim friends who see me from day to day as to what they should do. My impotence has been gnawing at me of late. It will go immediately the

[1] As Gandhiji was observing silence, his speech written in English was translated into Hindi and read out after the prayers.

fast is undertaken. I have been brooding over it for the last three days. The final conclusion has flashed upon me and it makes me happy.[1] No man, if he is pure, has anything more precious to give than his life. I hope and pray that I have that purity in me to justify the step. I ask you all to bless the effort and to pray for me and with me.

The fast begins from the first meal tomorrow (Tuesday). The period is indefinite and I may drink water with or without salts and sour limes. It will end when and if I am satisfied that there is a reunion of hearts of all communities brought about without any outside pressure, but from an awakened sense of duty.

The reward will be the regaining of India's dwindling prestige and her fast-fading sovereignty over the heart of Asia and therethrough the world. I flatter myself with the belief that the loss of her soul by India will mean the loss of the hope of the aching, storm-tossed and hungry world. Let no friend or foe, if there be one, be angry with me. There are friends who do not believe in the method of the fast for reclamation of the human mind. They will bear with me and extend to me the same liberty of action that they claim for themselves.

With God as my supreme and sole counsellor, I felt that I must take the decision without any other adviser. If I have made a mistake and discover it, I shall have no hesitation in proclaiming it from the house-top and retracing my faulty step. There is little chance of my making such a discovery. If there is a clear indication, as I claim there is, of the Inner Voice, it will not be gainsaid. I plead for all absence of argument and inevitable endorsement of the step. If the whole of India responds or at least Delhi does, the fast might be soon ended.

But whether it ends soon or late or never, let there be no softness in dealing with what may be termed as a crisis. Critics have regarded some of my previous fasts as coercive and held that on merits the verdict would have gone against my stand but for the pressure exercised by the fasts.

What value can an adverse verdict have when the purpose is demonstrably sound? A pure fast, like duty, is its own reward. I do not embark upon it for the sake of the result it may bring. I do so because I must. Hence I urge everybody dispassionately to examine the purpose and let me die, if I must,

[1] Gandhiji had given no inkling of what was in his mind to his close associates—not even to Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru who had met him shortly before this announcement at the prayer meeting.

This was the fifteenth fast to be undertaken by Gandhiji.

in peace which I hope is ensured. Death for me would be a glorious deliverance rather than that I should be a helpless witness of the destruction of India, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. That destruction is certain if Pakistan does not ensure equality of status and security of life and property for all professing the various faiths of the world and if India copies her. Only then Islam dies in the two Indias, not in the world. But Hinduism and Sikhism have no world outside India. Those who differ from me will be honoured by me for their resistance however implacable. Let my fast quicken conscience, not deaden it.

Just contemplate the rot that has set in in beloved India and you will rejoice to think that there is an humble son of hers who is strong enough and possibly pure enough to take the happy step. If he is neither, he is a burden on earth. The sooner he disappears and clears the Indian atmosphere of the burden, the better for him and all concerned.

I would beg of all friends not to rush to Birla House nor try to dissuade me or be anxious for me. I am in God's hands. Rather they should turn the searchlight inwards, for this is essentially a testing-time for all of us. Those who remain at their post of duty and perform it diligently and well, now more so than hitherto, will help me and the cause in every way. The fast is a process of self-purification.

I told you yesterday of two letters from Andhra. One was from the aged friend, no other than Deshabhakta Konda Venkatappayyagaru. I give here extracts from it:

> The one great problem, apart from many other political and economic issues of a very complicated nature, is the moral degradation into which the men in Congress circles have fallen. I cannot say much about other provinces but in my province the conditions are very deplorable. The taste of political power has turned their heads. Several of the M. L. A.s and M. L. C.s are following the policy of making hay while the sun shines, of making money by the use of influence, even to the extent of obstructing the administration of justice in the criminal courts presided over by magistrates. Even the District Collectors and other revenue officials do not feel free in the discharge of their duties on account of the frequent interference by the M. L. A.s and M. L. C.s on behalf of their partisans. A strict and honest officer cannot hold his position, for false reports are carried against him to the Ministers who easily lend their ears to these unprincipled self-seekers.
>
> Swaraj was the only all-absorbing passion which goaded men and women to follow your leadership. But now that the goal had been reached,

all moral restrictions have lost their power on most of the fighters in the great struggle, who are joining hands even with those who were sworn opponents of the national movement and who, now, for their personal ends enlist themselves as Congress members. The situation is growing intolerable every day with the result that the Congress as well as the Congress Government have come into disrepute.

The recent municipal elections in Andhra have proved how far and how fast the Congress is losing its hold upon the people. The municipal elections in the town of Guntur were suddenly ordered to be stopped by an urgent message from the Minister for Local Bodies (Madras) after every preparation was made for carrying on election. Only a nominated council was in power for, I believe, the last ten years or more and for nearly a year now the municipal administration has been in the hands of a commissioner. Now the talk prevails that the Government would soon nominate councillors to take charge of the municipal affairs of this town.

I, old, decrepit, with a broken leg, slowly limping on crutches within the walls of my house, have no axe to grind. I no doubt entertain certain strong views against some of the leading Congressmen in the two parties into which the members of the Provincial and District Congress Committees now stand divided. And I have made no secret of my views.

The factions in the Congress circles, the money-making activities of several of the M. L. A.s and M. L. C.s and the weakness of the Ministers have been creating a rebellious spirit among the people at large. The people have begun to say that the British Government was much better and they are even cursing the Congress.

Let the people of Andhra and the other provinces measure the words of this self-sacrificing servant of India. As he rightly says the corruption described by him is no monopoly of Andhra. He could only give first-hand evidence about Andhra. Let us beware.

My Bahawalpur friends, I have to ask you to be patient. Sardar Saheb saw me only at noon. Being silent and preoccupied I could say or write nothing. Shri Shanker[1] from his office was too busy to come so that I could not place your case before him and possibly save the Sardar's precious time.[2]

The Hindustan Times, 13-1-1948, and *Harijan*, 18-1-1948

[1] V. Shankar, Private Secretary to Vallabhbhai Patel

[2] Gandhiji visited Lord Mountbatten after the prayers.

389. LETTER TO A PUBLISHER[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 13, 1948

Who am I to write a foreword for the autobiography of a celebrity like sage Romain Rolland who, alas, is no more among us? I consider myself unfit for the task. What is more, I have not even had a moment to read the volume.

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C. W. 10590. Courtesy: Madeleine Rolland. Also *Romain Rolland and Gandhi Correspondence*, p. 352

390. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

January 13, 1948

CHI. MANI,

I had a talk with the Sardar today. Therefore not again just now. I wish to see the men[2] from Bahawalpur. I will send for you after that. I can't judge how I misunderstood the matter. I will rectify the mistake.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro–4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 145

[1] Who was planning to bring out Romain Rolland's *Voyage Intereur*
[2] Officials from Bahawalpur

CWMG - XC

391. TALK WITH A SIKH FRIEND[1]

January 13, 1948

My fast is against no one party, group or individual exclusively and yet it excludes nobody. It is addressed to the conscience of all, even the majority community in the other Dominion. If all or any one of the groups responds fully, I know the miracle will be achieved. For instance, if the Sikhs respond to my appeal as one man, I shall be wholly satisfied. I shall go and live in their midst in the Punjab, for they are a brave people and I know they can set an example in non-violence of the brave which will serve as an object lesson to all the rest.

Harijan, 18-1-1948

392. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[2]

NEW DELHI,
January 13, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today I may not finish my speech in 15 minutes as usual, as I have much to say.

Today I have come to the prayer meeting because for the first twenty-four hours after beginning a fast the body does not feel it or should not feel it. I began eating at half past nine this morning. People kept coming and talking to me.[3] I finished eating a little before eleven.[4] So I have been able to come to the meeting and this is not surprising. Today I can walk about and sit up and I have also done some work. From tomorrow there will be some change. Rather than coming here and not speaking, I might as well sit in my room and think. If I have to utter the name of God, I can do it there. I therefore feel that

[1] Reproduced from Pyarelal's article "An All-in Fast"

[2] The gathering at the prayer meeting was much larger than usual.

[3] Vallabhbhai Patel was with Gandhiji for nearly 45 minutes. Prominent among the callers were Abul Kalam Azad, Jairamdas Doulatram, H. S. Suhrawardy and Dr. Jivraj Mehta.

[4] Prayers were held at 11 a. m. as Gandhiji commenced his fast.

I shall not be coming to the prayer meeting from tomorrow. But if you do wish to join in the prayer you may come if you feel like it. The girls will come and sing the prayer. At least one of them will come. I have told you my programme in case you should feel disappointed at my not coming.

I had written down yesterday's speech and it has been published in the newspapers. Now that I have started my fast many people cannot understand what I am doing, who are the offenders—Hindus or Sikhs or Muslims. How long will the fast last? I say I do not blame anyone. Who am I to accuse others? I have said that we have all sinned. That does not mean that any one particular man has sinned. Hindus in trying to drive out the Muslims are not following Hinduism. And today it is both Hindus and Sikhs who are trying to do so. But I do not accuse all the Hindus and Sikhs because not all of them are doing it. People should understand this. If they do not, my purpose will not be realized and the fast too will not be terminated. If I do not survive the fast, no one is to be blamed. If I am proved unworthy, God will take me away. People ask me if my fast is intended for the cause of the Muslims. I admit that that is so. Why? Because Muslims here today have lost everything in the world. Formerly they could depend on the Government. There was also the Muslim League. Today the Muslim League is no longer there. The League got the country partitioned and even after the partition there are large numbers of Muslims here. I have always held that those who have been left behind in India should be given all help. It is only humanity.

Mine is a fast of self-purification. Everyone should purify himself. If not, the situation cannot be saved. If everyone is to purify himself, Muslims will also purify themselves. Everyone should cleanse his heart. No one should find fault with the Muslims whatever they may do. If I confess before someone that I have done wrong, then it is a kind of atonement.

I do not say this in order to appease the Muslims or anyone else. I want to appease myself which means that I want to appease God. I do not want to be a sinner against God. Muslims also must become pure and live peacefully in India. What happened was that for election purposes Hindus and Sikhs recognized the Muslim League. I shall not go into that history. Then followed the partition. But before partition became a fact the hearts had already become divided. Muslims were also at fault here, though we cannot say that they alone were at fault.

Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, all are to blame. Now all of them have to become friends again. Let them look to God, not to Satan. Among the Muslims too there are many who worship Satan. Among the Hindus and the Sikhs many worship not Nanak and other Gurus, but Satan. In the name of religion we have become irreligious.

Since I have undertaken the fast in the cause of the Muslims, a great responsibility has come to devolve on them. They must understand that if they are to live with the Hindus as brothers they must be loyal to the Indian Union, not to Pakistan. I shall not ask them whether they are loyal or not. I shall judge them by their conduct.

Then the name of the Sardar is being mentioned. The Muslims say that I am good, but the Sardar is not and he must be removed. They say that Jawaharlal too is good. They say if I join the Government it will be a good thing. They object only to the Sardar. I must tell the Muslims that their argument serves no purpose, because the Government is the whole Cabinet, neither the Sardar nor Jawahar by himself. They are your servants. You can remove them. Yes, Muslims alone cannot remove them. But at least they can bring to the Sardar's notice any mistakes which in their opinion he commits. It will not do merely to criticize him by quoting some statement or other he might have made. You must say what he has done. You must tell me. I meet him often and I shall bring it to his notice. Jawaharlal can dismiss him and if he does not, there must be some reason. He praises the Sardar.[1] Then the Government is responsible for whatever the Sardar does. You too are responsible for he is your representative. That is how things go in a democracy. Therefore I shall say that the Muslims must become brave and fearless. They should also become God-fearing. They must think that for them there is no League, no Congress, no Gandhi, no Jawaharlal but only God, that they are here in the name of God. Let them not take offence at whatever Hindus and Sikhs may do. I am with them. I want to live and die with them. If I cannot keep you united, my life is worthless. The Muslims thus carry a great responsibility. They must not forget this.

The Sardar is blunt of speech. What he says sometimes sounds bitter. The fault is in his tongue. I can testify that his

[1] The report in *The Hindustan Times* here adds: "The Sardar had not ceased to be his (Gandhiji's) esteemed friend though he was no longer his 'yes man' as he was once popularly and affectionately nick-named."

heart is not like his tongue. He has said in Lucknow[1] and in Calcutta[2] that all Muslims should live here and can live here. He also told me that he could not trust those Muslims who till the other day followed the League and considered themselves enemies of Hindus and Sikhs and who could not have changed overnight and suddenly become friends. If the League is still there who will they obey, Pakistan or our Government? The League's persistence in its old attitude makes him suspect it, and rightly so. He says that he no longer has faith in the *bona fides* of the League Muslims and he cannot trust them. Let them prove that they can be trusted. Then I have the right to tell the Hindus and Sikhs what they should do.

The song[3] these girls sang was composed by Gurudev. We sang it during our tours in Noakhali. A man walking alone calls to others to come and join him. But if no one comes and it is dark, the Poet says, the man should walk alone because God is already with him. I asked the girls especially to sing this song which is in Bengali. Otherwise they would have sung only Hindustani songs. The Hindus and Sikhs should cultivate this attitude if they are true to their religions. They should not generate an atmosphere in which the Muslims should be compelled to flee to Pakistan. Hindus and Sikhs should become brave and show that even if all the Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan were to be killed there would be no retaliation in India. I do not want to live to see our people copy Pakistan. If I am to live I shall ask every Hindu and every Sikh not to touch a single Muslim. It is cowardice to kill Muslims and we must become brave and not cowards.

[1] Addressing a public meeting at Lucknow on January 6, Vallabhbhai Patel had said: "I want to ask the Indian Muslims only one question. In the recent All-India Muslim Conference why did you not open your mouths on the Kashmir issue? Why did you not condemn the action of Pakistan?

These things create doubt in the minds of people. . . . So I want to say a word as a friend of Muslims. It is our duty now to sail in the same boat and sink or swim. I want to tell you very clearly that you cannot ride two horses. You select one horse, whichever you like better."

[2] Speaking at a mammoth gathering at Calcutta on January 3, Vallabhbhai Patel had emphasized that there could be no serious talk of a Hindu State. But one fact was indisputable. There were $4\frac{1}{2}$ crores of Muslims in India many of whom had helped the creation of Pakistan. How could one believe that they would change overnight. "The Muslims said they were loyal citizens, and therefore, why should anybody doubt their *bona fides*? To them we would say: 'Why do you ask us? Search your own conscience'."

[3] With the refrain *Ekla chalo re*—Walk thou alone

I shall terminate the fast only when peace has returned to Delhi. If peace is restored to Delhi it will have effect not only on the whole of India but also on Pakistan and when that happens, a Muslim can walk around in the city all by himself. I shall then terminate the fast. Delhi is the capital of India. It has always been the capital of India. So long as things do not return to normal in Delhi, they will not be normal either in India or in Pakistan. Today I cannot bring Suhrawardy here because I fear someone may insult him. Today he cannot walk about in the streets of Delhi. If he did he would be assaulted. What I want is that he should be able to move about here even in the dark. It is true that he made efforts in Calcutta only when Muslims became involved. Still, he could have made the situation worse, if he had wanted, but he did not want to make things worse. He made the Muslims evacuate the places they had forcibly occupied and said that he being the Premier could do so. Although the places occupied by the Muslims belonged to Hindus and Sikhs he did his duty. Even if it takes a whole month to have real peace established in Delhi it does not matter. People should not do anything merely to have me terminate the fast.

So my wish is that Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Muslims who are in India should continue to live in India and India should become a country where everyone's life and property are safe. Only then will India progress.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 293-300

393. NOTE TO MANU GANDHI[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 13, 1948

CHI. MANUDI,

If you were to have more courage, your entire bearing would change. You have considerable capability in you but that has not been developed fully because of your withdrawing nature. Think over this.

Your timidity is killing you. You should have the courage to tell anyone that it is your duty to eat where you do because

[1] Gandhiji gave this to the addressee before retiring to bed.

your parents like you to do so. You should admit that, since you are lacking in firmness of mind, if you eat at somebody's place you will eat only what and as much as he permits. You should say you will get used to it by and by. You should explain this fearlessly to everybody. Only then will your latent capacity come out and shine. You don't know how much it pains me to see you keep ill. Think what absolute trust Jaisukhlal has put in me. If, therefore, you do not improve and become perfect both physically and mentally, I would be deeply pained.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

394. NOTE TO BALVANTSINHA[1]

[After *January 13, 1948*][2]

The improvement in the charkha has not gone beyond the stage to which Maganlal[3] brought it. Its science is still imperfect. It is for the Ashram to perfect it. After I am gone the whole country may give up the charkha but the Ashram will not do so. You have been in the Ashram from its inception and you have to die there.

BAPU

[From Hindi]
Bapuki Chhayamen, p. 333

395. TALK WITH A MUSLIM FRIEND

[After *January 13, 1948*]

A Muslim friend entreated Gandhiji to give up the fast "for the sake of us Muslims". "You are our only hope and support," he pleaded. "The Muslims are not innocent. Have not the Hindus and Sikhs too suffered beyond words?"

I know that. That is the very reason why I am fasting. I shall become a broken reed and be lost to both Hindus and Muslims, like salt that hath lost its savour, if in this hour of test, I fail to live up to my creed and their expectations.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 706

[1]&[2] This was in reply to the addressee's letter written after the commencement of Gandhiji's fast on January 13.
[3] Maganlal Gandhi; *vide* Vol. XXXVI, pp. 261-3.

396. TO GUJARATIS[1]

I am dictating this from my bed early on Wednesday morning. It is the second day of the fast though it is not yet twenty-four hours since the fast commenced. It is the last day for posting matter for this week's *Harijan*. So I think it proper to address a few words to the people of Gujarat.

I do not consider this an ordinary fast. I have undertaken it after much reflection. Yet it is not reflection that has impelled it; it is God who rules over reason. It is addressed to no one or is addressed to all. There is no anger of any kind behind it, nor the slightest tinge of impatience. There is a time for everything. Of what use would any efforts be after the opportunity has slipped? What therefore remains to be considered is whether there is something that each Indian can do. Gujaratis are Indians. And since I write this in Gujarati it is addressed to all Indians who know Gujarati.

Delhi is the capital of India. If we do not accept partition in our hearts, that is, if we do not consider Hindus and Muslims separate peoples, we shall have to admit that Delhi is no longer the capital of India as we have visualized it. Delhi has always been the capital. It is this city which was Indraprastha, which was Hastinapur. We see the ruins standing today. It is the heart of India. It would be the limit of foolishness to regard it as belonging only to the Hindus or the Sikhs. It may sound harsh but there is no exaggeration in it. It is the literal truth. All Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Jews who people this country from Kanyakumari to Kashmir and from Karachi to Dibrugarh in Assam and who have lovingly and in a spirit of service adopted it as their dear motherland, have an equal right to it. No one can say that it has place only for the majority and the minority should be dishonoured. Whoever serves it with the purest devotion must have the first right over it. Therefore, anyone who seeks to drive out the Muslims is Delhi's enemy number one and therefore India's enemy number one. We are heading towards that catastrophe. Every Indian must do his bit to ward it off.

[1] A translation of this appeared in *Harijan*, 18-1-1948.

What should we do then? If we would see Panchayat Raj, i. e., democracy established, we would regard the humblest and the lowliest Indian as being equally the ruler of India with the tallest in the land. For this everyone should be pure. If they are not they should become so. He who is pure will also be wise. He will observe no distinctions between caste and caste, between touchable and untouchable, but will consider everyone equal with himself. He will bind others to himself with love. To him no one would be an untouchable. He would treat the labourers the same as he would the capitalists. He will, like the millions of toilers, earn his living from service of others and will make no distinction between intellectual and manual work. To hasten this desirable consummation, we should voluntarily turn ourselves into scavengers. He who is wise will never touch opium, liquor or any intoxicants. He will observe the vow of swadeshi and regard every woman who is not his wife as his mother, sister or daughter according to her age, and never see anyone with eyes of lust. He will concede to woman the same rights he claims for himself. If need be he will, sacrifice his own life but never kill another. If he is a Sikh, he will, as taught by the Gurus, be as heroic "as one lakh and a quarter" of men and will not yield an inch. Such an Indian will not ask what his duty in the present hour is.

NEW DELHI, January 14, 1948

[From Gujarati]

Harijanbandhu, 18-1-1948

397. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

Makar Sankranti, January 14, 1948

CHI. DEVDAS,

I have been through your letter early in the morning after the prayer.[1] I also understand the little talk we had yesterday.

[1] The addressee's letter dated January 13, 1948 read: "Your statement has been written in haste. Quite a few improvements could have been made in it. I had wished to tell you my views about the propriety of your fasting. But as I had no hint of the oncoming fast, I made no attempts to tell you these. . . . My chief concern and my argument against your fast is that you have surrendered to impatience, whereas your mission by its very nature calls for infinite patience. You do not seem to have realized what a tremendous success your patient labour has achieved. It has saved . . . thousands of lives and may still save many more. . . . By your death you will not be able to accomplish what you can by living. I would, therefore, beseech you to pay heed to my entreaty and give up your decision to fast."

My statement was not issued in haste in your sense of the word. In one sense it was, because I took less time in drafting it than I normally would. The reason for it was the four days of reflection and prayer that preceded it. That statement was the result of reflection and prayer, and so it cannot be called a hasty one either in my language or in the language of anyone who knows.

The statement certainly needed some polishing for improving the expression and making the language more refined and I made the changes the moment you suggested them. I did not want to hear either from you or from anyone about the propriety of my fast. That I have listened to you so far is a sign of my modesty and patience. You got the notice the moment I thought about it. Your main anxiety and your reasoning are meaningless. It is true you are my friend. It is true that you have risen high. But you can never cease to be a son and so your concern is only natural. However, your reasoning displays shallowness of thought and impatience. I consider this act of mine as the extreme limit to my patience. Is patience that kills its very object patience or stupidity? I can't claim credit for what has been achieved since my arrival in Delhi. It would be sheer conceit on my part to do so. That one or more lives were saved through my efforts has no value for the world. Only the All-knowing God can see its value. It is nothing but ignorance to say that "one who had been patient from the beginning of September has ceased to be so all of a sudden." It was only when in terms of human effort I had exhausted all resources and realized my utter helplessness that I laid my head on God's lap. That is the meaning of the fast. Read and think over *Gajendramoksha* which is considered the greatest epic. Perhaps then you will be able to value my action. The last sentence of your letter is a beautiful expression of your love. The origin of that love is ignorance or attachment. That this attachment is universal does not make it enlightenment. So long as we are unable to leave aside the question of life and death it is an illusion to think that we can do a particular thing only if we are alive. Strive as long as you are alive is a beautiful thing to say but bear in mind that striving has to be in a spirit of detachment. Now perhaps you will understand why I cannot comply with your request. Rama who has prompted me to go on fast will bid me give it up if He wants me to do so. In the mean time you, I and all of us should realize and have faith that it is equally well whether Rama preserves my life or ends it. I have only one prayer: 'O Rama, give me strength

during the fast so that desire to live may not tempt me into premature termination of my fast.' Preserve this letter which I have dictated to Manu after deep thought and read it from time to time.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 297-9

398. TALK WITH MUSLIMS

NEW DELHI,
January 14, 1948[1]

When the Delhi Maulanas came to see him in the course of the day Gandhiji greeted them with, "Are you now satisfied?" Then, turning to the one who had said to him three days ago that he should get the Union Government to send them to England, he remarked:

I had no answer to give you then. I can now face you. Shall I ask the Government to arrange a passage for you to England? I shall say to them: Here are the unfaithful Muslims who want to desert India. Give them the facility they want.

The Maulana said he felt sorry if his words had hurt him. Gandhiji retorted with urbane banter:

That would be like the Englishman who kicks you and at the same time goes on saying, 'I beg your pardon'! Do you not feel ashamed of asking to be sent to England? And then you said that slavery under the British rule was better than independence under the Union of India. How dare you, who claim to be patriots and nationalists, utter such words? You have to cleanse your hearts and learn to be cent per cent truthful. Otherwise India will not tolerate you for long and even I shall not be able to help you.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 709

[1] From *Dilhiman Gandhiji*

CWMG - XC

399. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 14, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Yesterday I said I might not be able to come to the meeting today. But I have managed it. However, from tomorrow or the day after I may not be in a condition to move about. Doctors have advised me rest from today.[1] I have placed myself not in the hands of the doctors but in the hands of God. I have no such attachment for life that I must live under any circumstances. Whether I die or live is wholly in the hands of God. I can only pray that my faith may remain firm and no one may interfere in my acting on that faith. Today man has become weak. He asks: Where is God? I want everyone to become strong. Only then can we escape misery. The few things I wanted to say to you I had in fact dictated in English, because I was not sure what my physical condition would be. I thought if I could not speak to you, a translation of the message could be read out. It was intended not only for you but for the millions in the country who would hear it on the radio and those who want to hear in my own voice what I have to say. I am a prisoner of their love and I thought that they had better hear my own voice today. I feel that a thirty-six hours' fast is very useful physically. It cleanses the body and can cause no harm. True, I have to conserve my energy for the future but God will see to that. I have been receiving many telegrams from all quarters—a lot of them from Muslims. I have also had cablegrams from outside India. I have told Pyarelal to pick out the most relevant of them. Not all need be published; only the few that can teach something to the people should be published. There are others which say that I should give up the fast and all will be well. But how can I give

[1] Gandhiji spent the second day of his fast as per his normal routine except for the morning and evening walks. He took hot water without salt or lime, participated in two meetings with the Cabinet Ministers and received a deputation of refugees from the N. W. F. P., besides a number of visitors and friends.

Drs. Jivraj Mehta and Sushila Nayyar issued a health bulletin that each day's fast increased both immediate and future danger to Gandhiji's life.

up the fast? God inspired the fast and He alone may terminate it. I have a telephonic message from Mridulabehn. She is in Lahore. She has a large number of friends among Muslims. She is a Hindu girl. The fast has distressed her. I carried her in my arms when she was a little girl. Now she has grown up. She goes about everywhere all by herself. She says Muslims, even officers in the Pakistan Government are asking her what they can do for me, now that I am doing what I am doing for their sake. This pleased me. I do not know whether my message has reached them. By tomorrow it will certainly reach them. My answer is that there is no need for them to ask. Although this *yajna* is being performed in Delhi it is for the whole country.

The fast is for self-purification. You must have God enthroned where today Satan sits enthroned. There must be some indication of it. Everybody cannot undertake a fast. It has become my proud privilege to do so. If everyone had this privilege they would have lived in amity. Hindus say, 'Kill the Muslims.' Muslims say, 'Kill the Hindus.' Sikhs say, 'Kill the Muslims.' If Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs fight in this way it helps no one. If you want to participate in the *yajna*, you must become brothers and should have love instead of hate in your hearts. Let all Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs pledge that they will not touch liquor, they will not touch opium. They will have nothing to do with adulterous men and adulterous women. Everyone will look upon other women as mothers or sisters or daughters. Everyone must exercise self-restraint and become clean. If they do all these things and if even then I regard Pakistan as full of sin, I will have to repent and say that Pakistan is not a land of sin but a land of purity. But what is needed is action, not mere words. If the Muslims of Pakistan become thus transformed, it is bound to have an effect in India. I have never tried to hide my view that Pakistan has committed crimes against Hindus.

What has happened in Karachi? Innocent Sikhs were murdered and their properties looted. Now I understand the same thing has happened in Gujrat.[1] There was a caravan coming from Bannu or somewhere. They were all refugees running away to save their lives. They were waylaid and cut down. I do not want to relate this grim tale. I ask the Muslims if in their name

[1] On January 13, a train carrying non-Muslim refugees from Bannu was attacked at the Gujrat (West Punjab) Station by the tribesmen who had assembled there on their way to Jammu. In spite of the heroic defence put up by the troops escorting the train, hundreds of refugees were killed or maimed and women and girls abducted by the tribesmen.

this kind of thing continues in Pakistan, how long will the people in India tolerate it. Even if a hundred men like me fasted they would not be able to stop the tragedy that may follow. You should all become good. Whether you are Muslims or tribals, you must all say that you will have the Hindus and Sikhs back. The poet says, "If there is paradise it is here, it is here." He had said it about a garden. I read it ages ago when I was a child. But paradise is not so easily secured. If Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs became decent, became brothers, then that verse could be inscribed on every door. But that will be only when Pakistan has become pure. But if you say one thing and do another, the place will become another hell. Cleanse your hearts and install God there. If that happens in Pakistan, we in India shall not be behind them. It does not matter that the country is geographically divided, so long as our hearts are one. There are so many different governments in the world. What does it matter if there are fifty or five hundred? There are seven hundred thousand villages in India. If each one of them had a government of their own it would be a good thing.

They tell me that I am mad and have a habit of going on fast on the slightest pretext. But I am made that way. When I was young I never even read the newspapers. I could read English with difficulty and my Gujarati was not satisfactory. I have had the dream ever since then that if the Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Muslims could live in amity not only in Rajkot but in the whole of India, they would all have a very happy life. If that dream could be realized even now when I am an old man on the verge of death, my heart would dance. Children would then frolic in joy to see that there is no strife any more. I urge all of you to help me in this task. If we all persevere in our respective religions and become good there can be harmony between all religions. We must not fear whether a man is a Sikh or a Pathan. We must fear God. This is what I want to see.

You can all try and become such men. What after all is society? Society is made up of individuals. It is we that make society. We are asleep and then say that we are helpless because society is such. The same goes for the Government. It is we who are the Government. If one man takes the initiative others will follow and one can become many; if there is not even one there is nothing.

I am not sure that I shall be able to come here tomorrow. But the prayers will be held and the girls will sing the *bhajans*.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*–II, pp. 300-4

400. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 15, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

This is a new experience for me. I have never so far had occasion to convey my word thus to the people. I cannot go to the prayer ground and my voice from here cannot reach you. Even so I thought that if you could hear my voice you would feel reassured. I have already dictated what I have to say. I do not know for how long this state will continue.[2]

My request to you is that none of you should think what another is doing, but each of you should examine your own self and purify yourself to the extent you can. I am convinced that if people in large numbers purify themselves it will do them a lot of good and it will also do me good. India then will benefit and maybe I shall be able to give up my fast sooner. Let no one be concerned about me. Let everyone be concerned for himself. You must give thought to the progress of the country and the welfare of the people. In the end all men have to die. He who is born cannot escape death. Why then should we fear death or grieve over it? It is my belief that death is a friend to whom we should be grateful, for it frees us from the manifold ills which are our lot.

Newspapermen sent me a message two hours after my prayer speech of last evening, asking to see me as they had some doubts to be cleared. After a heavy day's work I felt disinclined out of exhaustion to see them for discussion. I, therefore, told Pyarelal to inform them to excuse me and further

[1] The opening two paragraphs were spoken by Gandhiji, as he lay in bed, on the microphone in Hindi. The rest of the speech had been dictated earlier in English to Pyarelal. Sushila Nayyar read out the speech in Hindi at the prayer meeting.

The report in *The Hindustan Times* has been collated with the Hindi version in *Prarthana Pravachan*.

[2] The doctors who examined Gandhiji issued the following bulletin at 4.30 p. m. "Today is the third day of Gandhiji's fast. He is naturally losing weight. The weakness has considerably increased. He had to be carried out of the bathroom in an arm-chair this morning. His voice is feeble. Acetone bodies have appeared in the urine. . . ."

tell them that they should put down the questions in writing and send them to me next morning. They have done so.

Q. You have undertaken the fast when there was no disturbance of any kind in any part of the Indian Dominion.

What was it if it was not a disturbing disturbance for a crowd to make an organized and a determined attempt to take forcible possession of Muslim houses?[1] The disturbance was such that the military had to reluctantly resort to tear-gas and even to a little shooting if only in the air, before the crowd dispersed.

It would have been foolish for me to wait till the last Muslim had been turned out of Delhi by subtle undemonstrative methods, which I would describe as killing by inches.

Q. You have stated that you could not give any reply to the Muslims who came to you with their tale of fear and insecurity and who have complained that Sardar Patel, who is in charge of the Home Affairs, is anti-Muslim. You have also stated that Sardar Patel is no longer a "yes-man" as he used to be.[2]

These factors create the impression that the fast is more intended to bring about a change of heart in the Sardar and thereby amounts to a condemnation of the policy of the Home Ministry. It would be helpful if you can clear the position.

As to this I feel that my reply was precise, not admitting of more interpretations than one. The suggested interpretation never crossed my mind. If I had known that my statement could bear any such interpretation, I would have dispelled the doubt in anticipation.

Many Muslim friends had complained of the Sardar's so-called anti-Muslim attitude. I had, with a degree of suppressed pain, listened to them without giving any explanation. The fast freed me from the self-imposed restraint and I was able to assure the critics that they were wrong in isolating him from Pandit Nehru and me, whom they gratuitously raise to the sky. This isolation did them no good.

The Sardar has a bluntness of speech which sometimes unintentionally hurts, though his heart is expansive enough to accommodate all. Thus my statement was meant deliberately

[1] *Vide* pp. 357-8.
[2] *Vide* pp. 415-6.

to free a lifelong and faithful comrade from any unworthy reproach.[1]

Lest my hearers should run away with the idea that my compliment carried the meaning that I could treat the Sardar as my "yes-man", as he was affectionately described, I balanced the compliment by adding the proviso that he was too masterful to be anybody's "yes-man".

When he was my "yes-man", he permitted himself to be so named, because whatever I said instinctively appealed to him. Great as he was in his own field and a very able administrator, he was humble enough to begin his political education under me because, as he explained to me, he could not take to the politics in vogue at the time I began my public career in India. When power descended on him, he saw that he could no longer successfully apply the method of non-violence which he used to wield with signal success.

I have made the discovery that what I and the people with me had termed non-violence was not the genuine article but a weak copy known as passive resistance. Naturally, passive resistance can avail nothing to a ruler. Imagine a weak ruler being able to represent any people. He would only degrade his masters who, for the time being, had placed themselves under his trust. I know that the Sardar could never betray or degrade his trust.

I wonder if with a knowledge of this background to my statement, anybody would dare call my fast a condemnation of the policy of the Home Ministry. If there is any such person, I can only tell him that he would degrade and hurt himself, never the Sardar or me. Have I not before now said emphatically that no outside power can really degrade a man? Only he can degrade himself.

Though I know that this sentence is irrelevant here, it is such a truth that it bears repetition on all occasions. My fast, as I have stated in plain language, is undoubtedly on behalf of the Muslim minority in the Union and, therefore, it is necessarily against the Hindus and Sikhs of the Union and the Muslims of Pakistan.

[1] Expressing his anguish, Vallabhbhai Patel had written to Gandhiji on January 13, " . . . you have again and again to take up cudgels on my behalf. This . . . is intolerable to me."

Again on January 16 he said in Bombay that some Muslims went to Gandhiji and complained about his Lucknow speech and "Gandhiji felt compelled to defend me. That also pained me, for after all I am not a weak person who should be defended by others."

It is also on behalf of the minorities in Pakistan as in the case of the Muslim minority in the Union. This is a clumsy compression of the idea I have already explained. I cannot expect the fast taken by a very imperfect and weak mortal, as I truly confess I am, to have the potency to make its proteges proof against all danger. The fast is a process of self-purification for all. It would be wrong to make any insinuation against the purity of the step.

Q. Your fast has been undertaken on the eve of the meeting of the United Nations Security Council[1] and so soon after the Karachi riot and Gujrat massacre. What publicity the latter incidents received in the foreign Press is not known, but undoubtedly your fast has overshadowed all other incidents and Pakistan representatives would not be worth their past reputation if they do not seize the opportunity to declare that the Mahatma has undertaken the fast to bring sanity among his Hindu followers, who have been making the life of the Muslims in India impossible.

Truth takes a long time to reach the four corners of the globe. But in the mean time your fast may have the unfortunate effect of prejudicing our cause in the eyes of the United Nations.

This question does not demand or need any elaborate answer.

From all I have known of the powers and peoples outside India, I make bold to say that the fast has created only a healthy impression. Outsiders who are able to take an impartial and unbiased view of what is happening in India cannot distort the purpose of the fast, which is meant to bring sanity to all those who inhabit both the Union and Pakistan.

It is impossible to save the Muslims in the Union if the Muslim majority in Pakistan do not behave as decent men and women. Happily for the cause, the Muslims of Pakistan, as Mridulabehn's inquiry of yesterday made clear, have become wide awake to a sense of their duty. The United Nations know that my fast aids them to come to a right decision and to give the right guidance to the two newly-made Dominions.[2]

The Hindustan Times, 16-1-1948, *Harijan*, 25-1-1948 and *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 304-5

[1] Gopalaswami Ayyangar, leader of the Indian Delegation to U. N. O., opened the debate on the Kashmir issue in the United Nations Security Council on January 15.

[2] In response to popular demand Gandhiji's cot was placed in the verandah and as men and women filed past him, Gandhiji acknowledged their greetings with folded hands.

401. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,
January 16, 1948

CHI. MIRA,

I got your letter yesterday. Evidently when you wrote it, you had no knowledge of this, my greatest fast. Whether it will ultimately prove so or not is neither your concern nor mine. Our concern is the act itself, not the result of the action. The fast was commenced as usual with a service, part of which was singing of "When I survey"[1]. It was well sung by Sushila. There were some good friends at the service. The company was impromptu. No one was invited. I am dictating this immediately after the 3.30 a. m. prayer and while I am taking my meal such as a fasting man with prescribed food can take. Don't be shocked. The food consists of 8 ozs. of hot water sipped with difficulty. You sip it as poison, well knowing that in result it is nectar. It revives me whenever I take it. Strange to say, this time I am able to take about 8 meals of this poison-tasting but nectar-like meal. Yet I claim to be fasting and credulous people accept it. What a strange world !

I shall watch and see how you can keep two typists constantly at their typewriters. If it is only self-deception and the typists a fraud on you, you will succumb and fall ill in the midst of attractive surroundings of your own choice. One man claims that oil-cakes are easier to make, cheaper in the end, and yet as effective as compost which requires a fair amount of technical skill for a *kisan*.

Your description of Goswami's Goshala is tragic, if true. It is enough to make one despair of the cow, the mother of prosperity, receiving her due in a country accused of cow worship. There is no swaraj in such a land.

Your describing the Ashram as "Pashulok" is a magnificent idea. It is poetic. Don't ever write Pashulok Ashram. Ashram-Pashulok with a dash in between is good. Though now that I am thinking over it a little more deeply, Pashulok Ashram perhaps better represents your idea. Since, however, it is your excellent idea that is to be carried out, your choice is to be final.

[1] A hymn by Isaac Watts

I see that you are destined for serving the cow and nothing else. But I seem to see a vital defect in you. You are unable to cling to anything finally. You are a gipsy, never happy unless you are wandering. You will not become an expert in anything and your mother is also likely to perish in your lap. The only person and that a woman who really loves the cow will fail her. Shall I pity you, the cow or me, for I, the originator of the real idea of serving and saving the cow for humanity, have never cared or perhaps never had the time to become even a moderate expert. Satis Babu is better than you and me. He adopted the idea and has become a fair expert, in fact the real source of milk among Muslims, not Hindus in Bengal. It is he who has produced with amazing labour and concentration the only classic we have on [the] cow. He is a genius. I bow my head before him. Correspondence with him will give you something.

Don't rush here because I am fasting. The *yajna*, as I have called it, demands that everyone, wherever he or she is, should perform his or her duty. If an appreciable number do this, I must survive the ordeal. Trust God and be where you are. Pursue Goswami.[1]

From the original: C. W. 6532a. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9927

402. TELEGRAM TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

NEW DELHI,
January 16, 1948

ANAND HINGORANI
DECCAN GYMKHANA
POONA

BAPU APPRECIATES YOUR OFFER BUT ASKS YOU TO DESIST. WHEREVER HE GOES TODAY HE BECOMES A BURDEN ON THAT PLACE. THERE IS NO ACCOMMODATION WHERE HE IS STAYING NOR ANYWHERE ELSE. HIS MESSAGE IS DO YOUR DUTY WHEREVER YOU ARE.

PYARELAL

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

[1] This letter remained undespatched due to oversight and was sent hurriedly, when discovered, without being signed by Gandhiji, on January 19, 1948.

403. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

January 16, 1948

CHI. PREMA,

I got both your letters yesterday. I had received the *tilgur*[1] on the *Sankranti*[2] day itself. I saw that little bag on my desk. The card pinned to it was on the other side. I looked at it and read your name. I remembered that it was the *Sankranti* day and understood. I then got the parcel opened by Abha and asked her to distribute one piece as from you and the other one as from me among all those present, since, because of the fast, I myself could not partake of it. Immediately the *tilgur* grains were distributed among all present. I read your poem describing the significance of the *tilgur*, and was pleased. I would never slight a religious celebration which was used to strengthen pure sentiments. But celebrations which involve conspicuous enjoyments displease me.

Shankarrao Deo told me yesterday that you had written to him earnestly requesting him to inquire about my health daily and write to you. If he has to do this, please consider that he will not be able to attend to his duty. He has to go and visit different localities; should he neglect that duty in order to inquire after an old man? Why need you also come running here to see how I am? Please remember that there are a great many people here engaged in service of one kind or another. If I let all of them come and see me, my fast would have to be indefinitely prolonged. For they would then labour under the delusion that they were doing their all in looking after me and so neglect their real duty. If you still feel that you must come, you are free to do so.

Both your letters are like beautiful poems. I did not know that you had such great command over the language.

About the Socialists, I believe that they are self-sacrificing, studious and courageous men. I do not know what they have been doing. If it is enough to know what appears in the newspapers about them, then that much I know, though not in

[1] A preparation of sesame and gur

[2] January 14

great detail. If they remain in the Congress and also serve on the Working Committee, I think they will strengthen the organization. The reason is that such men would never seek to strengthen their party at the expense of the Congress and, if they did, they would only weaken it. If the converse also is true, those who follow my line of thinking should bear love towards the Socialists or other opponents and disarm their distrust through love. Even the bitterest enemy could be won over through love.[1] If we fail, we should know that the fault must be ours. Our love in that case is imperfect.

The words attributed to me when I proposed Jayaprakash's name as President must have been uttered by me, for they were true then.[2] There is some change in the position now. How it came about, we need not consider. It may be that in my affection I may consider a person deserving to be President. But his fitness to be President has nothing to do with my love. Let me tell you that even I would not be able to describe the context and the manner in which I had made the remark.

It is true that the Working Committee is selected from among men belonging to the majority in the Congress, but it does not always happen that the majority elects the President from its own ranks. A wise Committee would certainly select a capable and upright man from among the minority if they found one. In this way alone would democracy succeed in the end. A narrow-minded majority is bound to invite disaster.

As far as I know, Jayaprakash's views and policies are not harmful to the country's interests, but his method is. If, however, he becomes President, he must follow the Congress policy. Anyway, he was wise enough to decline to be President in the prevailing atmosphere of opposition to him. When a person who has opposed the official policies from outside becomes the leader of the whole country, he would if he has any touch of patriotism in him give up his opposition. This is not a rule laid down by me, but the common rule in a democracy. I am surprised how you failed to see this. I have explained above

[1] Vallabhbhai Patel, however, warned the Socialists in Bombay for pursuing their "obstructionist policy". On January 21, the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee expelled 17 Socialists from the Congress for "gross indiscipline".

[2] At the Congress Working Committee which met to elect the new President following Jawaharlal Nehru's resignation, Nehru was reported to have proposed the name of Acharya Narendra Dev. Gandhiji had reportedly endorsed it and remarked: "You can have even Jayaprakash as President."

how my mind was working. But this does not mean that anybody should give up his views and act contrary to his own convictions out of deference to me or to anybody even more important than I.

2. In order to explain this[1] fully, I would have to write a treatise. I am sure you don't expect me to do that on the fourth day of my fast. I don't remember what I wrote on the subject earlier. But in any case I would attach no importance to it. What matters to me, and should matter to you, is what I believe today. It would be a suicidal policy to take every decision by a majority vote. In matters involving no moral principle, there is always room for give and take. My own view is this, that if the provinces must be formally reorganized on a linguistic basis from right now, why not confirm what the Congress did in 1920?[2] If that is done and if the boundaries of each province are also determined through joint discussions among the parties concerned, I think the problem of Maharashtra, Bombay and Gujarat can be solved. But I think I must conclude the letter now, for Deo is waiting to carry it away. I had sent for him.

3. The Congress is still a political body and will remain so in the future. When, however, it holds political power, it becomes one of the parties, no matter how big. Those, therefore, who have perfect faith in ahimsa should not hold any office in the Government.

You could not have expected such a detailed reply in the present circumstances. But the fact that I am able to dictate it shows that this fast is causing me the least pain.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10459. Also C. W. 6897. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

[1] The addressee had sought Gandhiji's opinion regarding the claim of Maharashtra over Bombay, firstly because of its geographical situation and secondly because Maharashtrians constituted the majority there.

[2] *Vide* Vol. XIX, p. 191.

404. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 16, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I had not hoped to be able to speak to you today. But you will be glad to know that today by God's grace I feel my voice is stronger than it was yesterday. During all my previous fasts I never felt as strong as I am feeling today on the fourth day of the fast. My hope is that if you will continue the *yajna* of self-purification my strength to address you can remain to the end. I may say that I am in no hurry at all. Hurry will not help our work. I feel ineffable peace. I do not want that anyone should do anything incompletely and tell me that everything is all right. When there is perfect peace in Delhi there will be peace all over India. I have no wish to live if I cannot see peace established all round me, in India as well as in Pakistan. This is the meaning of this *yajna*.[1]

It is never a light matter for any responsible Cabinet to alter a deliberate settled policy.[2] Yet our Cabinet, responsible in every sense of the term, has with equal deliberation yet promptness unsettled their settled fact.[3] They deserve the warmest thanks from the whole country, from Kashmir to Cape Comorin and from Karachi to the Assam frontier. And I know that all the nations of the earth will proclaim this gesture as one which only a large-hearted Cabinet like ours could rise to. This is no policy of appeasement of the Muslims. This is a policy, if you like, of self-appeasement. No Cabinet worthy of being representative of a large mass of mankind can afford to take any step merely because it is likely to win the hasty applause

[1] Lying in bed Gandhiji spoke this in Hindi on the microphone. What follows had been dictated earlier in English and its translation in Hindi was read out at the prayer meeting. The report in *Harijan* has been collated with the Hindi version in *Prarthana Pravachan*.

[2] For the Government's earlier stand, regarding the payment of cash balances to Pakistan as enunciated by Vallabhbhai Patel, *vide* Appendix V(A).

[3] For the Government communique regarding the latest decision, *vide* Appendix V (B).

of an unthinking public. In the midst of insanity, should not our best representatives retain sanity and bravely prevent a wreck of the ship of State under their management? What then was the actuating motive? It was my fast. It changed the whole outlook. Without the fast they could not go beyond what the law permitted and required them to do. But the present gesture on the part of the Government of India is one of unmixed goodwill. It has put the Pakistan Government on its honour. It ought to lead to an honourable settlement not only of the Kashmir question, but of all the differences between the two Dominions. Friendship should replace the present enmity. Demands of equity supersede the letter of the law. There is a homely maxim of law which has been in practice for centuries in England that when common law seems to fail, equity comes to the rescue. Not long ago there were even separate courts for the administration of law and of equity. Considered in this setting, there is no room for questioning the utter justice of this act of the Union Government. If we want a precedent, there is a striking one at our disposal in the form of what is popularly known as the MacDonald Award[1]. That Award was really the unanimous judgment of not only the members of the British Cabinet, but also of the majority of the members of the Second Round Table Conference. It was undone overnight as a result of the fast undertaken in the Yeravda prison.[2]

I have been asked to end the fast because of this great act of the Union Government. I wish I could persuade myself to do so. I know that the medical friends who, of their own volition and at considerable sacrifice, meticulously examine me from day to day are getting more and more anxious as the fast is prolonged.[3] Because of defective kidney function they dread not so much my instantaneous collapse as permanent after-effects of any further prolongation. I did not embark upon the fast after consultation with medical men, be they however able. My sole guide, even dictator, was God, the Infallible and Omnipotent. If He has any further use for this frail body of mine, He will keep it in spite of the prognostications of medical men and women. I am in His hands. Therefore, I hope you will believe me when I say that I dread neither death nor permanent

[1] The Communal Award which was published on August 8, 1932

[2] Gandhiji had gone on fast on September 20, 1932, in protest against the provision of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. He broke his fast on September 26, following the Poona Pact. *Vide* Vol. LI.

[3] *Vide* also footnote 2, pp. 426 and 438.

injury even if I survive. But I do feel that this warning of medical friends should, if the country has any use for me, hurry the people up to close their ranks. And like the brave men and women that we ought to be under hard-earned freedom, we should trust even those whom we may suspect as our enemies. Brave people disdain distrust. The letter of my vow will be satisfied if the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Delhi bring about a union, which not even a conflagration around them in all the other parts of India or Pakistan will be strong enough to break. Happily, the people in both the Dominions seem to have instinctively realized that the fittest answer to the fast should be a complete friendship between the two Dominions, such that members of all communities should be able to go to either Dominion without the slightest fear of molestation. Self-purification demands nothing less. It will be wrong for the two Dominions to put a heavy strain upon Delhi. After all, the inhabitants of Delhi are not superhuman. In the name of the people, our Government have taken a liberal step without counting the cost. What will be Pakistan's counter gesture?[1] The ways are many if there is the will. Is it there?[2]

Harijan, 25-1-1948, and *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 309-12

405. TALK WITH RAJENDRA PRASAD

NEW DELHI,
January 17, 1948

Let all the representatives give [their assurances] under their signatures. I shall publish them. I regard verbal assurances as worthless, only the written ones carry weight with me. Suppose the [Muslim] refugees return from there and are killed on the way? Even if they are allowed to come to Delhi, are they not supposed to go out? Today tickets are not being issued to

[1] Ghulam Mohammad, Finance Minister of Pakistan, referring to Government of India's decision, said: "I am glad that Mahatma Gandhi's efforts have been fruitful and that he has succeeded in making the Government of India see the error of its ways and save it from a most untenable position."

[2] Men and women filed past Gandhiji as he lay on his cot.

As Gandhiji's kidneys were not functioning properly Abul Kalam Azad suggested that he should have some *mosambi* juice mixed with water. Gandhiji refused to take anything but sour lime and said that he was aware of the damage to his body and that the reason for it was lack of perfect faith in Ramanama.

Muslims, what more need I understand? If madness is the order of the day in Pakistan, should we also become mad? I shall die if I have to. Doctors cannot peep into my heart—which is above everything else. No one need worry about me. Our only consideration should be whether or not our conduct is right and whether we are purifying ourselves. The purpose of the fast is that we should be awakened. No doubt, Dr. Bidhan [Chandra Roy] has become anxious and he has conveyed it to Maulana. But I do not want that anyone should persuade me to terminate my fast under false assurances. If it happens it will further worsen the situation.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 328

406. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 17, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

God's mercy it is that on this fifth day of the fast I can speak a few words without feeling exhausted.[2] I have dictated the message for today which Sushilabehn will read out to you.

Whatever you do words must be backed by your full mind and heart, or it will avail nothing. You will be making the greatest mistake if you think only of how I am to be kept alive. It is not in any human hand to keep me alive or to kill me. It is in God's hands. I have not the least doubt about it, and no one else should have the least doubt.

The meaning of this fast is that our hearts should be cleansed and awakened. In that alone lies the good of all. Please do nothing out of pity for me. I shall fast for as many days as I can and if it is the will of God that I should die then I shall die.

[1] Over four thousand men and women had assembled for the prayers. The Hindi version in *Prarthana Pravachan* has been collated with the report in *Harijan*.

[2] The health bulletin issued on January 17 read: "Mahatma Gandhi is definitely weaker and has begun to feel heavy in the head. This is significant in view of the fact that the kidneys are not functioning well. In our opinion it will be most undesirable to let the fast continue. Therefore it is our duty to tell the people of all communities to take immediate steps to produce the requisite conditions for ending the fast without delay."

I know many of my friends are distressed and want me to terminate the fast at once. Today I cannot do so. When the occasion for it comes I shall not persist in the fast. Ahimsa requires us to accept our limitations and not to feel proud. It calls for humility. There is no pride in what I say. There is only pure love in it.[1]

I repeat what I have said before—nothing is to be done under pressure of the fast. I have observed before that things done under pressure of a fast were undone after the fast was over. If any such thing happens, it would be a tragedy of the highest degree. There is no occasion for it at any time. What a spiritual fast does expect is cleansing of the heart. The cleansing, if it is honest, does not cease to be when the cause which induced it ceases. The cleansing of a wall seen in the form of a white-wash done to welcome a dear one does not cease when the dear one has come and gone. This material cleansing is bound to require renovation after some time. Cleansing of the heart once achieved only dies with one's death. Apart from this legitimate and laudable pressure, the fast has no other function which can be described as proper.

The number of telegrams coming from Rajas, Maharajas, and common people continues to increase. There are telegrams from Pakistan too. They are good as far as they go. But as a friend and well-wisher I must say to all those who reside in Pakistan and mould its fortunes that they will fail to make Pakistan permanent if their conscience is not quickened and if they do not admit the wrongs for which Pakistan is responsible.

This does not mean that I do not wish a voluntary reunion, but I wish to remove and resist the idea that Pakistan should be reunited by force of arms. I hope that this will not be misunderstood as a note of discord, whilst I am lying on what is truly a death-bed. I hope all Pakistanis will realize that I would be untrue to them and to myself if out of weakness and for fear of hurting their feelings, I failed to convey to them what I truthfully feel. If I am wrong in my estimate, I should be so told and if I am convinced, I promise that I shall retract what I have said here. So far as I know, the point is not open to question.

My fast should not be considered a political move in any sense of the term. It is in obedience to the peremptory call of

[1] Gandhiji spoke the above in Hindi on the microphone for about three minutes. What follows had been dictated earlier in English and its translation in Hindi was read out at the meeting.

conscience and duty. It comes out of felt agony. I call to witness all my numerous Muslim friends in Delhi. Their representatives meet me almost every day to report the day's events. Neither Rajas and Maharajas nor Hindus and Sikhs or any others would serve themselves or India as a whole, if at this, what is to me a sacred juncture, they mislead me with a view to terminating my fast.[1] Let them know that I feel never so happy as when I am fasting for the spirit. This fast has brought me higher happiness than hitherto. No one need disturb this happy state, unless he can honestly claim that in his journey he has turned deliberately from Satan towards God.[2]

The Hindustan Times, 18-1-1948, *Harijan*, 25-1-1948, and *Prarthana Pravachan* —II, pp. 312-3

[1] Addressing a gathering of three hundred thousand people in Delhi, on January 17, Abul Kalam Azad said: "Before coming here I went to Gandhiji again and asked him what we should do so that he may break his fast. He gave me seven tests which should be fulfilled by the people. Assurances on these points, he said, must come from responsible people who can guarantee the proper fulfilment of these conditions. . . . No false assurance should be given." The conditions were as follows:

Complete freedom of worship to Muslims at the tomb of Khwaja Qutub-ud-Din Bakhtiar and non-interference with the celebration of the Urs which was due to be held there within a week.

Voluntary evacuation by non-Muslims of all the mosques in the city which were being used for residential purposes or which had been converted into temples.

Free movement of Muslims in areas where they used to stay before the disturbances.

Full safety to Muslims while travelling by train.

No economic boycott of Muslims.

Full discretion to Muslims to invite non-Muslims to live in areas occupied by them and freedom to Muslim evacuees to come back to Delhi if they so desired.

[2] The congregation filed past Gandhiji's room, but they could not have a view of Gandhiji because of his extremely weak condition.

As the prayer meeting ended a mile-long procession of the citizens of Delhi, shouting peace slogans entered the Birla House. Jawaharlal Nehru addressed a few words to them.

407. NEITHER ANGER NOR INFATUATION

A correspondent writes:[1]

When what is really true is stated, it is an improper use of the word to call it anger. In anger a man does strange things. If I have to close down the Urdu *Harijan* it becomes necessary for me to do the same with the Nagari *Harijan*. There is no question of anger in doing the right thing. What I consider proper, others such as the above correspondent, may not. How am I concerned with that? It is good if what we think right is considered so by the whole world but that does not happen. Everything has at least two aspects.

Now it remains for me to tell you whether I should stop one or both. It is true that when I started the *Navajivan* and *Harijan* in Devanagari there was no idea of both the scripts being used. If there was any such idea I did not know about it.

In the meantime the Hindustani Prachar Sabha was set up as desired by the late Jamnalal. It made the publication of the Urdu edition necessary. In my opinion it will be very unjust if the Nagari edition continues and the Urdu is stopped. Because according to the Hindustani Prachar Sabha Hindustani can be written in the Urdu script as well as in the Nagari.

Therefore the journal should be continued to be published in both the scripts. And that too at a time when people all over India say that Hindi alone should be their national language and it should be written only in the Nagari script. It is my duty to tell them that this view is not right. If my argument is correct it becomes my duty to retain the Urdu script along with the Nagari script, and if I don't then I have to sacrifice the Nagari *Harijan Sevak* along with the Urdu *Harijan*.

Among all the scripts I consider Nagari as the best. I make no secret of it. So much so that I had started writing Gujarati letters in the Nagari script even while in South Africa. I have not been able to continue it because of lack of

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had said that if any person other than Gandhiji had made a plea for discontinuing the Nagari *Harijan* and Urdu *Harijan* he would have considered it an expression of anger. He suggested closing down of the English *Harijan* and continuation of other editions. *Vide* pp. 314-5.

time. There is scope for improvement in the Nagari script as there is in almost all the scripts. However, that is a different question. I have mentioned it only to show that I am not at all opposed to the Nagari script. But when the protagonists of the Nagari script oppose the Urdu script, I smell malice and intolerance in their attitude. The opponents of the Urdu script do not even have the confidence that ultimately the Nagari script will have sway if it is more perfect than the other scripts. Looked at thus, my decision must appear flawless as well as necessary.

I am right in my preference for Hindustani. I do believe that as between the Nagari script and the Urdu script, the former will win. In the same way if we leave out the question of the script and consider the language only, Hindustani will certainly win. That is so because Sanskritized Hindi is wholly artificial while Hindustani is entirely natural. In the same way Persianized Urdu is unnatural and artificial. There are very few Persian words in my Hindustani; even then my Muslim friends and the Hindus of Punjab and the North say that they have no difficulty in understanding my Hindustani. I can find few arguments in favour of Hindi. Strange as it seems, when I defined Hindi for the first time at the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan,[1] there was almost no opposition to it. How the opposition started is a tragic story. I do not even want to remember it. I even said that the name Hindi Sahitya Sammelan was not, and even today is not, appropriate for the propagation of the national language.

But I had not become the president in order to propagate Hindi literature. The late Jamnalal and other friends told me that whatever might be the name they were interested only in the national language and not in Hindi literature. And it was for that reason alone that I started propagating Hindi in the South with great vigour.

I am writing this after prayer in the morning of the sixth day of my fast. Many painful memories come to my mind but I do not like to recollect them.

I do not at all like this quarrel over the name. Whatever may be the name, its activities should do good to the entire country or the nation. We should not squabble over a name.

Is there any Indian whose heart will not exult after listening to Iqbal's "*Sare jahan se achchha Hindostan hamara*"? If there

[1] On March 29, 1918, at Indore. *Vide* Vol. XIV, p. 294.

is any, I will consider him unlucky. Should I regard these lines of Iqbal as Hindi or Hindustani or Urdu? Who can say that it is not the national language or that it is not sweet or that it does not express maturity of thought? It may well be that today I am alone in my view but it is clear that neither Sanskritized Hindi nor Persianized Urdu will win. Victory will go only to Hindustani. We shall forget this artificial quarrel and feel ashamed of it only when we forget our internal jealousies.

Now remains the English *Harijan*. I consider it a very small thing. I cannot discontinue the English *Harijan*. Englishmen and Indian scholars of English believe that there is something special in my English. My contact with the West is also widening. I was never opposed to the British or any Westerner nor am I today. Their welfare is as dear to me as that of my own country. So English will never be excluded from my small store of knowledge. I do not want to forget that language nor do I want the country to forget it or give it up. My insistence has always been on not taking English beyond its rightful place. It cannot become our national language or the medium of instruction. In making it so, we have impoverished our languages. We have put great burden on our students. As far as my knowledge goes, such a sad spectacle is seen only in India. Slavery to this language has deprived crores of our people of considerable knowledge for years. We neither realize it nor feel ashamed of it nor repent it. How strange it is! Knowing all this pretty well, I cannot boycott English. Just as Tamil and other languages are the regional languages and Hindi is the national language, who can deny that similarly English is an international language? The rule of the British will go because it was corrupt, but the prevalence of English will never go.

I feel that whatever I write in Gujarati or English, the English *Harijan* and the Gujarati *Harijanbandhu* will continue to be self-supporting.

NEW DELHI, 5.45 a. m., January 18, 1948

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 25-1-1948

408. SPEECH BEFORE BREAKING FAST[1]

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,
January 18, 1948

Dr. Rajendra Prasad opened the proceedings by narrating to Gandhiji how they had all assembled on the previous night at the former's residence and after full discussion decided to sign the declaration[2] then and there. But as representatives of some organizations were not present in that meeting, they felt that they should not go to Gandhiji immediately with the signed document but wait till the remaining signatures were obtained. They had accordingly met again in the morning when all those who were absent during the previous night's meeting came and gave their signatures. It was

[1] Over a hundred representatives of various groups and organizations in Delhi, including Hindu Mahasabha, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Jamiat-ul-Ulema and others who had assembled earlier at Rajendra Prasad's residence, called on Gandhiji at 11.30 a.m. Prominent among others were Jawaharlal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad, Rajendra Prasad, Shah Nawaz Khan, Hifzur Rahman and Zaheed Hussain, Pakistan's High Commissioner.

The report in *Harijan* has been collated with the Hindi version in *Dilhiman Gandhiji*. *Vide* also pp. 450-3.

[2] The seven-point declaration written in the Persian and the Devanagari scripts at Gandhiji's instance, read:

"We wish to announce that it is our heart-felt desire that the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and members of the other communities should once again live in Delhi like brothers and in perfect amity and we take the pledge that we shall protect the life, property and faith of Muslims and that the incidents which have taken place in Delhi will not happen again.

"We want to assure Gandhiji that the annual fair at Khwaja Qutub-ud-Din Mazar will be held this year as in the previous years.

"Muslims will be able to move about in Subzimandi, Karol Bagh, Paharganj and other localities just as they could in the past.

"The mosques which have been left by Muslims and which now are in the possession of Hindus and Sikhs will be returned. The areas which have been set apart for Muslims will not be forcibly occupied.

"We shall not object to the return to Delhi of the Muslims who have migrated from here if they choose to come back and Muslims shall be able to carry on their business as before.

"We assure that all these things will be done by our personal effort and not with the help of the police or military.

"We request Mahatmaji to believe us and to give up his fast and continue to lead us as he has done hitherto."

found in the course of the morning meeting, Dr. Rajendra Prasad reported, that even those who had some lingering doubts on the previous night were now confident that they could ask Gandhiji with a full sense of their responsibility to break the fast. As the President of the Congress, Dr. Rajendra Prasad said that he had signed the document in view of the guarantee which they had all jointly and severally given. Khurshid, the Chief Commissioner and Randhawa, Deputy Commissioner of Delhi, who were present had signed the document on behalf of the administration. It had been decided to set up a number of committees to implement the pledge. Dr. Rajendra Prasad hoped that Gandhiji would now terminate his fast.

Deshbandhu Gupta, speaking next, described some touching scenes of fraternization between the Hindus and Muslims which he had witnessed when a procession of about 150 Muslims was taken out that morning in Subzimandi and was received with ovation and offered fruit and refreshments by the Hindu inhabitants of that locality.

Gandhiji replying said:[1]

I am happy to hear what you have told me, but if you have overlooked one point all this will be worth nothing. If this declaration means that you will safeguard Delhi and whatever happens outside Delhi will be no concern of yours, you will be committing a grave error and it will be sheer foolishness on my part to break my fast. You must have seen the Press reports of the happenings in Allahabad, if not, look them up. I understand that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha are among the signatories to this declaration. It will amount to breach of faith on their part if they hold themselves responsible for peace in Delhi, but not in other places. I have been observing that this sort of deception is being practised in the country these days on a large scale.

Delhi is the heart—the capital of India. The leaders from the whole of India have assembled here. Men had become beasts. But if those who have assembled here, who constitute the cream among men cannot make the whole of India understand that Hindus, Muslims and followers of other religions are like brothers, it bodes ill for both the Dominions. What will be the fate of India if we continue to quarrel with one another?[2]

I could not finish what I was saying as I was overcome by exhaustion. Let us take no step that may become a cause for

[1] Gandhiji was so weak that his voice was hardly audible. Pyarelal and Sushila Nayyar repeated aloud his words.

[2] Here Gandhiji broke down due to exhaustion.

repentance later on. The situation demands courage of the highest order from us. We have to consider whether or not we can accomplish what we are going to promise. If you are not confident of fulfilling your pledge, do not ask me to give up my fast. It is for you and the whole of India to translate it into reality. It may not be possible to realize it in a day. I do not possess the requisite strength for it. But I can assure you that till today our face was turned towards Satan, we have now resolved to turn towards God. If what I have told you fails to find an echo in your hearts or if you are convinced that it is beyond you, tell me so frankly.

What greater folly can there be than to claim that Hindustan is only for Hindus and Pakistan is for Muslims alone? The refugees here should realize that things in Pakistan will be set right by the example set in Delhi.

I am not one to be afraid of fasting. Time and again I have gone on fasts and if occasion arises I may again do so. Whatever therefore you do, do after careful thought and consideration.

The Muslim friends frequently meet me and assure me that peaceful atmosphere has been restored in Delhi and Hindus and Muslims can live in amity here. If these friends have any misgivings in their hearts and feel that today they have perforce to stay here—as they have nowhere else to go to—but ultimately they will have to part company, let them admit it to me frankly. To set things right in the whole of India and Pakistan is no doubt a Herculean task. But I am an optimist. Once I resolve to do something I refuse to accept defeat. Today you assure me that Hindus and Muslims have become one but if Hindus continue to regard Muslims as *Yavans* and *asuras*, incapable of realizing God, and Muslims regard Hindus likewise, it will be the worst kind of blasphemy.

A Muslim friend presented me with a book in Patna. Its author is an eminent Muslim. The book says: "God ordains that a *kafir* —and a Hindu is a *kafir*—is worse than a poisonous creature. He should be exterminated. It is one's duty to be treacherous to him. Why should one treat him with any courtesy?" If Muslims still harbouring such thoughts assure Hindus about their good behaviour, they will only be deceiving Hindus. If you betray one you betray all.

If I truly worship a stone image I deceive no one. For me God resides in that stone image. I feel that if the hearts of both Hindus and Muslims are full of deceit and treachery, why need I continue to live?

The telegrams I have received today include some from prominent Muslims. They have made me happy. It seems they have realized that the method adopted by them so far was not proper to run a government.

After listening to all that I have said, if you still ask me to end my fast I shall end it. Afterwards you have to release me. I had taken the vow to do or die in Delhi and now if I am able to achieve success here I shall go to Pakistan and try to make Muslims understand their folly. Whatever happens in other places, people in Delhi should maintain peace. The refugees here should realize that they have to welcome as brothers the Muslims returning from Pakistan to Delhi. The Muslim refugees in Pakistan are suffering acute hardships and so are the Hindu refugees here. Hindus have not learnt all the crafts of Muslim craftsmen. Therefore they had better return to India. There are good men as well as bad men in all the communities. Taking into consideration all these implications, if you ask me to break my fast I shall abide by your wish. India will virtually become a prison if the present conditions continue. It may be better that you allow me to continue my fast and if God wills it He will call me.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad remarked that the remarks to which Gandhiji had referred were abhorrent to the teachings of Islam. They were only indicative of the insanity that had of late seized some sections of the people.

He was followed by Maulana Hifzur Rahman[1] who categorically repudiated the allegation that his co-religionists did not regard India as their country. They all wanted to remain in India as citizens of India with self-respect and honour. . . .Describing next the change that had come over the city as a result of Gandhiji's fast, he said that they regarded it as a happy augury and a presage of things to come. He joined Dr. Rajendra Prasad in his appeal that Gandhiji should break the fast.

After Ganesh Datt had on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha and the R. S. S. reiterated that appeal. . . . Zaheed Hussain addressed a few words to Gandhiji. He was there, he said, to convey to Gandhiji how deeply concerned the people in Pakistan were about him and how they were daily inundating him with anxious inquiries about his (Gandhiji's) health. It was their hearts' desire that circumstances might soon prevail which would enable him to break the fast. If there was anything that he could fittingly do towards that end he was ready and so were the people of Pakistan.

[1] Who along with Ahmed Saeed and Habib-ur-Rahman represented the Muslims of Delhi

Zaheed Hussain was followed by Khurshid and Randhawa who on behalf of the administration reiterated the assurance that all the conditions mentioned in the citizens' pledge would be duly implemented, and no effort would be spared to restore to the Indian capital its glorious old tradition of communal harmony and peace.

Sardar Harbans Singh endorsed the appeal on behalf of the Sikhs.

Rajendra Prasad again appealed saying: "I have signed on behalf of the people, please break your fast." Gandhiji said:

I shall break my fast. Let God's will prevail. You all be witness today.[1]

Harijan, 25-1-1948, and *Dilhiman Gandhiji*—II, pp. 337-42

409. MESSAGE TO SIKHS[2]

January 18, 1948

The Sikhs have shown courage in that they have eschewed anger. This in truth is real courage. This is the true teaching of Guru Maharaj. That one Sikh is equal to one and a half lakhs of people has this very meaning. Victory to Sikhs!

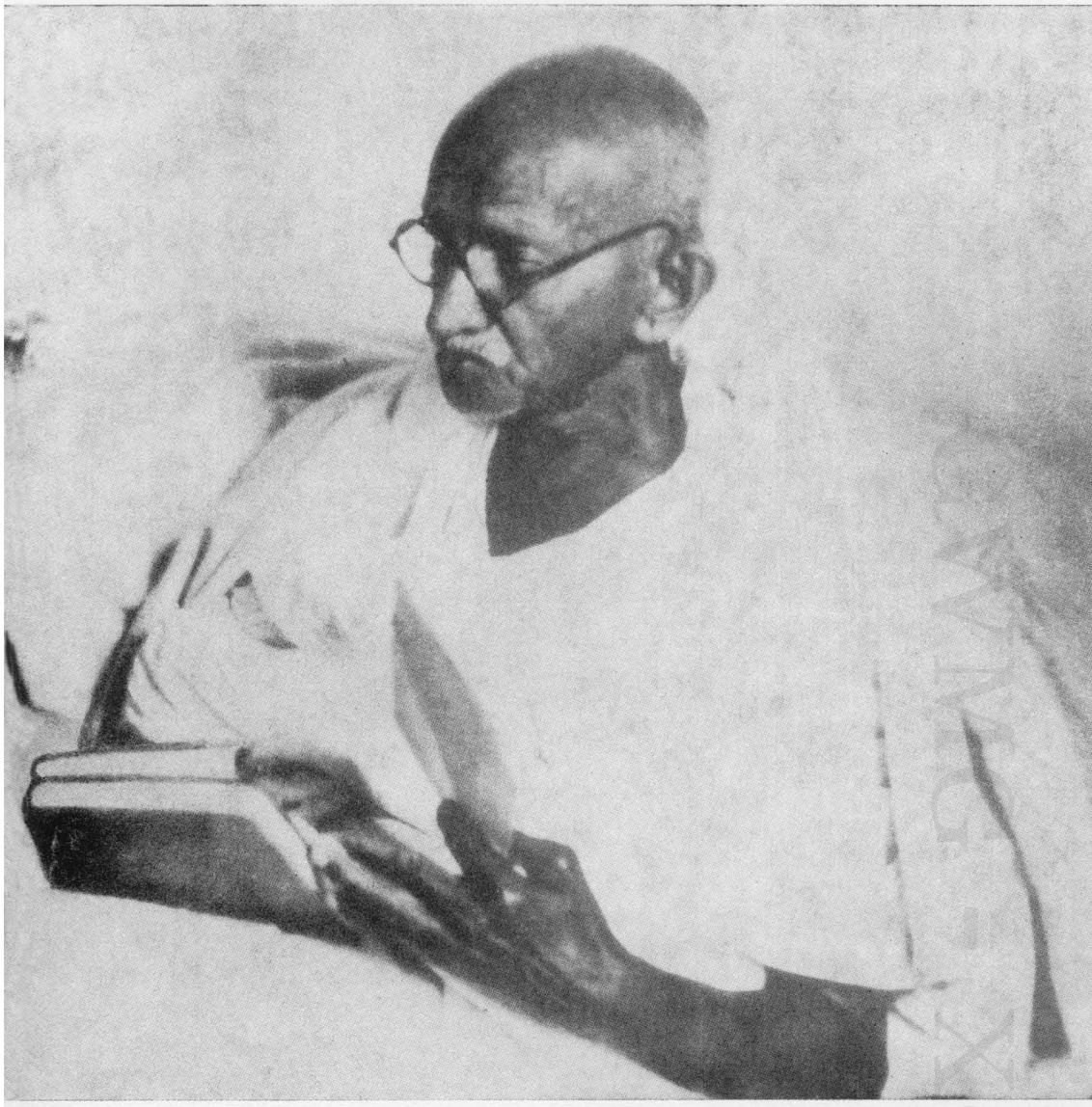
[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 344

[1] This was followed by recitations from the Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic and Parsi scriptures, and singing of a Christian hymn, a *bhajan* and *Ramdhun*. Abul Kalam Azad offered a glass of juice to Gandhiji who broke his fast at 12.15 p. m.

[2] It being Guru Govind Singh's birthday, Gandhiji dictated a special message for the Sikhs.

CWMG-XC



LAST DAY OF THE FAST



ARRIVING AT PRAYER MEETING

410. TALK WITH MUSLIM WOMEN[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 18, 1948

No one can observe *purdah* with me. I am your brother, your father, then why this *purdah* before me? *Purdah* should be of the heart.[2]

No Hindu or Sikh harasses you, I hope? If I have the blessings of all of you sisters, I shall regain my health. Your blessings will be blessed by God.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 344

411. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU[3]

January 18, 1948

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,

Give up your fast.

I am sending herewith a copy of the telegram received from the Speaker of West Punjab. Zaheed Hussain had said exactly what I had told you.

May you live long and continue to be the jewel of India.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2210

[1] About a hundred *burqa*-clad Muslim women had called on Gandhiji.

[2] The women then removed their *burqas*.

[3] After breaking his fast, when Gandhiji came to know that Jawaharlal Nehru was also fasting, he promptly wrote the letter in his own hand in spite of his extreme weakness.

CWMG-XC

412. TALK WITH MAJ.-GEN. K. M. CARIAPPA[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 18, 1948

"I am going to Kashmir in a few days' time," the General said. Gandhiji replied:

I hope you will succeed in solving the Kashmir problem non-violently. Come and see me after your return from Kashmir.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 524-5

413. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[2]

NEW DELHI,
January 18, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I have dictated a short message for today which Sushila will read out to you.

This is an auspicious day for me and it should be auspicious for you too. This is also the birthday of Guru Govind Singh. On this happy day I terminated the fast. The kindness I have received from the people of Delhi, including the refugees, and from the Government, I shall never forget. I experienced the same love in Calcutta. How can I at this moment forget the great work Shaheed Saheb did in Calcutta?[3] Had he not been there I could not have stood up there for long. We had quite a few suspicions concerning Shaheed Saheb and we still suspect him. But that should not concern us here. We must learn that however bad a man may be we must treat him as a friend and work with him. We must never under any circumstances treat

[1] Who had come to Delhi to take over charge of the Delhi and East Punjab Command under which operations in Jammu and Kashmir were conducted

[2] In spite of a drizzle a huge gathering had assembled at the prayer meeting. Gandhiji, lying in bed, spoke in Hindi for about twenty minutes on the microphone.

The Hindi version in *Prarthana Pravachan* has been collated with the report in *Harijan*.

[3] *Vide* p. 23.

anyone as an enemy. There is Shaheed Saheb and there are four crores of other Muslims. They are not all angels just as all the Hindus and Sikhs are not angels. There are amongst us good men as well as bad men. Only, bad men are fewer. We also have in our country what are called criminal tribes. We also have aborigines. We have to live with them in harmony. Muslims are a large community. They are not confined to this land but are spread all over the world. If we hope to be friends with the whole world, there is no reason why we should be enemies of the Muslims who are here. I am not a prophet but God has granted me the power of reason and a heart. My reason and my heart tell me that if for some reason or other we are unable to forge friendship between Hindus and Muslims, not only here but also in Pakistan and in the whole world, we shall not be able to keep India for long. It will pass into the hands of others and become a slave country again. Pakistan too will become a slave country and the freedom we have gained will be lost again.

Many people have showered blessings on me today. They have assured me that from now on Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims will live as brothers and under no conditions and on no provocation will the residents of Delhi, including the refugees, become enemies of each other. This is not a small thing. It means that from now on our endeavour will be to see that the people of Pakistan and India remain friends. Although India has been partitioned because of our weakness we must unite our hearts. If this is not the meaning of my breaking the fast, then I shall humbly say that you have not done a good thing in making me break the fast. The spirit behind the fast must be preserved. What happens in Delhi will happen in the whole of India. And what happens in India will happen in Pakistan. Have no doubt about it. Let no one be afraid, not even a child. So long, in my view, we were heading towards Satan. From now on I hope we shall begin to move towards God. But we must pledge that once we have turned our face towards God we shall never turn away. When that happens India and Pakistan will unitedly be able to serve the world and make the world nobler. I do not wish to live for any other purpose. A man lives only to raise humanity. The only duty of man is to move towards God. One may call Him by any name—God, Khuda or Satshri Akal, but if He is not enthroned in one's heart it is all delusion. He is one though called by different names. Then why should we forget Him and become one another's enemies?

I do not want to make a long speech. Let the Hindus take a pledge that they will not give themselves up to strife. I wish that Hindus should read the Koran as they read the *Bhagavadgita*. Let the Sikhs also do the same. I wish too that Muslim brothers and sisters should keep the *Granthsaheb* in their homes and try to follow its meaning. Let us uphold another's religion as we uphold our own. A good thing remains a good thing in whatever language it may be written. The Koran is the same to me as the *Gita* or the *Granthsaheb*. This has been my principle and whether you believe it or not I have been following it. I tell you clearly that I do not offer worship to a stone, but I am a *sanatani* Hindu. I do not hate those who worship a stone. God lives even in the stone. He who worships stone sees in it not stone but God. If you do not see God in stone, how can you say that the Koran is a divine scripture? Is this not idol worship? If you learn this we will also learn that there is no difference between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. All are brothers and must live together. Then the barbarities that are perpetrated today, like men and women being thrown out of trains, will cease. All will be able to live safely anywhere without fear. I shall never have peace so long as the refugees who have come here from Pakistan do not return to their homes and so long as the Muslims whom we have driven out and who want to return cannot come back and live here in peace.

That is all I have to say. May God grant good sense to us and to all everywhere in the world. May He awaken and draw us all to Him so that India and the world may be happy.[1]

I embarked on the fast in the name of Truth whose familiar name is God. Without a living Truth God is nowhere. In the name of God we have indulged in lies, massacres of people, without caring whether they were innocent or guilty, men or women, children or infants. We have indulged in abductions, forcible conversions and we have done all this shamelessly. I am not aware if anybody has done these things in the name of Truth. With that same name on my lips I have broken the fast. The agony of our people was unbearable. Rashtrapati Dr. Rajendra Babu brought over a hundred people representing the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and representatives of refugees from the Punjab, the Frontier Province and Sind. In this very representative company were present Zaheed Hussain, the

[1] What follows was read out by Sushila Nayyar.

High Commissioner for Pakistan, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi and the Deputy Commissioner, Gen. Shah Nawaz Khan, representing the Azad Hind Fauj (I. N. A.). Pandit Nehru, sitting like a statue, was of course there, as also Maulana Saheb. Dr. Rajendra Babu read out a document in Hindustani signed by these representatives, asking me not to put any further strain on them and to end the agony by breaking the fast. Telegrams after telegrams have come from Pakistan and the Indian Union urging me to do the same. I could not resist the counsel of all these friends. I could not disbelieve their pledge that, come what may, there would be complete friendship between the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and Jews, a friendship not to be broken. To break that friendship would be to break the nation.

As I write, comforting telegrams are deluging me. How I wish that God will keep me fit enough and sane enough to render the service to humanity that lies in front of me! If the solemn pledge made today is fulfilled, I assure you that it will revive with redoubled force my intense wish and prayer before God that I should be enabled to live the full span of life doing service of humanity till the last moment. That span according to learned opinion is at least one hundred and twenty-five years, some say one hundred and thirty-three. The letter of my vow has been fulfilled beyond expectation through the great goodwill of all the citizens of Delhi, including leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. The result could not be otherwise when I find that thousands of refugees and others have been fasting since yesterday. Signed assurances of heart-friendship have been pouring in upon me from thousands. Telegraphic blessings have come from all over the world. Can there be a better sign of God's hand in this act of mine? But beyond the letter of fulfilment of my solemn vow lies its spirit without which the letter killeth. The spirit of the vow is sincere friendship between the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of the Union and a similar friendship in Pakistan. If the first is assured, the second must follow, as sure as day follows night. If there is darkness in the Union, it would be folly to expect light in Pakistan. But if the night in the Union is dispelled beyond a shadow of doubt, it cannot be otherwise in Pakistan, nor are signs wanting in that direction. Numerous messages have come from Pakistan, not one of dissent. May God, who is Truth, guide us as He visibly guided us during all these six days.

Harijan, 25-1-1948, and *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 314-20

414. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

NEW DELHI,
January 18, 1948

CHI. NARAHARI,

So now you are able to write yourself. I regard it as a great improvement indeed. I expected it all along. I don't understand at all how you got the stroke. How straightforward, truthful and pure your life has been. Those qualities of your character have cured you in an incredibly short time. But let not this happy outcome make you complacent. Take as much rest as possible. If you do, your asthma also may disappear now. There is no need at all for you to run about.

As I was dictating the above lines in the morning before I broke the fast, I dozed off and the letter remained unposted. The fast has now become a mere dream. The physical effect remains, but it will probably disappear in about fifteen days' time. I will not write more today. There is plenty of work lying in front of me.

I will not write to Vanudi now. I had meant to. But now that from calm I have entered storm, how can I get time?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9149

415. LETTER TO KONDA VENKATAPPAYYA

NEW DELHI,
January 19, 1948

MY DEAR DESHABHAKTA,

Your letter. What do we care what others say?

I forgot to mention your fracture. Are you permanently cured?

As you know the fast was broken yesterday.

Yours,
BAPU

KONDA VENKATAPPAYYA
GUNTUR

From a photostat: G. N. 3234. Also Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

416. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

NEW DELHI,
January 19, 1948

CHI. MIRA,

Your note. All anxiety is over. I hope you got my letter dictated during the fast.[1] I was working top speed. Your note for *Harijan* will receive attention.[2]

Love.

BAPU

SHRI MIRABEHN
P. O. RISHIKESH
DIST. DEHRA DUN

From the original: C. W. 6533. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9928

417. LETTER TO ABDUL HALIM GAZNAVI

NEW DELHI,
January 19, 1948

DEAR SIR ABDUL HALIM,

Many thanks for your letter and the newspaper cuttings. As you know my fast was broken yesterday as a result of world-wide co-operation. . . .[3] is the effect of heartfelt prayer.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SIR ABDUL HALIM GAZNAVI
18 CANNING STREET
CALCUTTA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] *Vide* pp. 430-1.

[2] The addressee's note entitled "The New Family Member" regarding compost manure appeared in *Harijan*, 1-2-1948.

[3] Omission as in the source

418. LETTER TO MANU MASHRUWALA

NEW DELHI,
January 19, 1948

CHI. MANU[1],

I had your letter. Now there is no more reason for worry. Ramdas was so worried that he came running here yesterday, but by that time the fast was over. All of you will be well. Do not worry about me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From Gujarati: C. W. 2683. Courtesy: Kanubhai Nanalal Mashruwala

419. LETTER TO B. D. KALELKAR

NEW DELHI,
January 19, 1948

CHI. BAL,

Your letter. I did think of you during the fast. My pledge has been kept. How is your mental state? Keep writing to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 2175

420. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

January 19, 1948

CHI. MUNNALAL,

Why did you use khadi paper? For such purposes one should use only waste paper, which costs nothing. Wait and see what happens here.

I should be very happy to have you with me. I know your worth. But just now this place is overcrowded, and I shall not be able to give you work which will do you justice. When I go out, I need only a few persons to accompany me.

[1] Daughter of Harilal Gandhi, married to Surendra Mashruwala

CWMG - XC

Learn to read and write Urdu as soon as possible.

If living together Kanchan and you cannot free yourselves from passion you are not likely to do so living apart either. You should be able to do so. Only it requires mental self-control of the highest order. Being alone together has to be avoided. Likewise all touch with impure thoughts must be avoided. Whatever you do must have her fullest co-operation. She is right in believing you to be weak.

My intention ultimately is to keep you with me. And I seem to be free, too. I may, therefore, reach Sevagram even earlier than expected.

It is perfectly true that khadi, to which we had dedicated ourselves from the beginning, seems dead today. The fault is entirely ours. We have not mastered its science. The science died with Maganlal. We made ourselves, and remained, mere labourers. Nayee Talim played some part in making the production of khadi a science, but we have still much distance to cover. That is why I say that the most important work for the Ashram is to develop khadi into a science. One must learn to do the spinning with perfect concentration. Merely drawing yarn is not enough. What this means, I will explain to you some time if you ask me, or will write. But I don't want to have you here just for this purpose.

Regarding Nayakum[1] the solution is clear. Let him have whatever he wants for the Nayee Talim work. There is no question of money at all. If this means that you have to give up the land and the building in Sevagram, you may do even that. Ask me what to do when such a situation arises. I will guide you then. There is, therefore, no reason for worry. You must not lose your sleep because of the noise of any celebrations. Pay no attention to it at all. If, however, it becomes unbearable, draw Nayakum's attention to it.

If Prabhakar has got the entire area paved with stones, he must have had some reason for doing so. Discuss the matter with Sushila. No notice need be taken of the foundation work having been wasted.

I have sent the reply to Prabhakar's letter through Sushila. Pass it on to him. If you tell me what it is in the hospital which you don't approve of, I will think over the matter.

You may unhesitatingly write to me whenever and whatever you wish to. Learn to write briefly but fully. If I stay away,

[1] E. W. Aryanayakum

by all means free yourself from Sevagram for some time and come and stay with me for a week or two. I shall like it.

Go and see Ramdas Gulati.

I have already written about Kanchan. If you want me to write in greater detail, please let me know. If you want me to give you a letter for her, I will do even that.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8386. Also C. W. 7208. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

421. LETTER TO PIROJ WADIA

NEW DELHI,
January 19, 1948

DEAR SISTER,

Did you do your Gujarati? Can you read this? I read your letter to Sushila. God has seen us through this penance. It remains to be seen how the people behave now. You should both do there what you can.

Blessings from

BAPU

PIROJ WADIA
BOMBAY

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

422. LETTER TO JUGATRAM DAVE

NEW DELHI,
January 19, 1948

CHI. JUGATRAM,

How could I write to you during the fast? Yet I used to dictate for *Harijan* and attend to some very important matters too. Right now everything seems to be very fine; God knows what happens in the end. The whole world has turned topsyturvy. Everyone has to stand face to face with God, else there is perdition.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

CWMG-XC

423. LETTER TO DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR

NEW DELHI,
January 19, 1948

CHI. DEV,

I have your two letters. You are observing restraint very well. Write to me when you are well and truly free from work at Patna. The caste problem in Bihar is extremely tough. Do whatever you can. Look at everything from the view-point of Nayee Talim. Cattle wealth and welfare too must be in the same mould.

Chand is getting on well. I am referring to her physical health only. Her mother came yesterday. She is going to Bhilsa to give evidence. On her return Chand might accompany her to Amritsar. All the books you have there must be listed. If no list exists prepare one and send me a copy.

Pyarelal is now trying to go to Noakhali. He would like to take you for a short while. You should agree only if you can be conveniently spared from there.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi original: Documents relating to Gandhiji. Courtesy: National Archives of India

424. LETTER TO ANAND AND GANGI HINGORANI

NEW DELHI,
January 19, 1948

CHI. ANAND AND GANGI,

I have your letter.

How good it was that you did not come! How can they allow me a long fast? God is merciful. Stay on there and do whatever service you can.

To you both,

Blessings from
BAPU

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

425. LETTER TO M. S. ANEY

NEW DELHI,
January 19, 1948

BHAI BAPUJI ANEY[1],

I have your beautiful letter. Keep up the practice of writing in Hindi.

God is always present in all good work. All success to you! There is a lot of work to do in Bihar.[2]

My fast is now a thing of the past. Who knows what God wills us to do!

Do keep writing to me whenever you feel like it.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

426. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[3]

NEW DELHI,
January 19, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

My thanks go out to the senders of the numerous wires from all over the world, from Indians and non-Indians, expressing their goodwill and anxiety. These show the correctness of the step I had taken. Not that I had the slightest doubt about it. I had none about this, as I never have had about the reality that God is and that His most graphic name is Truth. Now has begun a stream of wires of congratulations expressing relief. These friends

[1] (1880-1968); President of Vidharbha Congress Committee; member of Congress Working Committee, 1924-25 and 1931-34; India's High Commissioner in Ceylon, 1943-47; member, Constituent Assembly; Governor of Bihar, 1948; member Lok Sabha, 1959-66; wrote a biography of Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Sanskrit verse

[2] The addressee was sworn in as Governor of Bihar on January 12.

[3] Gandhiji was carried in a chair to the prayer ground. It being his silence day, his written speech was read out by Sushila Nayyar after the prayer.

CWMG - XC

will forgive me for not sending personal acknowledgments. It is physically impossible to do so. I hope too that no such acknowledgment is expected by the senders. I feel constrained to single out two—one from the Premier of West Punjab and the other from the Nawab of Bhopal. They are today labouring under grave distrust. Let the extracted passages speak for themselves. If the senders were not sincere, they would have spared themselves and me on the solemn occasion that the fast was.

Here is the message from the Nawab of Bhopal:

> Your appeal for a reunion of hearts of all communities cannot fail to find support from all people of goodwill in both Dominions as will also any appeal for an understanding and friendly relations between India and Pakistan. We, in Bhopal, have been able happily to face our troubles during the past year in a spirit of concord, amity and goodwill between all communities with the result that not a single untoward incident has occurred to mar the peace of the State. We assure you that we shall strive to further this friendly spirit with all the strength at our command.

I give the full text of the wire from the Premier of West Punjab:

> West Punjab Ministry expresses deep admiration and sincere appreciation for your great gesture for furtherance of a noble cause. This Ministry has always stood for the principle of doing everything possible to protect the lives, honour and property of minorities, and giving them equal rights of citizenship. We assure you that this Ministry will follow this policy with redoubled vigour. We are anxious to see an immediate improvement in the situation throughout the Indian sub-continent which may enable you to break your fast. No efforts will be spared in this province to help in saving a life as precious as yours.

In this age of senseless imitation, my warning is that it would be foolish for anybody to embark on such a fast expecting identical results in an identically short space of time. If anyone does, he will face severe disappointment and will discredit what is a hoary and infallible institution. Two severe qualifications are necessary—a living faith in God and a peremptory call from Him. I am tempted to add a third, but it is superfluous. A peremptory call from God within presupposes the rightness, timeliness and propriety of the cause for which the fast is undertaken. It follows that a long previous preparation is required. Let no one, therefore, lightly embark on such a fast.

The citizens of Delhi and the refugees have a heavy task before them. Let them seek occasions for meeting together as often as possible in perfect mutual trust. It was a soul-stirring sight for me to meet Muslim sisters in large numbers yesterday.[1] Girls in my party told me the sisters were sitting in Birla House uncertain whether they could come to me. They were in *purdah*, most of them. I asked them to be brought in and they came. I suggested that they would not have the *purdah* before their fathers or brothers. Why should they think me less? And off went the *purdah* without exception. This is not the first time that the *purdah* has disappeared before me. I mention the incident to illustrate what genuine love, as I claim mine to be, is able to do.

Hindu and Sikh women should go to the Muslim sisters and establish friendship with them. They should invite them on ceremonial occasions and be invited. Muslim girls and boys should be attracted to common schools, not communal. They should mix in sports. Not only should there be no boycott of Muslims but they should be induced to resume their previous occupations.

Delhi is poorer for the disappearance of the exquisite workmanship of the Muslims. It is a miserable and miserly thing for Hindus and Sikhs to wish to take away from them their means of livelihood. On the one hand, there should be no monopoly and, on the other, there should be no attempt at deprivation.

In this great country of ours, there is room for all. The peace committees[2] that have been formed must not go to sleep as many committees unfortunately do in all countries. The condition of keeping me in your midst is that all communities in India live at peace with one another, not by force of arms but that of love than which there is no better cement to be found in the world.

Harijan, 25-1-1948, and *The Hindustan Times*, 20-1-1948

[1] *Vide* p. 449.

[2] A Central Peace Committee was formed to take effective steps to implement the terms of the written pledge submitted to Gandhiji.

427. KASTURBA FORTNIGHT

With a view to enlarging the activities of the Kasturba Trust its Working Committee, on the advice of its Provincial representatives, has decided to celebrate the fortnight from February 22 to March 9 as the Kasturba Fortnight. During the fortnight we should:

(1) explain the aims and activities of the Trust in the villages;
(2) provide information about our activities so far;
(3) make special efforts to enlist women from rural areas for training in midwifery, basic education and as *gram sevikas*[1]; and
(4) collect the required portion of the expenditure from the local sources in the districts and provinces in addition to the actual Trust fund sanctioned according to the budget for the year 1948.

According to the Gregorian calendar Kasturba died on February 22, 1944. According to the Vikram calendar this date falls around March 9 [this year]. It has been seen that its activities are neither given any publicity, nor has any publicity booklet been or is being printed. I do not care for such things. Moreover work in rural areas cannot be done in that way. Those who are interested in this work can know about it from the annual report. However, the difficulties of its representatives deserve to be considered sympathetically. The programme chalked out for the Kasturba Fortnight is quite good. The most important thing for its implementation is that the workers who are selected for the purpose should be interested in the work and should be familiar with rural life. Such workers will find out if, in addition to the work done today, there is anything else they can do and they will consult the men and women in the villages about this. It is possible that the villagers are not bothered about improving their lot. Even if it is so the women volunteers will make a note of it in their reports. So far we have organized a few camps, started a few maternity homes and a few kindergarten schools. As this work is entirely new we have to proceed slowly. What occupations can we introduce for rural women and children which will augment their income, increase their knowledge and improve their health? As a matter of fact we know what has to be done.

[1] Women workers for villages

The question here is, will the village women do anything in this direction or not?

NEW DELHI, January 20, 1948
[From Hindi]
Harijan Sevak, 1-2-1948

428. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 20, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

The first thing I would say to you is that I hope that those who have signed the document have signed it with God as witness. There are still voices being raised in Calcutta expressing the fear that what has happened here may all be a show. If the people of Delhi and the refugees who have come here stand firm, then whatever may happen outside I am certain they will be able to save India as well as Pakistan. Delhi after all is an ancient city and what is achieved in Delhi is bound to have an impact on the whole of India and Pakistan.

If you read carefully what the Sardar has said in Bombay you will realize there is no rift between Pandit Nehru and the Sardar. They may talk in different ways but they do the same thing. They cannot be enemies of the Muslims. I have no doubt that one who is an enemy of the Muslims is also an enemy of India. Let us realize the truth of this. Elsewhere in the world they have already realized this except perhaps in America where Negroes are still lynched. There are a good many white men there who do not consider this repugnant. They have no shame in their hearts. But elsewhere people do not approve of it. They consider it barbaric. Our own newspapers have described the acts of American whites as barbaric. Though Americans are so much given to reform, they still indulge in such behaviour. We assume we are better people and cannot do such things. And yet, think of what happens here. I would therefore ask your categorical assurance that irrespective of any injustice perpetrated here or elsewhere, you are not going to seek revenge privately, but will

[1] Gandhiji was carried in a chair to the prayer meeting. As the microphone was not working and Gandhiji's voice was feeble the substance of his speech was repeated aloud by Sushila Nayyar.

leave it to the Government to deal with. If this at least is agreed to, people can move about freely.[1]

I told you it was possible I might go to Pakistan. But I shall go to Pakistan only when the Government invites me as a friend of the Muslims as well as Hindus and the Sikhs. Of course the doctors insist that I must first recoup from the effects of the fast which may take another 15 days and that during the next 15 days I cannot go anywhere or eat anything solid. I can only take liquid diet which may be milk or fruit juice. Milk can of course sustain a man all his life.

I may tell you that Panditji is a man who will do everything for the refugees. If there is only one dry bed available he will offer it to a refugee to sleep on and himself go without sleep. He says there is no room left in his house and still people keep coming. He is our Prime Minister. He has visitors, some of them Englishmen. Is he to turn them out? And still he says that he will spare for the refugees one or two rooms or whatever he can. If other ministers as well as the army officers follow his example no one will be left unhappy. I congratulate Jawahar and I congratulate you on possessing such a jewel. I am told that wealthy people such as Birla will also do something in this direction. After all when the Prime Minister can do such a thing, why cannot the others? Thus vigorous efforts are being made to alleviate the distress of the refugees. Let us learn from this that we shall not treat Muslims as enemies.

I have a letter. In fact it arrived on January 16 when my fast was in progress. I am told some wicked people forged a great quantity of currency notes and started selling them to the poor. I humbly request the forgers not to indulge in such activities.

[1] At this stage there was a loud explosion. Gandhiji remained unruffled and said to Manu Gandhi, who was visibly shaken: "Why did you get so scared? Some military personnel must have been taking training in shooting. What will you do if someone really comes to kill us?" He tried to pacify the people and resumed his speech when order was restored.

It was later discovered that a guncotton slab had exploded about 75 feet away from where Gandhiji was sitting and that it was part of a conspiracy to assassinate him. The conspirators had planned to divert the attention of the people by the explosion. Their original plan to throw a hand-grenade from a servant's room behind the dais having failed, they mixed with the crowd. After the explosion Digambar Badge was to dash to the dais and throw a hand-grenade at Gandhiji, but his courage failed at the last moment. Six of the conspirators, viz., Nathuram Godse, Narayana Apte, Vishnu Karkare, Gopal Godse, Digambar Badge and Shankar Kistayya, escaped in a waiting taxi but Madanlal Pahwa was apprehended.

Can they not find some honest livelihood? I must at the same time warn the poor not to be taken in. They must not for ever remain simple and gullible.

I have a wire from Lahore, from the President of the Kashmir Freedom League. He says:

> Highly appreciate your magnanimous gesture for Hindu-Muslim unity. Kashmir is the root cause of the present tension and a stumbling-block in the way of any rapprochement. Must receive top priority if peace actually desired. Withdrawal of aggressive Indian troops from Kashmir and handing it over to whom it rightfully belongs to is the only satisfactory solution of the problem.

The wire distresses me. If there is no settlement over Kashmir, does it mean that things must continue in their present state? Must Muslims be enemies of Hindus and Sikhs and must Hindus and Sikhs be enemies of Muslims simply on account of Kashmir? Besides, I do not agree that the armed force our Government has dispatched to Kashmir has committed aggression there. The armed force was sent in response to the appeals of Sheikh Abdullah, the Premier of Kashmir, and the Maharaja. It is true that Kashmir should go to whom it belongs. In that case all those who have gone there from outside, be they Afridis or any other, should get out of Kashmir. I cannot object to people in Poonch revolting but I object to their rebelling in order to grab the whole of Kashmir. I can understand it if every outsider leaves Kashmir and no one interferes from outside or sends help or complains. But I cannot understand it if they say that they themselves will remain in Kashmir but that others should get out. And to whom does Kashmir belong? Right now I shall say it belongs to the Maharaja because the Maharaja still exists. In the eyes of the Government the Maharaja is still the legitimate ruler. Of course if the Maharaja is a wicked man, if he does nothing for the people, I think it is for the Government to displace him. But so far no such eventuality has arisen. If the Muslims of Kashmir say that they do not want the Maharaja, that they want to accede either to India or to Pakistan, no one can complain. I have just emerged from a fast. I am enemy of none. So how can I be an enemy of Muslims? Let them come and convince me of my error. A Muslim gentleman of Gwalior has sent me a telegram from Ratlam. In it he says:

> We Muslim inhabitants Jahangirpur, District Ujjain, Gwalior inform your honour that on 15th and 16th instant our village was surrounded by a Hindu party who beat us severely. Several injured,

CWMG - XC

one died. Our crops and houses destroyed. Officer of State not taking any action. We are in danger. Kindly arrange urgently.

It was sent on the 15th or the 16th of January when my fast was going on. If this is true I must tell the Gwalior Hindus that they are going to undo the achievement of Delhi. The correspondent says that those running the administration were of no help to them. But how can this be? If this happens in any part of India, then it is a matter of shame for the Government and for all of us. I hope matters in Gwalior will be put right.

I see from the papers that all the Rajas of Kathiawar—there are more than two hundred of them—have met together and decided to merge all their States to form one large State which will have an assembly of its own.[1] If this is true, it is a great thing. I must congratulate all the Rajas of Kathiawar on this step.

In Bhavnagar the Maharaja has handed over all power to the people and has himself become a servant of the people. I congratulate him on this great step.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 323-7

429. LETTER TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY

NEW DELHI,
Early morning, January 21, 1948

MY DEAR SHAHEED,

I was much concerned about your financial obligations. This letter is the measure of my concern. I have seen many Muslim friends go under because of their extravagant habits. Do not say you are no better than Hindus, etc. The remedies you suggest are worse than the disease. I would like you to do what I have induced my Muslim clients to do to their credit. Thereby they gained in self-esteem and in the esteem of their friends. Honourable insolvency is the straight line. Of this more when you return from Sind and if you would then discuss the thing with me. In politics you have much to correct, if I am right. The Sardar is not bad.

Love.

Yours,
BAPU

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 485

[1] The Kathiawar Rulers signed a covenant on January 23 at Nawanagar, approving the creation of Saurashtra Province, a united State of Kathiawar.

430. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

NEW DELHI,
January 21, 1948

MY DEAR C. R.,

Of course you were right in speaking to me through your silence. You might not have broken it as you did through yours of 16th instant.[1] From calm I have entered storm. Thank God I have fairly learnt to face either with some amount of indifference. I hope you are faring well in every respect. I observe that you have lighted upon the fittest job for you.[2]

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 2194

431. LETTER TO KHURSHED NAOROJEE

NEW DELHI,
January 21, 1948

DEAR SISTER[3],

So your hope has been fulfilled. I am drinking not merely water which I was [taking][4] when on fast, [but also] sweet fruit juices, clear vegetable soup and milk. Though or because

[1] In response to an appeal issued by the addressee, special prayers were held in places of worship in Calcutta on January 16 for the fulfilment of Gandhiji's mission. Addressing one of these functions, C. Rajagopalachari said that Gandhiji had become insolvent because he had taken upon himself the debts of all other people. His sorrows had accumulated like the interest of a money-lender and he had gone to a great banker, namely, God, in order to repay all debts. He expressed the hope that God would "help us in spite of the difficulties which appear to be insurmountable".

At another meeting Rajagopalachari exhorted the Hindus to treat Muslims as their own kith and kin.

[2] Presumably the reference is to the addressee's efforts to restore communal harmony in the strife-ridden Calcutta.

[3] The superscription is in Gujarati.

[4] The source has "eating".

I am taking substantial things, the zone of calm has been left for that of storm.

I hope now you have got the work for which you are most fitted.

Love.

BAPU

KHURSHEDBEHN NAOROJEE
KANYA MAHAVIDYALAYA
JULLUNDER

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

432. LETTER TO REPRESENTATIVE, REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

NEW DELHI,
January 21, 1948

DEAR FRIEND,

Many thanks for the kind message from the President. Please accept them for yourself too, for your own good wishes.

I hope the Republic of Indonesia will flourish.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

REPRESENTATIVE
REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

433. TALK WITH G. D. BIRLA

NEW DELHI,
January 21, 1948

I do not find this as shocking as you do.[1] Because if I say no, the Sardar and Jawaharlal, who are hemmed in by so many worries, will be haunted by the added worry concerning my safety. These friends are shouldering a great responsibility today. I personally believe that I am in the keeping of Rama. If He wants to take me away, even a hundred thousand men cannot save me. But those in the Government do not share my faith in

[1] The addressee had expressed his fear that Gandhiji might not allow so many police personnel to be posted in the Birla House.

ahimsa and if they believe that I can be protected by these police guards, so be it. Today perhaps I am the only one left who has faith in ahimsa. I pray to God that He may grant me the strength to demonstrate this ahimsa even if it be in my own person. So it is all the same to me whether there are or there are not all these police and military personnel posted here for my protection. Because it is Rama who protects me and I become more and more convinced that everything else is futile.[1]

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 364

434. TALK WITH SIKH DEPUTATION

NEW DELHI,
January 21, 1948

GANDHIJI: I know what is happening there.[2] But nothing is to be gained by our showing cowardice. Someone tells me that in U. P. Hindus have started growing beards with the notion that thereby they will become brave. But that is no way to become brave. I read your *Granthsaheb*. But I do not do so to please you. Nor shall I seek your permission to do so. But the Guru has not said anywhere that you must grow beards, carry *kirpans* and so on. If the Muslims treat the Hindus as poison you should not have persuaded me to give up the fast. If that be so, food to me will be like poison. If I know that it is all deception then all effort is futile. I had told the Muslims so very clearly.

[1] After the bomb explosion on January 20 and on receiving information from the Bombay Government about a conspiracy to assassinate Gandhiji, Vallabhbhai Patel tightened the security measures at Birla House by posting army and police personnel along with plainclothes men. As a precautionary measure the police wanted to search everyone entering the compound. According to a statement made by Vallabhbhai Patel in Parliament on February 6 "the D. I. G. met Gandhiji and represented to him that there was danger and they should be allowed the facilities asked for, otherwise they would be discredited if anything untoward happened, but Gandhiji would not agree. He said that his life was in the hands of God, that if he had to die, no precautions could save him and that he would not agree to anybody being restricted from coming to prayer meetings or anybody being allowed to come between his audience and himself. I myself pleaded with Gandhiji for allowing the police to do their duty in regard to his protection, but without success."

[2] Giani Kartar Singh had described the excesses perpetrated on Sikhs in Pakistan.

The spectacle today is one of supreme bravery. From now on we will not seek revenge for enmity but we will return it with friendship. I have given in to your pleading. It is good you have told me everything. At present there is peace all over Delhi. What security can I need? But if there is betrayal this cup of orange juice shall be as poison to me. It is only the third day today. When I am a little bit stronger you may tell me what you want.

KARTAR SINGH : Afflicted men cannot be balanced men. Everybody cannot be a Mahatma Gandhi.

GANDHIJI: Mahatma Gandhi is neither an angel nor a devil. He is a man like you. . . .The slaughter that took place at Shekhupura was reminiscent of the outrage of Nadirshah[1]. The Wah camp at Rawalpindi presented the same spectacle. It can do no good to dwell on who has killed more people and where. The Sikhs have shown great bravery today for which I am grateful. In spite of their terrible sufferings they have accepted all my conditions for breaking the fast. This is not a small matter. I am doing all that any individual can do.

I had three Parsi visitors[2] who had come after meeting Mr. Jinnah and other Pakistani leaders. They told me that [non-Muslims] no doubt had suffered immense hardships in Karachi but the people there were also ashamed [of their deeds]. Nobody says that they are not at fault. Now Mr. Jinnah has proclaimed that anyone found guilty of criminal actions will be severely punished. A lot of plundered goods have been seized from the homes of officials. I assure you that I shall do as much as I can. For I have to do or die. You will have seen what happened yesterday, but I know that if there is work that God wants me to do I must do it.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 365-7

[1] Shah of Persia who invaded India in 1739, defeated Muhammad Shah and ordered a massacre in Delhi

[2] Jamshedji Mehta, Jehangir Patel and Dinshaw Mehta

435. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 21, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

First of all I must ask you to forgive me for being late by ten minutes. I am not well and so could not be punctual. Let me first deal with the bomb incident of yesterday. People have been sending me wires congratulating me and praising me. In fact I deserve no congratulations. I displayed no bravery. I thought it was part of army practice somewhere. I only came to know later that it was a bomb and that it might have killed me if God had not willed it that I should live. But if a bomb explodes in front of me and if I am not scared and succumb, then you will be able to say that I died with a smile on my face. Today I do not yet deserve to be so praised. You should not have any kind of hate against the person who was responsible for this. He had taken it for granted that I am an enemy of Hinduism. Is it not said in chapter IV[1] of the *Gita* that whenever the wicked become too powerful and harm dharma God sends someone to destroy them? The man who exploded the bomb obviously thinks that he has been sent by God to destroy me. I have not seen him. But I am told that is what he said when questioned by the police. He was well dressed too. But I am sure God is not out of His mind to continue sending such men. If we do not like a man, does it mean that he is wicked? Even if I become wicked in the eyes of everyone I shall not be considered such in the court of God. If then someone kills me, taking me for a wicked man, will he not have to answer before God? Let us pray that God may grant him good sense. It seems he had lodged himself in a mosque. In this he had offended against India, against God and against Hinduism. If everyone thus takes to occupying mosques and, when stopped, assails police officers it will never do. This is not the sort of thing that God will prompt anyone to do. When he says he was doing the bidding of God he is only making God an accomplice in a wicked deed. But it cannot be so. Therefore those who are behind him or whose tool he is, should know that

[1] Verse 8

this sort of thing will not save Hinduism. If Hinduism has to be saved it will be saved through such work as I am doing. I have been imbibing Hindu dharma right from my childhood. My nurse, who literally brought me up, taught me to invoke Rama whenever I had any fears. With God's grace, later in life I came in contact with noble and good persons—who were Hindus. I had the good company of Christian and Muslim friends as well, who too could not influence me otherwise. Therefore having passed all the tests I am as staunch a Hindu today as intuitively I was at the age of five or six. If God deems it fit to make anyone the instrument for saving Hindu dharma, it could be none but me. Do you want to annihilate Hindu dharma by killing a devout Hindu like me?

Some Sikhs came to me and asked me if I suspected that a Sikh was implicated in the deed. I know he was not a Sikh. But what even if he was? What does it matter if he was a Hindu or a Muslim? May God bless him with good sense. I have told the Inspector-General of Police not to harass the man. They should try to win him over. I cannot ask that he should be released because that is not my function. If he can realize that he has committed a crime against Hinduism, against India, against the Muslims and against the whole world, we should not be severe with him. We should pity him. If you all think that my fast was worthless and at the same time you would not let me die because you would not want to take the blame for it, then I think you have deceived me as well as yourselves and what the man did was only right and no sin. If you whole-heartedly disapprove of his action his heart will change of itself, because in this world sin cannot stand by itself. It always wants support. Only God and his devotees are self-sustained. This is the premise from which our non-co-operation is derived. I pray to God to give us enough strength that we may maintain our self-possession and continue the prayer and not budge from our places, even if a bomb should be thrown in our midst, and even if a police party should come and try to make us leave. Only then shall I deserve to be congratulated. I want to go on uttering Ramanama even if there should be shooting taking place all around me.

Yesterday an illiterate woman[1] displayed courage in having the culprit arrested. I admire her courage. It is my belief that however illiterate or uneducated one may be, it does not matter so long as one has a stout heart.

[1] Sulochana Devi

Bahawalpur people have written urging that we should hurry and get them out or they will all be killed. I must ask them not to become panicky. I have another wire from the Nawab Saheb only today in which he says that he is doing his utmost for these people. I have also not forgotten them.

I have also a telegram from Bombay sent by Sindhi Sikhs there. They say there are still some fifteen thousand Sikhs in Sind. Some have already been slaughtered. Their lives and their faith are in peril. They request that some arrangement should be made to get them out of Sind, if possible by plane. What I say here will reach them. Even a telegram takes longer. I shall not tolerate it if these 15,000 Sikhs are cut down or their faith or dignity attacked. I will do what a single individual can do. Panditji himself thinks of everybody. I shall request the Pakistan and Sind Governments to reassure the Sikhs that so long as they are there they are not in any kind of danger. If they cannot give such an assurance they should collect them in one place or send them to India under escort. Sikhs are a brave people. Who can dare to attack their faith? Let the Sikh brethren be reassured. I have sent some Parsee friends to see their condition.

A correspondent writes that when I was in jail in 1942 people had indulged in acts which were sometimes violent. If I should die while fasting there would be such a wave of violence in the country that even my God would cry out. My fast therefore would be violent and I should give it up. There is love as well as ignorance behind what the correspondent says. It is true that there was violence in the country following my imprisonment. The present situation is a consequence of that. Had the country then remained wholly non-violent, we would not have been in the plight that we are in today. I have also thought over the possibility that after I am no more there may be further strife. If God wants to save me He will do so. The death of a non-violent man will always have desirable consequences. But when Krishna was no more the Yadavas did not become better and purer. They destroyed themselves in fratricidal strife. I shall not weep over it. But I am a poor lowly individual. Why should anyone take to fighting after I am gone? But God sometimes makes the very lowly His instrument. I am told Hindus and Muslims will not fight here any more. Muslim women too have begun to come out of their houses. This makes me happy. I must ask all to make their hearts the temple of God.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 328-30

436. CABLE TO ARUNA ASAF ALI[1]

[Before *January 22, 1948*][2]

YOUR PLACE IS IN INDIA.

The Hindustan Times, 23-1-1948

437. LETTER TO ISMAT IFTIKHAR-UD-DIN

NEW DELHI,
5 a. m., January 22, 1948

MY DEAR ISMAT,

You had no business to get ill again. You discredit your doctor. I was disappointed when Iftikhar appeared without you and was sorry when I learnt that the cause was your illness. Your services are required much more than ever before. Therefore be up and doing. I assure you I am eager to go to Lahore as soon as my convalescence is finished and the way is open for me to go to Lahore or better still to Pakistan.

Love.

BAPU

BEGUM ISMAT IFTIKHAR-UD-DIN
LAHORE

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

[1] The addressee had cabled from Washington to inquire if she could be of help in India.

[2] The report of the cable appeared under the date-line "Washington, January 22".

CWMG - XC

438. LETTER TO DR. CHARLES MOORE

NEW DELHI,
January 22, 1948

DEAR DR. MOORE,

Many thanks for your good wishes. I was glad to meet you.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

DR. CHARLES MOORE
B. H. U.
BENARES

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

439. LETTER TO AMBASSADOR OF NETHERLANDS

NEW DELHI,
January 22, 1948

DEAR FRIEND,

I have to thank you for your good wishes. Our meeting was a pleasure.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

AMBASSADOR OF NETHERLANDS

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

CWMG - XC

440. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 22, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

By the grace of God, I am as you see slowly recovering my strength.[1] I hope very soon I shall be as strong as ever. But it is in the hands of God. A friend writes saying that Jawaharlal may spare a room or two in his large house for the refugees, and other ministers, army officers and Government executives may also similarly spare some accommodation in their houses, but then, he asks, how many refugees can we house in this way? There are many who give verbal assurance but only a few act on them.

I agree that only a few thousand refugees can be housed in this way. But that is not important. What is important is that leading men and officers will have set an example. In England if the King makes the smallest sacrifice, like giving up a glass of wine, the gesture is greatly appreciated. Every civilized country appreciates such gestures. It also creates a good impression among the refugees who feel that people are doing the best for them and they too should try and face difficulties bravely. But if this leads to people rushing to Delhi in the belief that they will be better looked after here it will spoil things.

Another difficulty has been placed before me. People say that formerly the Congress could collect even a lakh of rupees only with the greatest difficulty. Today it can disburse crores of rupees. This is the power which it had been fighting for. But they are following in the footsteps of the British Government in the matter of spending lavishly. Some say that since we are now running the Government we must spend lavishly and live in style, otherwise our prestige outside India will suffer. But if we want to compete with the British in the lavishness they show in maintaining their dignity, we shall have to be as well off as they are. But our per capita income is nowhere near that of England. We are an extremely poor country. If, therefore, we

[1] For the first time after his fast, Gandhiji was able to walk up to the prayer ground.

compete with others in the matter of spending we shall be destroyed. I hope our representatives abroad will realize this. They should not try to compete with America in throwing dinners, banquets and parties. That even our self-sacrificing Congressmen should fall into such erroneous ways is something that should make us sit up and think. People also object to ministers getting higher salaries than other people. If Sardar Patel is paid Rs. 1,500 a month, then they say they should at least be paid Rs. 500. This is not the way of living in India. When we are all trying to purify ourselves why should we think along such lines? We do not judge people by the money they have.

I have read out to you the wire describing the plight of certain Muslims in Gwalior.[1] A worker from there came to me saying that he had good news. He says that the Maharaja of Gwalior has handed over all power to the people.[2] But if the Praja Mandal people show discrimination and drive out Muslims, how can I be happy over it? I shall be happy if you tell me that there will be no discrimination and that no ill will would be shown against anyone, be he a Hindu or Muslim or Parsi or Christian. Then I shall congratulate you and bless you. The Maharaja has become the servant of the people. In this *yajna* of self-purification everyone, including the ruler and the ruled, should participate. Only then shall we be able to stand before the world. If we want to carry the world on the right path and save it there is no other way before us.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 331-2

[1] *Vide* pp. 466-7.

[2] The Maharaja of Gwalior had announced his decision to form an interim government having the support of the majority party in the legislature.

CWMG-XC

441. WORTHY OF REFLECTION[1]

A young man[2] writes[3]:

Today at noon I learnt that you had commenced fasting. I resisted the temptation of writing to you during the fast. But I can do so no longer.

1. It is idle to think that a fast of five or seven days on your part can establish heart-unity between the Hindus and Muslims. . . . What your fast will do will be to make the Hindus suppress their anger . . . And I think it should be enough to induce you to end your fast.

2. By your penance you have gained a unique place in the hearts and affection of the people. . . .They will, therefore, suppress their anger and hatred in order to save your life. But this pent-up anger is sure to burst out at the first opportunity. . . .

3. If anger and hatred are to be purged out of the hearts of the people, the Government ought to teach them to base their lives on constructive work. . . .In America, they are tending more and more to revert to natural manures. We seem to be going in for the production of chemical fertilizers.

4. I can say from my experience that the Indian Muslims are not so innocent as they might appear. . . .a large majority of them are simply biding their time and waiting for an opportunity to play the fifth-columnists when Pakistan invades India. . . .

5. In view of the foregoing, I feel that your fast was not meant to achieve anything more than making the Hindus restrain their passions.

6. I hold that the Hindu-Muslim trouble can be resolved only in two ways. First, by the Hindus completely cleansing their hearts. That expectation may be said to have been belied long ago. As you have observed, the Congress struggle has so far been based on the passive resistance of the weak. Therefore, now that power has come to it, it will rush towards *himsa* with redoubled speed. . . .The other way is for the Indian Government to handle the situation with firmness. This, it seems to me, it has failed to do so far and to that extent—thanks to your influence—the interest of the country has suffered.

[1] The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 1-2-1948.
[2] Kanti Gandhi; *vide* p. 483.
[3] Only excerpts from the letter are reproduced here.

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The foregoing letter deserves careful attention. Contrary to what the correspondent holds, instances can be adduced of instantaneous change of heart. It would have been more apt to say that such heart change is transitory. Now that my fast is over, it remains to be seen what result it produces. I say this not to deprecate or detract from what the writer of the foregoing letter has said. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs—all may learn something from it. The ideal of communal unity is not a new one. It has always been before the country as one of the pillars of national independence. Without it independence cannot last. This has been regarded as more or less axiomatic. The transition period, which I hope is now over, reflected our distemper. We may, therefore, expect that the unity that has been established in Delhi will prove enduring.

That the edifice of unity can rest on constructive work alone is a maxim which everybody should remember. The question is how to realize it. It is up to every worker who believes in it to live it in his life and to bring it home to his neighbours. By explaining the scientific basis of the constructive programme, it can be made interesting. Our daily experience shows that this programme cannot be advanced by mechanical or unintelligent work.

That tractors and chemical fertilizers will spell our ruin, I have not a shadow of a doubt.

I do not regard all the Muslims of India to be innocent. What is obvious is that after the birth of Pakistan the Muslims in the Indian Union have been placed in a very difficult situation and it is up to the majority community to mete out exact justice to them. It would spell the ruin of both the Hindu religion and the majority community if the latter, in the intoxication of power, entertains the belief that it can crush the minority community and establish a purely Hindu Raj. I consider the present occasion to be particularly auspicious for purging out the dross from the hearts of both the communities by a strenuous effort at self-purification.

The meaning of the fifth paragraph is not quite clear. In any case, my fast being for the purification of all, I expected and still expect all—be they Hindu, Muslim or others—to turn the searchlight inward and to cast out all hidden impurity.

In the sixth paragraph I find only dry logic. It ignores the heart. No one has a right to say that what could not be achieved during the struggle for independence is unachievable at all times. On the contrary, today there is a real opportunity to

demonstrate the supremacy of ahimsa. True, our people have been sucked into the whirlpool of universal militarization. If even a few can keep out of it, it will be their privilege to set an example of ahimsa of the brave and be reckoned as the first servants of India. This cannot be demonstrated by intellect. Therefore, till it can be realized through experience, it must be accepted on faith.

The Swaraj Government is bound to proceed with firmness and courage. A government which is weak or which allows itself to be led into courses which its reason does not approve of, is not fit to rule. It ought to step aside and make way for a better one. To say or to believe that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel have weakened under my influence is to betray gross ignorance of their character. And if my influence has really the enervating effect imputed to it by my correspondent, it is a thing for me to be ashamed of and for the country to deplore as detrimental to its very existence.

NEW DELHI, January 23, 1948
Harijan, 1-2-1948

442. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,
After prayer, 6 a. m., January 23, 1948

CHI. MANUDI,

I have been looking into your diary for quite a few days. I am very pleased. You have passed the test. You have shown great devotion in serving me. Whether in the family or outside I have not met a girl of your purity. That is why I became a mother to no one but you. Why is it that though your diary shows your mental anguish you have not expressed it to me? Why should you be concerned about . . .[1] or anyone else? That girl has been deceiving me but in reality those who seek to deceive me are themselves deceived. The service you have rendered in this great *yajna* is of inestimable value to me. Your only offence is that you have let your body be ruined in the process, not so much from physical work as from your native reticence. Who knows but that there may be another bomb explosion and with Ramanama on my lips I may be taken away from you? If that

[1] The name is omitted in the source.

happens you will have won a total victory, only I shall not be there to watch it. But these scribbled words will remain and so will you. As for me, I shall think I have won a victory only when you transform yourself from an old woman of seventy which you look like today, into a blooming maiden of seventeen. You see how God is helping us. Everyone is appearing in his true colours. In the Congress too there is so much confusion.

Today I have written you a long letter. Please send a copy to Jaisukhlal.

May your service bear fruit.[1]

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 376

443. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO NAWAB OF BAHAWALPUR[2]

January 23, 1948

The latest is to the effect that about 500 people have died of illness brought about by exposure and partial starvation and 1,100 were lying ill. . . .[3] I have decided, therefore, to send to your State Mr. Leslie Cross of the Friends' Service Unit to be assisted by Dr. Sushila Nayyar . . .[4] who, when she was yet a child . . .[5] came under my care and has been with me ever since and is now, among other things, serving Muslim evacuees. . . .[6] They are going to your State in the hope of meeting you and meeting such non-Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, whom they may be permitted to see and bring me first-hand information. . . .[7]

Nothing would please me better than to be able to testify personally that things are as happy as they are described in your letter under reply and that I can advise the refugees from your State to return with perfect confidence as to the safety of their lives, honour and faith. I am not inclined to favour the view suggested by you that all these people left under a plot to discredit

[1] Gandhiji dictated the above to Manu Gandhi and added this sentence before signing.

[2] The addressee had written to the effect that non-Muslims were all right where they were, if only "communalist busy-bodies" would let them alone.

[3], [4], [5], [6], & [7] Omissions as in the source

the State. If you are not confident that these unhappy refugees can return to their homes and resume their former avocations, I know you will not hesitate to say so and in that case I would suggest your sending away, at least for the present, all your Hindu and Sikh subjects including Harijans, to the Union under proper escort. The chief question to consider is whether the Muslims of the State and the Muslim refugees have come under the purificatory influence of the recent fast, so as to welcome back their Hindu and Sikh brothers and sisters.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 756-7

444. LETTER TO KANTI GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
January 23, 1948

CHI. KANTI,

Your letter is beautiful. I am sending it for publication in *Harijan*[1] omitting the name and other particulars. I am not sending the original, however, only a copy (edited). See the note I have written on it. Ask me if you do not follow it. The fast seems to have done some harm to the body.[2] To that extent I may be said to be deficient in regard to Ramanama. It requires ceaseless practice, which I have not been able to manage. If God wants my faith to bear fruit, He will give me the experience. Even if I do not get the experience in this life, I think my faith will remain unshaken. I hope all three of you are well. Ask Saru[3] to write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 7387. Courtesy: Kanti Gandhi

[1] *Vide* "Worthy of Reflection", pp. 479-81.
[2] Gandhiji's kidneys and liver had been affected.
[3] Saraswati, addressee's wife

445. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 23, 1948

My giving up the fast has not lessened my responsibility; it has added to it. I am slowly regaining strength. It will count for something if I can show some achievement in Delhi. On the 20th I might have died. But Rama saved me because He had to take some more work from me. But if I can die with a smile on my lips it will be a great mercy. Do I deserve such grace? It is my endeavour to make myself fit for such death. The endeavour becomes more earnest with each passing day. This morning I had a long frank talk with Manu. I am a servant of Rama. I shall work as long as He commands me to work; I shall go when He commands me to go. I am prepared for both. My only prayer is that I may realize non-violence and make others realize it. You should join me in that prayer.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 377

446. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 23, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I have many things to say today. I shall try to deal with as many as I can. Today is Subhas Babu's birthday. I have told you I cannot remember anyone's Birthday or death anniversary. Someone reminded me of Subhas Babu's birthday. Subhas Babu was a votary of violence while I am a devotee of ahimsa. But what does it matter? I know that the most important thing is that we should learn from other people's virtues. As Tulsidas says:

> The Lord has created this world full of lifeless and living things and virtues and vices. The wise like the swan take the milk of virtue and leave out the waste of water.

CWMG - XC

We should be like the swan and take the milk of virtue. Man has virtues as well as vices. We should emulate him in his virtues and forget his deficiencies. Subhas was a great patriot. He laid down his life for the country. He was not by nature a fighter but he became commander of an army and took up arms against a great empire. The soldiers of that army included Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians. He never considered himself only a Bengali. He had no use for parochialism or caste distinctions. In his eyes all were Indians and servants of India. He treated all alike. It never occurred to him that since he was the commander he deserved more and others less. Let us therefore in remembering Subhas think of his great virtues and purge our hearts of malice.

Once a friend who was an eminent advocate asked me to define Hinduism. I told him I was neither a lawyer like him nor a religious leader and was really unable to define Hinduism, but I would suggest that a Hindu was one who had equal respect for all religions. Subhas had equal respect for all religions and he easily won every heart. It is good to remember such things on this occasion.

I told you some time ago of the tragic happenings in a village of Gwalior in which some Muslims were killed.[1] I have been making inquiries and I have a letter in this regard. The correspondent has given his name. He says I was wrong in saying that the place where murder, arson and looting are said to have occurred was Ratlam. It was really Jahangirpur which is in Gwalior State. He says that the report was not quite accurate. No doubt there was some disturbance but it was a private quarrel involving some Hindus and some Muslims. He says that it was not right to give the incident a communal colour and that no one was killed. I must place before you whatever reaches me. If people fabricate stories in this way, it must lead to widespread misunderstanding. If you must exaggerate, you should exaggerate your own shortcomings. Only then can it be said that we are following the path of self-purification.

I have a telegram from Mysore, saying that although what I have achieved in Delhi is quite creditable, one cannot say that it has had any effect in Mysore for there has been rioting there. There is also news to this effect in the newspapers. I know the Hindus and Muslims of Mysore. I have stayed there many times. I also know the people running the Government

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", pp. 466-7.

there and I have asked them to explain to the world everything that has happened. There is no doubt that some tragic events have taken place in Mysore.

I also have a telegram from some Muslims in Junagadh. It is a lengthy one but it is good. They say that ever since the Sardar took over the administration of Junagadh and a Regional Commissioner was appointed, they have been treated with justice and fairness. They assure me that no one can create a rift between Hindus and Muslims there. A referendum is soon to take place in Junagadh[1] and when that happens Muslims will vote for the continuation of the present arrangement.

There is also a wire from Meerut from the local Hindus. They say that the fast has created a very good effect. They have no malice against the nationalist Muslims but if I think that the Muslim Leaguers have become good or will ever become good, I shall have to repent. They praise my ahimsa but say that it cannot be effective in politics, that it should be confined only to spiritual matters. Then they express their approval of the present Government consisting of Panditji, the Sardar and others and say that it should not be changed. I have not so far heard anything suggesting that a change is impending. I cannot imagine who can change them or dismiss them. But still people talk and exaggerate. The Meerut Hindus have participated fully in the struggle for freedom. But they are in error in what they say. In politics we cannot say that we shall trust some people and not trust others. The people who are in the Government today have got to be trusted. We shall also have to trust the Muslims. If we have decided to live as brothers with Muslims we cannot distrust any Muslim even if he is a Muslim Leaguer. Similarly, if Muslims say that all Hindus and Sikhs are wicked it will be nonsense. All that we can do is to bring it to the notice of the Government that such and such a person is bad and then it will be for the Government to punish him in any way. We must not take the law into our own hands. It will be barbarism.

I continue to receive numerous wires. I cannot answer all the senders individually. I thank all of them through this meeting. May their blessings bear fruit.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 333-5

[1] The Government of India had decided to hold a referendum in Junagadh, Babariawad, Mangrol, Manavadar, Bantwa and Sardargarh in the third week of February.

447. *HIS MAJESTY'S OPPOSITION*

. . . Great Britain prides itself on possessing the "Mother of Parliaments". The method prevailing there is to maintain at Government cost "His Majesty's Opposition" to keep the Ministers within bounds by directing the flood-light of public criticism on the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government. . . .

Our country has taken up the reins of government. If we desire to pursue non-violence, what shall be the form of our government? Our Government also will need a corrective force to perform the functions of an "Opposition". . . . What we should aim at is not to replace the ministers, but to hold up models that they should follow. The constructive workers should direct them into proper channels by the beacon light of their example. This is a great responsibility that would devolve upon the constructive workers in a non-violent economy.

A well-organized body of constructive workers will be needed to provide this directive force. Their service to the people will be their sanction and the merit of their work will be their charter. The ministers will draw their inspiration from such a body which will advise and guide the secular government.

To be able to discharge this function the constructive workers forming such a body will have to be drawn from men of renunciation, whose one aim and ambition is the service of the people.

In a political structure of this nature the body of constructive workers will form the bulwark of safety for the people against exploitation. A government run on this basis will give the needed emphasis to the affairs of the people and ensure their welfare, bringing in swaraj to the masses.

This is very attractive.[1] But it has to be confessed that we have not the requisite number of selfless workers capable of giving a good account of themselves.

NEW DELHI, January 24, 1948

Harijan, 1-2-1948

[1] Only extracts from J. C. Kumarappa's article are reproduced above.

448. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

January 24, 1948

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

I am writing to you after a long time. But Manu does write to you and you write to her, so both you and I have news of each other.

One may say that something has been achieved in Delhi. How long it is going to last remains to be seen. The weakness following the fast persists. But God is slowly giving me back my strength. The kidneys and the liver are not functioning as satisfactorily as they should.

I write this about Manu, whom a year ago you offered as a sacrifice in this great *yajna*. It will not be wrong to say that occasionally I have been harsh in testing her. But the more brutal my treatment the more it was a blessing to her. She unflinchingly went through the ordeal and satisfactorily came out unscathed. As I had said at Srirampore, in this *yajna* we have to do or die. Here both these will be encompassed. On the 20th when the bomb exploded Manu was sitting beside me along with others. So we might both have died. But who can harm one whom Rama protects! Yesterday I had a long talk with Manu. I told her to write to you that if you could free yourself from there, you should come to Sevagram or Delhi. It is possible that I may have to go to Wardha for Jamnalal's death anniversary[1]. But it is not certain. It does not seem likely that I can get away from Delhi. Manu told me that since it was I who had laid down terms for participation in this *yajna* I myself should write to you. The best thing would be for you to see my programme in the newspapers and then come wherever I may be. You will see that I have settled the debt I owed. She has sent you her diaries. She has made great progress in writing the diary. She takes great interest in writing notes and when I see them Mahadev's face appears before my eyes.

I am dictating this immediately after the prayer. There is a heap of letters to be attended to. If God wills we shall be

[1] Which fell on February 11

meeting in a few days and then we can talk about the rest.

Manu is enjoying herself. If you have some magic for making her fat you should let me know. The girls will be well with their in-laws.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 380-2

449. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 24, 1948

Things are well here but elsewhere there is certainly disorder. In Sind and the N. W. F. P. the situation is deteriorating. I have sent Jehangir Patel and Dinshaw Mehta to have talks with Jinnah, Liaquat Ali and others. I am hoping that I shall get considerable help from Suhrawardy in my projected visit to Pakistan. But all this is day-dreaming.

By God's grace I am slowly regaining strength. I am a servant of Rama. I will do His work so long as He wills. I shall have won if I am granted a death whereby I can demonstrate the strength of truth and non-violence. I did not display any courage in what happened on the 20th. I thought it was part of some army exercise. Had I known that it was an intimation of my death I cannot tell how I might have reacted. So I am not yet a mahatma. What does it matter if people describe me as one? I am only an ordinary mortal. Yes, if I have been sincere in my pursuit of truth, non-violence, non-stealing, *brahmacharya* and so on and if I have done all this with God as my witness, I shall certainly be granted the kind of death that I seek. I have expressed the wish at the prayer meeting[1] also that should someone kill me I may have no anger against the killer in my heart and I may die with Ramanama on my lips.

Today after the prayer I wrote a letter to Manu's father. This is the next. There is a whole pile of letters to answer. The Working Committee will also start meeting from today. Therefore the post can be attended to only after the morning prayer.

[1] On January 21; *vide* p. 473.

You should keep me informed of things there. Nothing has been decided about my going to Sevagram.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 382-3

450. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 24, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I requested you to maintain silence during the prayer meeting. For some time you were quiet, but later when the prayer was going on some women carried on a conversation and children were screaming. I have repeatedly said that when children cry they should be taken out of the meeting. Good manners demand that women should not keep their crying children in the meeting.

Today I will deal with a lengthy telegram, which I had no time to take up yesterday. It says that the agreement that had been signed between the two Governments for expatriation of the prisoners and abducted girls was a good one but that it only lasted for a short while and has now been broken. The reason for this seems to have been the condition laid down by the West Punjab Government that it would implement the agreement only after all the States in East Punjab had undertaken to return all the Muslim girls held anywhere under their jurisdiction.

I can see no difficulty in this if the same should apply to the States in West Punjab even if there are fewer States there than in East Punjab. It is true that difficulties crop up in implementing such an agreement. When the agreement was signed no difficulties were raised. What does it matter? All the girls whether on this side or that side should be restored. It does not seem to me to be right that if ten girls are returned by the West Punjab Government East Punjab should also return only that number and no more. All the girls held in East Punjab, all the women and men who are prisoners should be returned unconditionally. But today this does not happen because there is ill feeling. What does it matter that there are more girls held in West Punjab than in East Punjab? I say that we should not think on these lines. It is all a mistake. To carry away one person is as much a mistake as to carry away a hundred. If more

were not carried away it is only because the ruffians were not able to—not because they did not intend to—carry away so many girls or imprison so many men. A process that has been once set in motion should not be hampered. In fact the agreement should have been extended to cover other things too. If the two Governments meet in a spirit of amity and fully resolve that they will not go to war, the way will become clear. I shall therefore humbly ask the two Governments to forget what has happened and to correct themselves. We must cleanse our hearts. But even if our hearts have not been cleansed we can still do what is clearly our duty. Self-purification means that we purge our hearts.

I have been receiving complaints that not all the girls abducted are returned from West Punjab. I have the same complaint concerning girls held in East Punjab. I have not conducted any investigation and cannot say who is lying and who is telling the truth. But if the complaint is true with regard to West Punjab it is a matter of shame. The same holds good for East Punjab. But there is yet another complaint against West Punjab. It is said they say one thing and do the opposite of it. All I can say is that this should be put right or else the purpose for which I fasted has been fulfilled in letter but not in spirit.[1]

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 335-7

451. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,
January 25, 1948

DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM,

I have your two letters. It is as you say. God is very merciful. Of all my fasts this was the biggest. What the result will be God alone knows.

I am dictating this letter, because after prayer in the morning it is more convenient to dictate than to write.

[1] At this stage the chatter had become so loud that Gandhiji said he could not proceed with what he wanted to say and brought the meeting to a close. He stressed the importance of the women observing complete silence at the prayers and suggested that those with children should stand at the fringe so as not to disturb the meeting.

I am in a dilemma about your coming here. At first I had thought of sending you a telegram, then I gave up the idea. If the work at Borkamta can go on well in your absence and you can be conveniently relieved from there, you can come to me.

I am regaining strength. Do not worry about me.

About Kanu too I am in a dilemma. He can come if he wants to. If I get the time I will write to him.

I am sending Rashid's wife's[1] letter to you. I could not decipher her signature. What is her name? I wrote to her that she could come whenever she wanted. She will stay with me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 594

452. LETTER TO PRABHUDAYAL VIDYARTHI

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,
January 25, 1948

CHI. PRABHUDAYAL,

I have your letter. You are doing good work. Keep working in the same way. We have never done any work in the villages and therefore the difficulties arise. You have to produce there milk, fruit and vegetables. Leafy vegetables take very little time to grow. Do you not have any cow at all in your village? Meet the zamindars and try to soften their hearts with love. So far we have not seen the true strength of ahimsa. Now is the time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 11666

[1] Hosa Rashid

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453. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 25, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

People say that we have achieved heart-unity. I question both Muslims and Hindus and they all say that they have realized the futility of going on fighting with each other. I will not ask how many Muslims there are at this meeting. But I shall ask everyone to treat them as their brothers. If you meet any Muslim treat him as a brother and offer him a place to sit. For the last two days more people have been coming to the prayer. If each one of them brings a Muslim with him it will be a great thing.

The Urs[1] will start from tomorrow at the Mehrauli shrine. This fair is an annual feature but this year we had destroyed the shrine. Even the stone lattice work was demolished. Now it has been repaired somewhat and the Urs will take place as usual. I do not know how many Muslims will go there but I know that formerly a large number of them visited the Urs and so did a large number of Hindus. I hope that this time too Hindus will go there with peaceful intent and reverent hearts. Let them not mock or malign the Muslims who will be going to the fair. The police of course will be there but these should be as few as possible, you should all act as policemen yourselves and make sure that everything functions smoothly. At any rate you have earned a good name. The newspapers feature it and I continue to receive letters and telegrams from all over the world. I am receiving communications from China and other parts of Asia and from America and Europe as well. All of them say that we have achieved here something very great, that they had been fearing that with the British having left the country we Indians being stupid and inexperienced in the ways of governing would destroy ourselves in a civil war.

I shall be leaving for Wardha on February 2. Rajendra Babu will accompany me. But I shall try to return to Delhi as

[1] A religious fair held annually at the shrine of Khwaja Syed Kutub-ud-Din Bakhtiar

soon as I can. The newspaper report that I shall be staying there for a month is not correct. I shall go to Wardha only if you will all bless me and assure me that you will not start fighting as soon as I leave. I shall later go to Pakistan also, but for that to be possible the Pakistan Government has to tell me that I can go and carry on my work there. Even if any one of the Provincial Governments of Pakistan invites me I shall go.

Whenever there is a meeting of the Congress Working Committee at which I am present I give you some idea of what is transacted there. Today there was a second meeting of the Congress Working Committee and many matters were discussed there. You may not be interested in everything that was taken up for discussion but one thing I may tell you. The Congress had decided some twenty years ago that there should be as many provinces in the country as there are major languages. The Congress had also said that as soon as power came into its hands such linguistic provinces would be formed. For that matter we have nine or ten provinces even today—all under a central authority. If new provinces are formed and they are all placed under the authority of Delhi there is no harm in it. But it will be very bad if they all want to be free and refuse to accept central authority. It should not be that Bombay then will have nothing to do with Maharashtra and Maharashtra with Karnataka and Karnataka with Andhra. Let all live as brothers. Moreover if linguistic provinces are formed it will also give a fillip to the regional languages. It would be absurd to make Hindustani the medium of instruction in all the regions and it is still more absurd to use English for this purpose.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 338-40

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454. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 26, 1948

This day, 26th January, is Independence Day. This observance was quite appropriate when we were fighting for independence we had not seen nor handled. Now we have handled it and we seem to be disillusioned. At least I am, even if you are not.

What are we celebrating today? Surely not our disillusionment. We are entitled to celebrate the hope that the worst is over and that we are on the road to showing the lowliest of the villager that it means his freedom from serfdom and that he is no longer a serf born to serve the cities and towns of India but that he is destined to exploit the city-dwellers for the advertisement of the finished fruits of well-thought-out labours, that he is the salt of the Indian earth and that it means also equality of all classes and creeds, never the domination and superiority of the major community over a minor, however insignificant it may be in numbers or influence. Let us not defer the hope and make the heart sick. Yet, what are the strikes and a variety of lawlessnesses but a deferring of the hope? These are symptoms of our sickness and weakness. Let labour realize its dignity and strength. Capital has neither dignity nor strength compared to labour. These the man in the street also has. In a well-ordered democratic society there is no room, no occasion, for lawlessness or strikes. In such a society there are ample lawful means for vindicating justice. Violence veiled or unveiled must be taboo. Strikes in Kanpur, coal mines or elsewhere mean material loss to the whole society not excluding the strikers themselves. I need not be reminded that this declamation does not lie well in the mouth of one like me who has been responsible for so many successful strikes. If there be such critics they ought not to forget that then there was neither independence nor the kind of legislation we now have. I wonder if we can remain free from the fever of power politics or the bid for power which afflicts the political world, the East and the West. Before leaving this topic

[1] It being Gandhiji's silence day, Pyarelal translated the written speech into Hindustani and read it out after the prayers.

of the day, let us permit ourselves to hope that though geographically and politically India is divided into two, at heart we shall ever be friends and brothers helping and respecting one another and be one for the outside world.

Decontrol of cloth[1] has been welcomed in all quarters. There never was a scarcity of cloth. How can it be when there is enough cotton and enough hands in the land for spinning and weaving? Equally welcome is the removal of control on firewood and coal. It is remarkable that there is now a glut in the market of *gur*, the poor man's supply for caloric deficiency. There would be no remedy for glut nor for reaching places outside the boundary of production unless there is quick locomotion. Let a correspondent in the know speak on this subject:

> Needless to say that efficiency of the rail and road transport is the chief factor for the success of the decontrol policy. If there is no improvement in the railway transport there is a danger of country-wide famine and the entire collapse of the decontrols. The present working of the railway transport is a living danger to these decontrols and controls alike. The terrible contrast of different prices prevalent in different parts of India for the same commodity is chiefly due to this transport bottleneck. If *gur* is sold at Rs. 8 per maund at Rohtak and at Rs. 50 in Bombay, we must say there is something wrong with the working of the railways. Thousands of wagons in the length and breadth of the country are not kept moving. Wagons are not even unloaded for months and months together. Corruption is rampant in a most virulent form in the booking of these wagons, in the garb of 'scarcity of wagons and coal' and 'priority for different commodities'. For the booking of one wagonload one has to spend hundreds of rupees and spend days together in the railway yards. Even the best efforts of the worthy Transport Minister[2] have cut no ice in so far as the supply of these wagons and their constant moving is concerned.
>
> The entire rail and road transport requires a complete overhauling by the Transport Minister to make the decontrols a thorough success. Then only decontrols shall prove a blessing to the poor for the benefit of whom they are being pursued. Millions of villagers, farmers and labourers are hit owing to the defective system in this rail and road transport as their produce seldom reaches the market.
>
> As stated in my previous letter, the rationing of petrol ought to be removed and monopoly and permit system of the road transport may be abolished altogether. This monopoly system is benefiting

[1] The Government had decided to decontrol cloth from January 19.
[2] John Matthai

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a few transport companies only but has rendered the lives of millions and millions of our countrymen difficult.

Ninety-five per cent of the success in decontrols solely depends upon the efficient working of the railways and vehicles, i. e., in keeping the wagons moving, and abolishing the rationing of petrol and the permit and monopoly system of the lorries. This shall bring from the remotest corners of the country lakhs of tons of foodstuffs and all other produce profusely to the entire markets of the land.

The subject of corruption referred to by the correspondent is not new. Only it has become much worse than before. Restraint from without has practically gone. Corruption will go when the large number of persons given to the unworthy practice realize that the nation does not exist for them but that they do for the nation. It requires a high code of morals, extreme vigilance on the part of those who are free from the corrupt practice and who have influence over corrupt servants. Indifference in such matters is criminal. If our evening prayers are genuine, they must play no mean part in removing from our midst the demon of corruption.

The Hindustan Times, 27-1-1948, and *Harijan*, 1-2-1948

455. CONGRESS POSITION

Indian National Congress which is the oldest national political organization and which has after many battles fought her non-violent way to freedom cannot be allowed to die. It can only die with the nation. A living organism ever grows or it dies. The Congress has won political freedom, but it has yet to win economic freedom, social and moral freedom. These freedoms are harder than the political, if only because they are constructive, less exciting and not spectacular. All-embracing constructive work evokes the energy of all the units of the millions.

The Congress has got the preliminary and necessary part of her freedom. The hardest has yet to come. In its difficult ascent to democracy, it has inevitably created rotten boroughs leading to corruption and creation of institutions popular and democratic only in name. How to get out of the weedy and unwieldy growth ?

The Congress *must* do away with its special register of members, at no time exceeding one crore, not even then easily identifiable. It had an unknown register of millions who could never be wanted. Its register should now be co-extensive with

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all the men and women on the voters' rolls in the country. The Congress business should be to see that no faked name gets in and no legitimate name is left out. On its own register it will have a body of servants of the nation who would be workers doing the work allotted to them from time to time.

Unfortunately for the country they will be drawn chiefly for the time being from the city-dwellers, most of whom would be required to work for and in the villages of India. The ranks must be filled in increasing numbers from the villagers.

These servants will be expected to operate upon and serve the voters registered according to law, in their own surroundings. Many persons and parties will woo them. The very best will win. Thus and in no other way can the Congress regain its fast-ebbing unique position in the country. But yesterday the Congress was unwittingly the servant of the nation, it was *khudai khidmatgar*—God's servant. Let it now proclaim to itself and the world that it is only God's servant—nothing more, nothing less. If it engages in the ungainly skirmish for power, it will find one fine morning that it is no more. Thank God, it is now no longer in sole possession of the field.

I have only opened to view the distant scene. If I have the time and health, I hope to discuss in these columns what the servants of the nation can *do* to raise themselves in the estimation of their masters, the whole of the adult population, male and female.

New Delhi, January 27, 1948

Harijan, 1-2-1948

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456. HARIJANS AND TEMPLE-ENTRY

A friend from Wadhawan writes:[1]

The second letter is from Ahmedabad. It is unsigned, with a subscription "Yours oppressed". The handwriting is well formed. The language and the writing are not of any Harijan I know. I reproduce below its relevant portion.[2]

The distinction drawn by the writer of the first letter has in my opinion no meaning. Hindus can and do visit Swaminarayan and Jain temples. Harijans should also visit them. For years there has been a movement going on to prove that Brahmins and Harijans have equal rights. It has met with considerable success. Now that the Bombay Government have passed a law to that effect there seems to be no occasion for satyagraha. If the law is in conformity with public opinion it should command respect. If it is against public opinion, its enforcement will be rather slow. In a democracy a law cannot be enforced through coercion. It always calls for discerning circumspection. It will succeed if a reformer takes recourse to it with clear understanding. If he is impatient the law will prove a failure.

Trustees are not the owners of the temples. Even those who get the temples built are not the owners if they are built for public use. The real owners of the temples are the devotees. Devotees are those who visit the temples either for worship or to feign worship. Regarded in this light all Jain and Swaminarayan temples are Hindu temples. I have myself visited these temples. No one even cared to ask me or hundreds like me to which sect we belonged. It was enough that I looked a Hindu. So where Hindus go Harijans can also go. Harijans are not a separate community. Enlightened public opinion and the law which embodies that opinion say that they are one of the *varnas*,

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had written that Harijans were admitted into temples anyhow with or without the consent of the trustees and questioned the insistence on getting Harijans admitted into Swaminarayan or Jain temples in which they had no faith.

[2] Not translated here. The correspondent had written that on *Makar Sankranti* day some Harijans had gone to the local Swaminarayan temple but the doors of the temple were closed to them and that they had been offering satyagraha for having the temple opened without any change in the attitude of the management.

be they four or eighteen, comprising Hindu society. Therefore the contrary view cannot prevail. It is the devotees who make of God a living entity. If they are good, the God is good.

Now the second letter. I fail to appreciate the impatience of the Harijans notwithstanding my firm views as stated above. Those who insist on going into the temple are not true devotees. They do not care for *deva-darshan*, they are running only after their right and away from religion. They write anonymous letters or allow others to write for them. True devotees will not do such things; they will do what Nandanar[1] did. He had no one except God. A Brahmin who regards himself as belonging to a higher class gladly worships that Nandanar today. I want to see among the Harijans a Nandanar who has become a man of God by his own choice and those who are born Harijans should also wish for the same. If non-Harijan Hindus want, let them take Harijans to their temples with due respect. As long as that does not happen, let the Harijans stay at their homes and sanctify themselves with the purifying Ganga of their devotion. There is no need for them to fast before a temple. I believe that it is *adharma* to do so. Such fasts are called *dharnas* in Hindi. In Gujarati it is *langhan* or *tragu*. There is no merit in it. It is certainly sinful and everyone should keep miles away from such sins.

NEW DELHI, January 27, 1948
[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 1-2-1948

457. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 27, 1948

"I know what is dharma but I do not pursue it; I know what is *adharma* but I do not abjure it."[2]

If I can prove that this is not true in my case, I shall think that I have done enough. But this can only be if I can joyfully take a volley of bullets. I do not think that I deserve to be congratulated on what happened on the 20th. It was only God's blessing. But I am fully prepared to go when the summons

[1] An "untouchable" devotee, who became one of the sixty-three Saiv saints of South India. *Vide* also Vol. XXVII, pp. 72-3 and Vol. XXXIV, pp. 516-20.

[2] जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः
जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः।

comes. For the rest, I am pursuing the idea of going to Wardha but it does not seem likely to me that I shall be able to go. Who knows what tomorrow will bring?

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 392-3

458. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER[1]

January 27, 1948

Only today I have written on the policy of the Congress. You will see it[2]. I am trying to persuade . . . says that he cannot do without . . . and . . . says he cannot do without . . . If one talks of resigning . . . is already ready to resign[3]. About Kashmir I feel that there is no need for us to go to Lake Success[4]. Still we shall see what comes about.

I had resolved to do or die here. It looks like something has been achieved. Still a great deal remains to be done.

I am going to Mehrauli today.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 393

459. SPEECH AT URS[5]

MEHRAULI,
January 27, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I would request the sisters to remain silent and give me a few minutes. I had hardly imagined that I would be required to speak here. I have come here on pilgrimage. Several days ago I had heard that it might not be possible to hold the Urs at Mehrauli as in the previous years. Had it been so I would

[1] Omission of names in the letter is as in the source.

[2] *Vide* pp. 497-8.

[3] Obviously the reference is to the growing differences between Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel, both of whom had written detailed notes to Gandhiji, each offering to resign in favour of the other.

[4] The United Nations Organization

[5] Gandhiji was taken to the innermost shrine. The usual practice of not allowing women to enter the shrine was waived and the girls accompanying Gandhiji were allowed to enter.

have been deeply distressed. I request you—Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims who have come here with cleansed hearts—to take a vow at this holy place that you will never allow strife to raise its head, but will live in amity, united as friends and brothers. Then the world will admit that though we quarrelled among ourselves as two brothers, ultimately we have not turned into sworn enemies. We might be different outwardly but after all we are the offshoots of the same tree. I do not want to talk about one who is a slave of Satan. I have seen life. This is nothing new. Even now somewhere or other fighting is going on. Only today I have read that Hindus have been killed in the Frontier.[1] The Muslims here should be ashamed of it. We have to resolve to cleanse our hearts. The people massacred there are not going to come back. But we must declare and say that we are not going to avenge it by killing anyone. We will purify ourselves and meet the opponents with love. It would be well for the Hindus if they understood and assimilated this. When I broke my fast it was on the condition that the Hindus and Muslims of Delhi would thoroughly cleanse their hearts. If, however, you persuaded me to break my fast just to keep me alive, it was folly on your part.

[From Hindi]
Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 394

460. INTERVIEW TO KINGSLEY MARTIN[2]

NEW DELHI,
January 27, 1948

Gandhiji explained how the freedom movement had not been a non-violent movement in the highest sense of the term. If it had been the non-violence of the strong no butchery such as had taken place recently could have come about. He discovered this while he was on his pilgrimage in Noakhali and ever since this discovery he had been impressing the fact on everyone. He felt that non-violence during the struggle for independence was an expedient, i. e., resistance to the white man was undertaken in a non-violent manner simply because we had no military strength with which to offer battle.

[1] Non-Muslims waiting for evacuation in a camp at Parachinar were attacked by tribesmen on the night of January 22. According to the local authorities, 130 were killed, 50 wounded and 50 abducted.

[2] A British press correspondent. Notes of this interview taken by Amrit Kaur were approved by Gandhiji.

Gandhiji went on to relate how he had resisted a certain millionaire in South Africa who had introduced him at a public meeting as a mere passive resister and weak because as an Indian there he was landless and without any rights.[1] Gandhiji objected to this description and said that real passive resistance had been miscalled a weapon of the weak. After all Jesus Christ had been called the Prince of passive resisters. Could he, in any sense of the term, be called a weak man? People forget that soul-force, the only weapon of the truly non-violent man, was a weapon of the strong.

In reply to the correspondent's suggestion that many people looked upon non-violence as a good opposition weapon in politics and that they could not understand how it could, for example, be used as a positive weapon in Kashmir today or against a man like Hitler who just killed everybody and stamped out opposition in that manner, Gandhiji laughingly replied that he was not in charge of the Government and therefore could not guide their policies; nor did he think that the members of the present Government believed in non-violence. He recalled how Maulana Saheb had said, "When we gain power we shall not be able to hold it non-violently." Gandhiji said that he had laughed to himself at that time and related the moral of Tolstoy's story of Ivan the Fool which had always remained with him. Hindu scriptures, Gandhiji said, had scores of such stories but he quoted Ivan the Fool because the interviewer might have read the book. Ivan remained non-violent even when he became king. Gandhiji pointed out how the truly non-violent man could never hold power himself. He derived power from the people whom he served. For such a man or such a government, a non-violent army would be a perfect possibility. The voters then would themselves say, 'We do not want any military for our defence.' A non-violent army would fight against all injustice or attack but with clean weapons. Non-violence did not signify that man must not fight against the enemy and by enemy was meant the evil which men did, not human beings themselves. He went on to say that if he were the leader of Kashmir like Sheikh Abdullah, he would have such an army but Sheikh Abdullah quite honestly and humbly thought otherwise.

[1] According to "A Correction" sent by H. S. L. Polak which appeared in *Harijan*, 5-9-1948, the reference was obviously to William Hosken who though a well-to-do businessman, was not a millionaire.

William Hosken had introduced Gandhiji and the passive resistance movement at a meeting at Germiston in 1909 as follows: "The Transvaal Indians have had recourse to passive resistance when all other means of securing redress proved to be of no avail. They do not enjoy franchise. . . . They are weak and have no arms. Therefore they have taken to passive resistance which is a weapon of the weak." *Vide* Vol. XXIX, p. 93, also Vol. IX, pp. 243-4.

On the correspondent suggesting a solution of the Kashmir issue on the basis of separation, e. g., a predominantly pro-Pakistan area like Poonch going to Pakistan and the Kashmir Valley remaining in India Gandhiji had no difficulty in giving a firm answer in the negative. He held firmly that India or any part of India could not be divided in this manner. It was an evil that must not be allowed to continue.

Take, for example, Hyderabad; will you separate the town of Hyderabad from the rest of the State? Such pockets exist all over India and separation would then become an endless process spelling the ruination of India.

The interviewer pleaded that the position of Hyderabad was not wholly analogous. Any state on a border area was surely different. But Gandhiji maintained that it was not possible for states even on the border to be either cut up or separated or . . . to call themselves independent. And when the correspondent mentioned Gilgit, Gandhiji recalled that he was in Kashmir[1] when the city of Srinagar was illuminated. On asking what the illuminations were for Gandhiji was told that they were celebrating the accession of Gilgit to Kashmir. He was sad when he heard the news because he wondered how long Kashmir would hold Gilgit. It had been a big bite even for Britain. Britain's policy of keeping on adding to her territories in India had not been either a wise or right policy. If Kashmir acceded to India, it would be because of the will of the people as a whole and they would do so well knowing that Gilgit was no part of the Indian Union today. There were people who said they would reconquer Gilgit. All sorts of complications would then arise. Gandhiji said that Britain had made of India a political whole and India must continue as such.

In reply to a question as to what Pakistan could do with tribal people Gandhiji said:

I would accept a challenge of conquering the tribal areas but as a non-violent man. I would not bribe them, nor kill them; I would serve them. Have not missionaries allowed themselves to be eaten by cannibals?

The correspondent exclaimed, "Alas! there are no Gandhis in Palestine, in Russia or in the U. S. A.!", to which Gandhiji laughingly replied:

So much the worse for them.

In reply to a query as to why Poonch going over to Pakistan was not practicable and that a war between India and the Frontier would be unending, Gandhiji replied that it would be a very bad example to others. There were pockets everywhere, for example, Murshidabad in West Bengal.

[1] From August 1 to 4, 1947

The vital difference between the policy of the Indian Union and that of Pakistan was that the former never believed in dismemberment while the Pakistan leaders did. Gandhiji quoted the example of Kathiawar. Pakistan wanted to vivisect Kathiawar by getting Junagadh to accede to that Dominion. Vivisection of Kathiawar which was indivisible was quite unthinkable. The whole basis of partition was, in his opinion, wrong. Gandhiji admitted that two distinguished persons had suggested the idea of partition of Kashmir to him but he had very firmly said "no" for reasons he had already explained.

In conclusion he asked the correspondent to study things deeply and not superficially. He himself was working for a heart-union between Hindus and Muslims not only in India but in Pakistan also and would continue his efforts in that direction.

Harijan, 20-6-1948

461. A DISCUSSION[1]

January [*27*],[2] *1948*

Mr. Diwakar and myself[3] met Mahatmaji to consult him on some of the important points relating to the changes in the Congress Constitution. The following is a summary of the talk we had with him:

On the question of general membership, on being asked whether the membership of the Congress should be open to all who subscribed to its creed or whether it should be further restricted to those who also agreed with the fundamentals of its socio-economic programme, Mahatmaji was of opinion that there need be no necessity for enrolment of members even on the present basis. Instead, he suggested that the constituencies should be so limited in area that all adults residing in that locality could participate in the elections to the primary committees, irrespective of the fact whether they formally subscribed to the creed and programme of the Congress or not. The reason he advanced in favour of this was, firstly, that the constituency being small every adult in it would be able to exercise his or her judgment in favour of a candidate about whose conduct and work he or she could properly judge. The Congress should henceforward be an organization of

[1] & [2] According to the introductory note issued with the "Draft Constitution of Congress" the Constitution Committee met Gandhiji in the morning after the Working Committee meeting held on January 26 and "had the privilege of discussing many important points". Gandhiji was requested to prepare a draft embodying his proposals which he undertook to hand over on January 30. *Vide* pp. 526-8.

[3] Presumably Acharya Jugal Kishore, one of the General Secretaries of the Congress and a member of the Constitution Committee

sevaks who possessed missionary zeal to be able to effect a radical change in the society ensuring justice, tolerance and economic equality. Only through such a change in the social outlook could the state be reformed and restrained.

Secondly, and consequently he wants to avoid the present system of election with its pocket or rotten boroughs and the corruption incidental to it.

Regarding the qualifications of those who are to be eligible to stand as candidates for election to the various Congress Committees he would require everyone to subscribe not only to the creed but also to the fundamentals of the socio-economic programme and also to put in some kind of constructive work such as plying the charkha for a stated period or any other manual work besides doing some kind of public work.

On the question whether the Congress, now that the political power had been transferred to the representatives of Indians, had any role other than that of carrying out the parliamentary activities, Mahatmaji was very emphatic that even for carrying out parliamentary activities the Congress had to carry on constructive activities in the country to maintain contact with the people and to educate them to understand Congress policies and programmes. But apart from this kind of activities the Congress had also to rebuild a new society based upon truth and non-violence—a society not so much dependent on the existence of a strong and centralized government as on the intelligent co-operation of the people organized on a voluntary basis and inspired by the ideals of justice, tolerance and truthfulness. He was of opinion that unless the Congress took up this role, the Congress would gradually lose its moral influence and was likely to degenerate into a political party hankering only after power and position. Viewed in this context, the Congress must reorganize itself on the basis proposed by him and become eventually a strong and efficient instrument of public service and of public will. His suggestion regarding the question of jurisdiction of the Congress was that it should not function in the Pakistan area. He said that formerly he was of opinion that it could function in that area but in the changed circumstances brought about by the communal frenzy it would not be proper to function there directly. In the case of East Bengal his suggestion was that the Congress could function there if the Government of East Bengal had no objection. Regarding States, he was of opinion that the States Peoples' Conference should continue to function but they should have representatives on the A. I. C. C. and Provincial Congress Committees.

A. I. C. C. File No. 1876. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

462. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 27, 1948

Gandhiji began his post-prayer address by asking how many Muslims were present and expressed his disappointment when only one hand went up. The other day he had advised that each Hindu or Sikh should bring at least one Muslim friend along and he had expected they would do that.

Gandhiji next described his morning visit to the Dargah Sharif at Mehrauli.

No one had difficulty in visiting the fair. When I asked the Muslims whether as many people visited the shrine this year as in the previous years, they said that some at least must have been too frightened to go. This shows that there are amongst us people who cause a scare. They say that what happened in Allahabad could happen here and ask what the Hindus would do then. It is a shameful situation that one man should be frightened of another man. But at least I observed at the fair that there were as many Hindus and Sikhs as there were Muslims. I also saw something that distressed me. The shrine is very ancient. It is second only to the Ajmer shrine. The chief thing about it was the beauty of its marble carvings and inlay work. Much of it, though not all, has been destroyed. I was sorry to see it. It is sheer vandalism. Have we fallen so low that we should violate and desecrate a tomb of a saint on which thousands of rupees had been spent? I cannot go into the account that says that what happened in Pakistan was ten times worse. To me it is meaningless to consider whether the crime committed was of greater or less magnitude. To me it is a shameful thing. If the whole world indulges in shameful acts does it mean that we should do the same?

You will surely agree with me that we should not resort to such shameful conduct. I am told the shrine has always attracted large crowds both of Hindus and Muslims who go there to seek fulfilment of some wish. It is associated with the name of a saint in whose eyes Hindus and Muslims were all equal. This is

[1] The Hindi version in *Prarthana Pravachan* has been collated with the report in *The Hindustan Times*.

a matter of history and it does not do to falsify history. We should have respect for such men of God and should not be guided by what happens in Pakistan.

I see from the newspapers today that at one place[1] in Pakistan one hundred and thirty Hindus and Sikhs have been murdered. There was also looting. There are many small tribes of Muslims around the borders of the Frontier Province. These tribals attacked the Hindus and killed them. No one says that these Hindus had caused any harm. The Pakistan Government says that it took prompt action and many of the attackers were put to death. We do not know how far that is true. But since the Pakistan Government says so we should accept it. Let us not be provoked and start killing the Muslims here. Today you are living like brothers but if you harbour any malice in your heart you will be untrue to the pledge you have taken. It is for our Government to ask for an account from the Pakistan Government. Our part is only to keep our pledge to keep our hearts clean.

Rajkumari[2] had been on a visit to Ajmer. She told me of a tragic and shameful situation. It seems the Harijans there, from whom people take a lot of work which they willingly perform, live surrounded by dirt and filth. The administration there is our own. And the officers—Hindus and Sikhs—work under our Government. How can they allow this disgraceful state of affairs to continue? There are many white-collared Hindus there who earn a lot of money and are quite well-to-do. Why do they not go to the Harijan locality and stay there even for a day? If they went there they would be nauseated and some of them might even die. It is criminal that people whose only sin is that they were born Harijans should be allowed to live in such squalor. I have been to the Harijan locality in Delhi too. The conditions there are pretty bad. But Ajmer seems to be much worse in this respect. We have secured our independence, but it is of no value if we cannot stop such a thing. And it can be done in a day. Can we not provide a piece of dry ground for the Harijans? If they must remove garbage, as they do, must they also be made to live in it? We seem to have lost our reason and we have become heartless. We have forgotten God. That is why we continue to commit such crimes. How can we then find fault with others?

Finally I want to tell you about Mirpur. I have referred to the matter briefly earlier. Mirpur is in Kashmir. It has been

[1] At Parachinar; *vide* footnote 1, p. 502.
[2] Amrit Kaur

occupied by the raiders. A number of women and children there have been abducted. They include not only young women but also some elderly ones. They are in the power of the raiders who, I have no doubt, have violated their honour. The food given to them is very bad. A few of them are within the border of Pakistan. Some of them may have been taken up to the Jhelum in the Gujrat district.

I must tell the raiders that they must exercise a modicum of restraint. What they are doing will bring about the downfall of Islam and yet they say that they are doing all this for a free Kashmir.

I can understand it if people indulge in plunder and rapine for food. But it is too much to assault innocent young girls and to deprive them of food and clothing. Is this what the Koran teaches? I must ask the Pakistan Government to recover all the abducted women and girls and let them go back to their homes.

The Mirpur people who came to me are quite strong and sturdy. But they feel disconsolate. They ask me why it is that such a powerful Government cannot do anything about this. I tried to explain matters to them. Jawaharlal himself has been deeply distressed and is trying to do what he can. But how does his grieving or his trying help? How can those who have lost their all, who have been ruined and separated from their nearest and dearest, be comforted? One of the men who came to see me has lost fifteen of his relatives. He asked me what was to happen to those still left there. I must ask the raiders and the Government of Pakistan, for the sake of humanity and for the sake of God, to return all the abducted women with due respect and without waiting to be asked. It is their duty. I have enough knowledge of Islam about which I have read a good deal. Nowhere does Islam bid people to carry away women and keep them in such a disreputable condition. It is irreligion, not religion. It is worship of Satan, not of God.

The Hindustan Times, 28-1-1948, and *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 344-7

463. INTERVIEW TO VINCENT SHEEAN[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 27/28, 1948

Gandhiji's objection to the use of force was not that force could as well be used to support unrighteous wars; it was fundamental.

I do not know what is intrinsically good. Hence I do not go by results. It is enough if I take care of the means.

For instance, as a nature-curist, he did not believe in the use of sulpha drugs. Suppose he got typhoid. Should he abandon his belief and try to get cured by taking sulpha drugs?

I do not know whether it is good for me or humanity to be cured by the use of sulpha drugs; so I refuse to use sulpha drugs . . .[2] If evil does seem sometimes to result from good, the inference would be that the means employed were probably wrong.

Good action to produce good results must be supported by means that are pure.

If those who believe in the idea of non-violence keep away from government, government will continue to be carried on by the use of force. How is then the transformation of the existing system of government to be brought about?

Gandhiji admitted that ordinarily government was impossible without the use of force.

I have therefore said that a man who wants to be good and do good in all circumstances must not hold power.

Is all government to come to a standstill then?

No, he (the man of non-violence) can send those to the Government who represent his will. If he goes there himself, he exposes himself to the corrupting influence of power. But my representative holds power of attorney only during my pleasure. If he falls a prey to temptation, he can be recalled. I cannot recall myself. All this requires a high degree of intelligence on the part of the electorate. There are about half a dozen con-

[1] Vincent Sheean, an American author, accompanied Gandhiji on his evening walk on January 27. The interview continued the next day.

[2] Omission as in the source

structive work organizations. I do not send the workers to the Parliament. I want them to keep the Parliament under check by educating and guiding the voters.

You mean to say that power always corrupts?

Yes.

Asked further whether this did not call for a very prolonged and high degree of discipline which it would be too much to expect of common people, he answered, "No." It was their inertia that made people think so.

Too much is being made of the study of things that are in my view really of not much consequence to humanity, to the neglect of things eternal. Take, for instance, the exact distance of the sun from the earth or the question whether the earth is round. The discipline that is necessary to discover the laws that govern life is no less important and yet we say that it is so laborious that only a select few can attain it. For instance, we steal in so many ways—not to steal in any shape or form needs some mental poise, contemplation. I have given my time not to abstract studies but to the practice of things that matter.

To Sheean's question whether misuse of atomic energy might not endanger our planet itself since the phenomenal universe is perishable, Gandhiji answered that everything was possible "including the dissolution of appearances . . .[1] and the survivors, if any, will then say, 'what a wondrous spectacle ' ". He very much doubted that the advent of the atomic era would basically affect human problems.

They claim that one atom bomb changed the entire course of the war and brought the end of war so much the nearer. And yet it is so far. Has it conquered the Japanese spirit? It has not and it cannot. Has it crushed Germany as a nation? It has not and it cannot. To do that would require resorting to Hitler's method, and to what purpose? In the end it will be Hitlerism that will have triumphed.

The whole of the *Gita* was an argument in defence of a righteous war, Gandhiji's visitor argued. The last war was a "war in a righteous cause". Yet violence was more rampant as a result than it was ever before. Gandhiji agreed so far as the result of the last war was concerned. Even in India they had not been able to escape from its back-lash.

See what India is doing. See what is happening in Kashmir. I cannot deny that it is with my tacit consent. They would not lend ear to my counsel. Yet, if they were sick of it, I could

[1] Omission as in the source

today point them a way. Again, see the exhibition that the United Nations Organization is making. Yet I have faith. If I live long enough . . .[1] they will see the futility of it all and come round to my way.

But he did not agree that the *Gita* was either in intention or in the sum total an argument in defence of a righteous war. Though the argument of the *Gita* was presented in a setting of physical warfare, the "righteous war" referred to in it was the eternal duel between right and wrong that is going on within us. There was at least one authority that supported his interpretation. The thesis of the *Gita* was neither violence nor non-violence but the gospel of selfless action—the duty of performing right action by right means only, in a spirit of detachment, leaving the fruits of action to the care of God.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 677 and 763-5

464. LETTER TO NARAHARI PARIKH

NEW DELHI,
4.25 a. m., January 28, 1948

CHI. NARAHARI,

I was very happy to read your letter written in a clear hand. Though I believe every word of what you say, I remain of the same view as before. "No one who strives for good meets with an evil fate."[2] This statement is as true today as it was when it was penned. This is proved by your speedy recovery. It will be enough now if you do not throw away through impatience what you have gained.

You have plenty of writing work to do. It will keep you sufficiently occupied. But don't do even that at the cost of sleep or exercise. Any health resort on the sea-coast which Swami finds is bound to be good. But in case he fails, Ghogha, Gopnath, Veraval and Mangarol are excellent. Porbandar used to be equally good, but I am afraid it is no longer so.

Anybody who wishes to avail himself of your experience will take the necessary trouble to come and see you.

Take long baths in shallow and clear water in the sea.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S. N. 9151

[1] Omission as in the source
[2] *Bhagavadgita*, vi. 40

465. LETTER TO VANAMALA PARIKH

January 28, 1948

CHI. VANUDI,

I write this merely to address you. I should certainly like it if you decided to stay with Father and look after him for the rest of his life. Girls who dedicate their lives to the service of their fathers deserve to be admired. Mani[1] is one such. May you be another. Among Parsis it is quite a common practice; Kabraji's daughters, for instance. They were extremely capable and looked after all their father's work. I do not know what the sisters did after Kabraji's death.

Keep writing to me.

If Delhi releases me, I intend to leave for Wardha on the 2nd. I should like to return from there on the 12th, but will do as Rama ordains.

The Harijan Ashram must have changed completely. I will visit it when God permits me to do so.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5800. Also C. W. 3023. Courtesy: Vanamala Desai

466. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

NEW DELHI,
January 28, 1948

CHI. LILI,

I have your letter. It was wise of you to have stayed back. You had better not be impatient. I have given you permission to come when your long vacation begins, and that should be enough. What are my fasts worth? They have become part of me. Who can tell when one will burst forth? I myself never know. This time I have broken the fast in good faith. A lot of work is to be done, and everybody can do it. That may include you also because self-purification can be accomplished wherever one might

[1] Manibehn Patel

be. One can forge friendship with Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Jews; they can be accepted as our own. Thus, even if I were on a fast, rushing to me would be nothing but blind love. It is a different thing if I am to be looked after. But they have always been looking after me.

I am writing all this till the Committee[1] arrives. You must have your feet cured. I hope Dwarkadas is all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

467. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 28, 1948

Now that things here have somewhat settled down, there are disturbances in the N. W. F. P. I am still knocking about in a dark world. I do not intend to stay on here for too long. Whatever has to be decided will be decided in the next four days.

I have not the slightest doubt that if we show the least bit of slackness over Kashmir, Hyderabad and Junagadh are going to meet with the same fate. Sheikh Abdullah is a brave man. But one wonders whether he may not betray in the end. I hold that no man can betray another, for ultimately one is betrayed by oneself. Therefore on this account I have no worry. My health is satisfactory. I am still on liquid diet. It suits me.

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 397-8

468. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

January 28, 1948

More than the biting cold the tale of horrors of N. W. F. P. froze me yesterday. How our human nature can degrade us! All nationalist Muslims, indeed all Muslims, should issue a joint statement and expiate this great sin.

[From Hindi]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 398

[1] Presumably the Central Relief Committee whose members called on Gandhiji at 2 p. m.

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469. LETTER TO DR. SYED MAHMUD

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,
January 28, 1948

RESPECTED DOCTOR SAHEB,

Jai Hind.

Gandhiji has received your letter. He says that it is not possible for him to go there for rest. Where is any rest for him in this life? If it is possible, he wishes to go to Sevagram for a few days. From there he will return straight here.

Hope you are well.

Yours,
BRIJKRISHNA

From a photostat of the Urdu: G. N. 5097

470. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 28, 1948

Gandhiji said he had received a complaint from some friends in Bahawalpur that they had asked for an appointment with him but failed to get it. Gandhiji knew they were in distress and he would manage to find time for them if that would comfort them. He, however, desired to assure them that everything possible was being done.

Dr. Sushila Nayyar and Mr. Leslie Cross went to Bahawalpur and the Nawab has promised to help them in every way. In the Union Capital, by the grace of God, there is again peace among the three communities. This will certainly improve the situation all over India.

You know in South Africa our people are fighting for their rights. Here in India there are no laws depriving the people of the right of owning land or living wherever they please. It is true we have reduced Harijans to some such condition but for the rest of

[1] The Hindi version in *Prarthana Pravachan* has been collated with the report in *The Hindustan Times*.

CWMG-XC

society that is not so. But I have seen with my own eyes that that is so in South Africa. The Indians therefore are having to put up a struggle to safeguard their rights and in defence of the honour of India. They can resort to various means in their struggle but they claim to be satyagrahis and their struggle has taken the form of satyagraha. They keep on sending cables. They cannot even move from one province to another without a permit. South Africa is like a continent. It is a very large country. Indians wishing to go to the Transvaal from Natal can do so only if they have a permit. They say it is as much their country as anyone else's and ask why there should be such restrictions imposed on their movements. Many have succeeded in moving to the Transvaal and the Government this time have been decent. They have not been arrested so far. They first went to Volksrust which is the first city after crossing the border. There were policemen present in strength but they only looked on and did not arrest them. There they found a motor vehicle and proceeded in it further on. Then a meeting was held there at which they were given a warm welcome. I thought I should give you this information. Those Indians have performed an act of great courage. Indians in South Africa are few in number but, if they all become true satyagrahis, their victory is certain and no obstacle can stop them. But this has yet to be achieved. There are, as here, many kinds of people. There are Hindus and there are Muslims. They all work together. They know they cannot fight their battle separately. They have reached Johannesburg but they cannot stop there. They must go on and on till they are arrested. The Government have a right to arrest them, for satyagraha implies the acceptance of punishment for the violation of a law. They deserve congratulations. I shall ask the Government of South Africa not to be too severe with people who carry on their struggle with such decency. They should understand their grievances and come to a settlement with them. Why should it be that one with a white skin cannot have a dialogue with one with a black skin? Why should Indians have to fight for their legitimate rights? How does it harm the whites if Indians too are allowed to live there? Today we are also a free country as South Africa is and are members of the same Commonwealth, which implies that we should all live like brothers and equals. But if they consider Indians their enemies and deprive them of their basic civic rights, then they are not behaving as friends but as enemies. It is something which is difficult to understand. Why should they look down on the

coloured people? Is it because they are industrious and thrifty? I shall tell the Government of South Africa through this meeting that it should mend its ways. I have myself lived in South Africa for twenty years and I can therefore say that it is my country. I should have told you all this yesterday but I could not do so.

Some Muslims from Mysore had sent me a wire a few days ago saying that my fast had produced no effect there and Muslims were still being killed there. I had also said a few words on the matter.[1] Now I have a telegram from the Home Minister of Mysore in which he has refuted the charge made in the wire and has explained that the Government is trying to be just to the Muslims. I must tell the Muslims of Mysore what I have told all others, namely, that they should not indulge in exaggeration. This hampers me and I am able to do nothing. If anything they should try to water down such reports. This is the only way Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs can live as brothers.

Our people are so simple that they send money by post. I recollect an incident from my childhood. My father had some jewellery among which was a valuable pearl. He mailed it by post. That was not cheating but it certainly was risky because, if anybody had suspected it, they could have opened the envelope. In any case the money was not saved because he wanted the acknowledgment by wire. It seems there still are innocent people like my father. A friend sent currency notes of over a thousand rupees in this way. He had the envelope neither registered nor insured. He sent it by ordinary post. When there is dishonesty and corruption everywhere it is a matter of great credit to our Post Office that envelopes with money are safely delivered. They do not even want to see what an envelope might contain. My advice to people who send money like this is not to take such risk because in the postal department there are bound to be some dishonest men and, if the money is misappropriated in the post, the loss will be mine or that of the Harijans for whom this money is intended, and also of the donor. I congratulate the postal department on displaying such honesty. Let the other departments follow their example and take care of other people's money and keep away from graft and peculation.

The Hindustan Times, 29-1-1948, and *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 348-51

[1] *Vide* pp. 485-6.

471. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

NEW DELHI,
4.20 a. m., January 29, 1948

CHI. LILI,

I got your letter regarding Vijaya[1]. I am taking immediate steps. She must get the money without delay. As you say, there is complete confusion. But even in this case the fruits of patience will be sweet.

I am likely to leave here on the 2nd. It will be decided tomorrow. I have twelve days' work there. Then I will be back here.

You must have received my letter of yesterday.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 7181. Also C. W. 10248. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

472. LETTER TO VIJAYA WALJI SODAWALA

NEW DELHI,
4.30 a. m., January 29, 1948

CHI. VIJAYA,

You did well in writing to me. It is a matter of shame that you should be put to such straits. It is being delayed probably because the arrangements are new. I hope everything will be all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: K. G. Mashruwala Records. Courtesy: Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad

[1] Vijaya Walji Sodawala, a final-year Harijan student of M. B. B. S. in Bombay

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473. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
January 29, 1948

CHI. KANAIYO,

I talk at length with Abha and thus save time by omitting to write to you. On the whole I like your letters. There is scope for a few improvements which can come in course of time. About your coming, I have for the time being left the decision to you. And that seems to be the only right thing to do. Right now I don't feel that you must come over, but when you do, you will be coming in your own right. This is what I have told Abha. And this I think will lead to her development. Also she will be of the maximum use to you. I am writing a postcard because I think it will reach you the earliest. I understand you eat nothing but uncooked food. I wish that you should not undertake this experiment. Your body is like that of Hanuman[1]; if you ruin it you will be liable to punishment. The body is the true temple for God to dwell in. Bear this in mind when you make use of your body. Don't shrink from writing to me. My leaving this place is not definite. Perhaps I may visit Wardha for twelve days.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

474. LETTER TO SANKARAN

NEW DELHI,
January 29, 1948

BHAI SANKARAN[2],

Chi. Kishorelal gave me news of the death of your daughter Sulochana. I had no idea of it at all. What can I write to you? What comfort could I give? Death is a true friend. It is only our ignorance that causes us grief. Sulochana's spirit was

[1] Who was known for his physical prowess
[2] A teacher at the Hindustani Talimi Sangh at Sevagram

yesterday, is today and will remain tomorrow. The body, of course, must die. Sulochana has gone taking her failings with her, leaving the good in her behind. Let us not forget that or her. Be even more true in the discharge of your duty.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: C. W. 10420

475. LETTER TO KISHORELAL MASHRUWALA[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 29, 1948

CHI. KISHORELAL,

I am devoting the time after prayer today to writing letters. You did well in writing to me about the death of Sankaran's daughter. I have written to him. My proposed visit there is still in the air. I have mooted the idea of my staying at Sevagram from 3rd to 12th. If my mission is regarded to have been accomplished, I need not stay on here now for the fulfilment of my pledge. Whether or not it can be so regarded will depend on the co-workers here. Probably we shall be able to arrive at some decision tomorrow. The purpose of my visit will be to discuss the possibility of uniting the various organizations for constructive work into one body and to join in the observance of Jamnalal's death anniversary. I am regaining strength fairly well. This time both the kidneys and the liver have been affected. According to me, it indicates that my faith in Ramanama is not complete.

Blessings to you both from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]
Harijanbandhu, 8-2-1948

[1] This letter could not be posted on the 29th. The next day when Manu Gandhi asked Gandhiji if she could add a line in it saying that they were to leave for Wardha on the 2nd, he remarked: "Who has seen tomorrow? If my going is finalized I shall mention it after the prayers today and it will be relayed in the night broadcast. But the letter should not have been left like that. Though it was Bisen's responsibility you cannot be relieved of any of my jobs. It may be a lapse on the part of someone else but I regard it as a lapse on your part."

476. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

NEW DELHI,
January 29, 1948

SHRI BALVANTSINHAJI,

What Bapuji said I am writing to you in my own words. Hoshiaribehn had gone to Khurja, but she is now back here. She returned only yesterday. She goes back to Khurja today, as some physician there has promised to restore her to health in a month's time. She has decided to take his treatment, and Bapuji has approved of her decision. Bapuji says: "Hoshiari will be able to devote herself fully to serving others only after she is physically all right herself, and so I have agreed to her taking the treatment of this physician."

Please show this letter to Chimanlalbhai also. The rest you will learn from Chimanlalbhai's letter.

With regards,

BISEN

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1990

477. INTERVIEW TO MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 29, 1948

Margaret Bourke-White discussed with Gandhiji the doctrine of trusteeship. Bapu had once said that the rich should be trustees for the poor. How did he define a trustee?

A trustee is one who discharges the obligations of his trust faithfully and in the best interests of his wards.

Did he know of any industrialist who lived up to that ideal?

[1] This and the following item are reproduced from P. B. Chandwani's article "The Master at Work".

Margaret Bourke-White, American photographer and *Life* magazine correspondent, introduced herself as the "Torturer", a title Gandhiji had conferred on her earlier in Bengal.

No, though some are striving in that direction, my host, G. D. Birla, for instance. I hope he is not deceiving me. If I saw him do so, I would not live under his roof.[1]

Did he still cherish the wish and hope to live the full span of life?

He had lost that wish, Gandhiji said, in view of the prevailing darkness. He was, however, groping for light. If things took a turn for the better and the people responded to his call and co-operated to usher in a new era of peace and amity, he would again wish—indeed, he would be "commanded" to wish to live the full span.

"Would you advise America to give up the manufacture of atom bombs?" she finally asked.

Most certainly. As things are, the war ended disastrously and the victors are vanquished by jealousy and lust for power. Already a third war is being canvassed, which may prove even more disastrous. Ahimsa is a mightier weapon by far than the atom bomb. Even if the people of Hiroshima could have died in their thousands with prayer and goodwill in their hearts, the situation would have been transformed as if by a miracle.[2]

Harijan, 22-2-1948

[1] What follows is reported by Margaret Bourke-White in her book *Halfway to Freedom* under the date January 30, 1948.

[2] At this stage the interviewer presented some pictures taken by her for Gandhiji's autograph in order to complete her questions. *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase* carries the following version of the interview:

"How would you meet the atom bomb . . . with non-violence?"

"I will not go underground. I will not go into shelter. I will come out in the open and let the pilot see I have not a trace of ill will against him. The pilot will not see our faces from his great height, I know. But the longing in our hearts—that he will not come to harm—would reach up to him and his eyes would be opened.

"If those thousands who were done to death in Hiroshima, ... had died with that prayerful action—died openly with that prayer in their hearts—their sacrifice would not have gone in vain."

CWMG-XC

478. INTERVIEW TO GENERAL SECRETARY, Y. W. C. A.[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 29, 1948

The interviewer, an American lady, asked Bapu what America with her interest in India and her well-being could do for India.

Gandhiji said that American visitors should endeavour to see India through Indian spectacles. They could go round and offer friendly and constructive criticism but to describe its dirty spots as India would be a caricature. Here Bapu recalled the instance of Emily Kinnaird[2], who had invited herself to be Gandhiji's guest in Bombay[3]. She was content with the vegetarian food and modest comforts she could get and always insisted on walking with him to the prayer ground. Till the moment of her death, she continued to write long and delightful letters to Bapu, pouring out her heart and spirit.

Asked what foreign missions could do in the new set-up for Indian Christians or Christian Indians as they would now like to be called, Bapu replied that the best course would be to leave them to their own resources, to help them settle down as sons of the soil.

Harijan, 22-2-1948

479. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
January 29, 1948

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Of the many things I wish to tell you, I have chosen six for today, for I must finish in 15 minutes.

I notice that we are beginning a little late, which is wrong. Sushila has gone to Bahawalpur, to see the refugees still stranded there. She has no other mission. Mr. Leslie Cross of the Friends' Service has gone with her. My idea was that someone from the Friends' Unit should go and observe the conditions of refugees there and report to me. There was no proposal for Sushila to go. But when she heard about the plan she suggested

[1] Of the World Headquarters in Switzerland

[2] Who had met Gandhiji on July 20, 1940 and January 15, 1941 in Sevagram. *Vide* Vol. LXXII, pp. 297-9.

[3] Obviously a slip for 'Sevagram'

that she be permitted to accompany Mr. Cross. She has known him ever since she went to Noakhali. She is an efficient doctor and she belongs to the Gujrat district in the Punjab. She too has suffered a good deal. She had a large property which she has lost. But her heart has not become poisoned. She said it would help if she went because she could speak Punjabi, Hindustani, Urdu and English and could be of use to Mr. Cross. I was delighted. There are of course hazards but she said she was not afraid. Had she been afraid she would not have gone to work in Noakhali. Many people who live in the Punjab have been completely ruined in every way. At least she can still find food and other provisions. I consulted Mr. Cross and he welcomed the idea. He said she could act as an interpreter. He is from the Red Cross. The function of the Red Cross is to provide medical relief to war victims. Whether Dr. Sushila went with Mr. Cross or Mr. Cross went with Sushila is a complicated question but they are friends and like each other. They have gone to render service and not to make money. They will observe and give me a report of what they see. The Nawab keeps writing to me. After I have the report from Mr. Cross and Sushila Nayyar I shall tell you more about the matter.

Some people, perhaps forty of them, from Bannu had come to me. They have suffered hardships no doubt but they are able to walk. Some had injured fingers, some had other wounds on other parts of the body. I saw them just now and told them to explain everything to Brijkrishna. They were all respectable men. They must have been full of anger but they accepted my advice. One of them—I did not ask whether he was a refugee—said I had done enough harm already and that I should stop and disappear from the scene. He did not care whether I was a mahatma. I asked him where he wanted me to go. He said that I might go to the Himalayas. I had to rebuke him. He is not as old as I am and is stronger. But I could not afford to become nervous. I asked why I should go to the Himalayas merely because he wished it, when there were many who wanted me to stay. There are many who praise me and there are others who abuse me. What am I to do? I can only do as God bids. You may say that you do not believe in God. But then you must allow me to go my way. God is the help of the afflicted. But an afflicted person is not God. When I claim that every woman is my own sister or daughter, then her suffering becomes my suffering. Why do you presume that

I do not understand the sufferings of the refugees? Why do you presume that because I am a friend of Muslims I am an enemy of Hindus and Sikhs? I cannot run away because anyone wants me to run away. I have not taken to service at any one's bidding. I have become what I have become at the bidding of God. God will do what He wills. He may take me away. I shall not find peace by going to the Himalayas. I want to find peace in the midst of turmoil or I want to die in the turmoil. My Himalayas are here.

I keep receiving complaints about the refugees. They are given food and drink and clothing and they are helped in every possible way. But they do not want to work. I have said that if the refugees want to end their sufferings, if they want to convert suffering into happiness and serve India and serve themselves, they must not shirk work. A refugee has no right to live comfortably without working. The *Gita* says: "Eat only after you have performed *yajna*." Eat what remains after the *yajna*. This has not been said only for me but also for you and all others. It applies also to the refugees. Even if a millionaire eats and does not work, he is a burden on the earth. Of course one can understand if you are a cripple, or if you are blind or too old. But a robust man has no excuse for not working. Let those who are strong of body clean lavatories in the camp; let them spin, let them do any other work that comes to hand. Let them teach their boys.

Someone came to see me today. I forget his name. He mentioned peasants. I said if I had my way our Governor-General would be a peasant; our Prime Minister would be a peasant. In my childhood I learnt a poem which says "O farmer, you are the king, the master of the whole world." What would we eat if the peasant did not produce food? But today we have made him a slave. What can a peasant do? Must he acquire academic degrees such as B.A. and M.A.? If he does that he will be ruined. He will be no more good for wielding the pickaxe. If the man who produced foodgrain out of the earth becomes our Chief, our Prime Minister, the face of India will change.

There is a scarcity of food in Madras. A representative of the Madras Government had come here to plead with Shri Jairamdas[1] that he should make foodgrain available for Madras.

[1] Jairamdas Doulatram (1891-1979); Editor of *The Hindustan Times*, 1925-27; General Secretary of Congress, 1931; Governor of Bihar, 1947-48 and of Assam, 1950-56; Minister of Food and Agriculture in the Union Cabinet, 1948-50

This attitude of the people of Madras saddens me. I want to point out to them that they can find enough things to eat in their own province such as groundnut, coconut and various other things. They also have plenty of fish which most of them take. What need is there for them to go out and beg? It is not right for them to insist on rice and that too polished rice which has all its food value removed or to insist on wheat in place of rice. They can mix groundnut flour or coconut flour with rice flour and thus keep the wolf from the door. What they need is self-confidence and dedication. I know the people of Madras quite well. I had with me in South Africa people drawn from all the linguistic areas of the Province. During the satyagraha march[1] they were given a pound and a half of bread and an ounce of sugar each day. But they surprised me when on our striking camp they would pick out some edible greens or some other thing and cook it singing away in great delight. How can such resourceful people ever feel so helpless? True we were all coolies. But then in honest work lies our freedom and the satisfaction of all our basic needs.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 352-6

480. DRAFT CONSTITUTION OF CONGRESS[2]

NEW DELHI,
January 29, 1948

Though split into two, India having attained political independence through means devised by the Indian National Congress, the Congress in its present shape and form, i. e., as a propaganda vehicle and parliamentary machine, has outlived its use. India has still to attain social, moral and economic independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages as distinguished from its cities and towns. The struggle for the

[1] Which commenced on November 6, 1913; *vide* Vol. XXIX, p. 240.

[2] Acharya Jugal Kishore, General Secretary of A. I. C. C., released this draft to the Press on February 7, with the note: "As something has already appeared in the Press . . . regarding the proposals which Mahatmaji had made concerning changes in the Congress constitution I am releasing the full draft as was handed to me on the fateful forenoon of 30th January. . . ."

This appeared in *Harijan* under the title "His Last Will and Testament".

In his article "The Fateful Friday", in *Harijan*, Pyarelal writes: "The whole of the 29th had been so cram-full with work that at the end of the

ascendency of civil over military power is bound to take place in India's progress towards its democratic goal. It must be kept out of unhealthy competition with political parties and communal bodies. For these and other similar reasons, the A. I. C. C. resolves to disband the existing Congress organization and flower into a Lok Sevak Sangh under the following rules with power to alter them as occasion may demand.

Every panchayat of five adult men or women being villagers or village-minded shall form a unit.

Two such contiguous panchayats shall form a working party under a leader elected from among themselves.

When there are one hundred such panchayats, the fifty first-grade leaders shall elect from among themselves a second-grade leader and so on, the first-grade leaders meanwhile working under the second-grade leader. Parallel groups of two[1] hundred panchayats shall continue to be formed till they cover the whole of India, each succeeding group of panchayats electing a second-grade leader after the manner of the first. All second-grade leaders shall serve jointly for the whole of India and severally for their respective areas. The second-grade leaders may elect, whenever they deem necessary, from among themselves a chief who will, during pleasure, regulate and command all the groups.

(As the final formation of provinces or districts is still in a state of flux, no attempt has been made to divide this group of servants into provincial or district councils and jurisdiction over the whole of India has been vested in the group or groups that may have been formed at any given time. It should be noted that this body of servants derive their authority or power from service ungrudgingly and wisely done to their master, the whole of India.)[2]

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day Gandhiji felt utterly fagged out. "My head is reeling. And yet I must finish this," he remarked to Abha, pointing to the draft constitution for the Congress which he had undertaken to prepare, and then, "I am afraid I shall have to keep late hours."

The next morning Gandhiji revised the draft and gave it to Pyarelal to "go through it carefully". He added: "Fill in any gaps in thought that there might be. I wrote it under a heavy strain." When Pyarelal took the revised draft to him he "went through the additions and alterations point by point with his characteristic thoroughness and removed an error in calculation that had crept in in regard to the number of panchayats."

[1] The copy available in the A.I.C.C. files has a question-mark here. *Vide* footnote 2 above.

[2] A facsimile of the draft up to here is available in *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*.

1. Every worker shall be a habitual wearer of khadi made from self-spun yarn or certified by the A. I. S. A. and must be a teetotaller. If a Hindu, he must have abjured untouchability in any shape or form in his own person or in his family and must be a believer in the ideal of inter-communal unity, equal respect and regard for all religions and equality of opportunity and status for all irrespective of race, creed or sex.

2. He shall come in personal contact with every villager within his jurisdiction.

3. He shall enrol and train workers from amongst the villagers and keep a register of all these.

4. He shall keep a record of his work from day to day.

5. He shall organize the villages so as to make them self-contained and self-supporting through their agriculture and handicrafts.

6. He shall educate the village folk in sanitation and hygiene and take all measures for prevention of ill health and disease among them.

7. He shall organize the education of the village folk from birth to death along the lines of Nayee Talim, in accordance with the policy laid down by the Hindustani Talimi Sangh.

8. He shall see that those whose names are missing on the statutory voters' roll are duly entered therein.

9. He shall encourage those who have not yet acquired the legal qualification, to acquire it for getting the right of franchise.

10. For the above purposes and others to be added from time to time, he shall train and fit himself in accordance with the rules laid down by the Sangh for the due performance of duty.

The Sangh shall affiliate the following autonomous bodies:

1. A. I. S. A.
2. A. I. V. I. A.
3. Hindustani Talimi Sangh
4. Harijan Sevak Sangh
5. Goseva Sangh

Finance

The Sangh shall raise finances for the fulfilment of its mission from among the villagers and others, special stress being laid on collection of poor man's pice.

M. K. G.

New Delhi, January 29, 1948

Harijan, 15-2-1948. And A.I.C.C. File No. 1578. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

481. TALK WITH DEVDAS GANDHI[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 29, 1948

... I had had one of those rarest of rare experiences, that of being alone with Bapu for a moment. It was my customary call at 9.30. He was in bed. ... I stepped in and was greeted by "what news?" ... I ... had no news to give. So I asked: "How does the ship of State fare?" He said:

I am sure the little differences[2] will vanish. But things may have to await my return from Wardha. That won't be long. The Government is composed of patriots and no one will do anything that is in conflict with the interests of the country. I am sure that they must hold together at all costs and they will. There is no difference of substance.

There was more conversation on the same lines and I would have invited the usual "crowd" even at that hour, had I tarried. So, preparing to leave, I said: "Bapu, will you sleep now?"

No, there is no hurry. You may talk for some time longer if you like.

Harijan, 15-2-1948

[1] Reproduced from Devdas Gandhi's article, "I Speak as an Orphan", broadcast by All India Radio on February 5

[2] Between Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel

482. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

NEW DELHI,
January 30, 1948

SHRI ANANDBHAIYA AND GANGIBEHN,

Bapu had your letter. Bapu is going to Sevagram but only for ten days. So Bapu says that there is no need for Gangi to come. Yes, when he goes there for a long stay she may come. . . .

Yours,
BISEN

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

483. TALK WITH PYARELAL[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 30, 1948

Passing out of the room at the end of the massage, Gandhiji . . . inquired if I had finished the revision[2] and further asked me to prepare a note on how to meet the threatened food crisis in Madras in the light of my experience and experiment in Noakhali.

The Food Ministry is feeling nervous. But I maintain that a province like Madras that is blessed by nature with cocoanut and palm, ground-nut and banana in such plenty, not to mention roots and tubers of various kinds, need not starve, if only the people know how to husband their resources in food.

Harijan, 15-2-1948

[1] This and the following two items have been reproduced from Pyarelal's article "The Fateful Friday".

[2] Of the draft constitution of the Congress; *vide* pp. 526-8.

CWMG - XC

484. TALK WITH PYARELAL

NEW DELHI,
January 30, 1948

I put before Gandhiji the case for orderly evacuation[1], but his view was emphatic and clear. Just as we, workers, had to "Do or Die", even so had we to prepare our people to "Do or Die" for the vindication of their self-respect, honour and right of religious freedom.

Maybe in the end only a few will be left. But there is no other way of evolving strength out of weakness. Are not ranks decimated in the war of weapons too? How can it be otherwise under non-violence then? What you are doing is the way. You have shed the fear of death and established yourself in the hearts and affections of the people. To love and diligence must be joined knowledge. This you have done. If you alone do your part fully and well, you will cover the whole lot. You know, I need you here, the burden is so heavy. And there is a lot I would like to share with the world which I cannot do now that you are away. But I have steeled myself to it; the work you are doing is more important.

He then showed how to deal with miscreants in the event of the Government failing to discharge its duty.

Harijan, 15-2-1948

485. TALK WITH SUDHIR GHOSH[2]

NEW DELHI,
January 30, 1948

Sudhir Ghosh, among other things, read out to Gandhiji a cutting from the London *Times* and extracts from a letter from an English friend

[1] From Noakhali

[2] Sudhir Ghosh in his book *Gandhi's Emissary* writes: "As I sat down he handed to me a letter written to him by Agatha Harrison enclosing with it a clipping from the London *Times*. Agatha's letter said that the whispering campaign about a serious rift between his two lieutenants Mr. Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel had spread to London and *The Times* editorial on this rift between the two men was a bad omen; was Gandhiji not going to do something about it?"

showing how some people were assiduously trying to drive a wedge between Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel by traducing the latter as a communalist, while pretending to praise the former. Gandhiji remarked that he was aware of the move and was deeply exercised over it. He had already dealt with it, he said, in one of his post-prayer speeches[1], which had been published in the *Harijan*. But he felt that something more needed to be done. He was thinking what he should do.[2]

Harijan, 15-2-1948

486. TALK WITH MUSLIM LEADERS

NEW DELHI,
January 30, 1948

Gandhiji told them that if he did not leave for Sevagram on the proposed date[3], all his plans would be upset. The Maulanas said they had no wish to detain him on their account, for they knew that he would be working for them wherever he was. The interval would enable them to assess and report to him how the implementation of the pledges given as a result of his fast was progressing. They hoped he would be able to return to Delhi by the 14th February. Gandhiji replied:

I do expect to be back here by the 14th. But if Providence has decreed otherwise, that is a different matter. I am not, however, sure whether I shall be able to leave here even the day after tomorrow. It is all in God's hands.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 770

[1] *Vide* p. 464.

[2] Sudhir Ghosh reports: He finished the writing of whatever he was working at and said, "I wonder what I am going to do about it"—as if asking himself a question. I said, "Well they are so big that nobody dares to talk to them about it; but people talk behind their backs. Some day you may like to talk to both of them about it. You alone can do it." He pondered over my remark and said, "Well, there is something in what you say. I think I am going to talk about it. I think I will talk about it after prayers this evening. Vallabhbhai is coming to see me at 4. Jawaharlal is coming to see me at 7. You can come and see me just before I go to bed." *Vide* also "Talk with Vallabhbhai Patel", p. 534.

[3] February 2

487. A TALK

NEW DELHI,
January 30, 1948

Wherever I look I find our plight the same as that of the Yadavas who met their doom killing one another. No one realizes how much harm we are doing to society by being engaged in our personal feuds. But what can you or anyone else do about it? This indicates a failure on my part. What could anyone do when God made me blind to these things? But let me set things right as far as possible, while I am alive, so that the coming generation may not hurl abuses at me. If I succeed in it, I shall regard it as God's grace.

I ought to take up this task.[1] The diaries should be edited well and compiled. Narahari's health does not permit any work and . . .[2] has dissociated himself from all my activities. But how can it be said that he has done so without full understanding? Everyone is entitled to freedom of thought. If Chandrashankar[3] shoulders this responsibility he will exhibit his talents as well. What similarity between the handwritings of the two! I shall write to him.[4]

[From Gujarati]

Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 425

[1] Of editing and compiling of Mahadev Desai's diaries

[2] The name is omitted in the source.

[3] Chandrashanker P. Shukla

[4] After this talk Rasikbhai Parikh and U. N. Dhebar from Kathiawar wanted an appointment with Gandhiji. Being busy Gandhiji said: "Tell them I shall talk with them during my walk after the prayers, if I am alive."

CWMG - XC

488. INTERVIEW TO SINDHI DEPUTATION[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 30, 1948

Bapu said in an exceedingly tender voice that all this had distressed him beyond measure. Outwardly he seemed light and happy but his heart was smitten with grief at the wave of insanity which was sweeping over the land. Either this must end or he must perish.

He also referred to the advice offered to him by a refugee[2] to retire to the Himalayas. Chuckling with laughter he observed that nothing would be better in one sense: he would develop into a double *Mahatma* and attract larger crowds. But what he wanted was not vainglory or ease but such comfort and strength as he could extract out of the prevailing darkness and misery.

Harijan, 22-2-1948

489. TALK WITH VALLABHBHAI PATEL[3]

NEW DELHI,
January 30, 1948

Although he had previously expressed his view, Gandhiji told the Sardar, that one of the two—either the Sardar or Pandit Nehru—should withdraw from the Cabinet, he had since come to the firm conclusion that the presence there of both of them was indispensable. Any breach in their ranks at that stage would be disastrous. He further said he would make that the topic of his post-prayer speech in the evening. Pandit Nehru would

[1] Reproduced from P. B. Chandwani's article "The Master at Work" The deputation, led by Choithram Gidwani, narrated the woes of Sindhis and spoke of the restrictions imposed by the Pakistan Government on their evacuation.

[2] From Bannu; *vide* pp. 524-5.

[3] Gandhiji carried on his spinning while talking.

CWMG - XC

be seeing him after the prayer; he would discuss the question with him too. If necessary, he would postpone his going to Sevagram and not leave Delhi till he had finally laid the spectre of disunity between the two. . . .[1]

Gandhiji said to the Sardar as he rose to get ready to go to the prayer-ground:

I must now tear myself away.[2]

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 771-2

490. REMARKS ON WAY TO PRAYER MEETING[3]

NEW DELHI,
January 30, 1948

"Bapu, your watch must be feeling very neglected. You would not look at it," remarked Abha.

Why should I, since you are my time-keepers?

"But you do not look at the time-keepers", rejoined one of them. Bapu again laughed. The last remark he uttered as he cleared the steps leading to the prayer-ground was:

It is your fault that I am ten minutes late. It is the duty of nurses to carry on their work even if God himself should be present there. If it is time to give medicine to a patient and

[1] According to the source, "the talk with the Sardar continued. At 4.30 p. m. Abha brought Gandhiji his evening meal. It was getting near prayer time. But the Sardar had still not finished. Abha felt fidgety, knowing the great importance that Gandhiji attached to punctuality, particularly in regard to prayer time. But she dared not interrupt. At last, becoming desperate, she picked up his watch and held it before him to draw his attention. But it was no good. Noting her predicament, Manibehn Patel tactfully intervened."

[2] In his letter to Jawaharlal Nehru dated February 5, 1948, while referring to this talk Vallabhbhai Patel wrote: "I had the good fortune to have a last talk with him for over an hour just before his death and he communicated to me what had passed between you and him as well as his talk with H. E. [Lord Mountbatten]. He had also fixed an appointment to meet both of us the next day. His opinion also binds us both and I can assure you that I am fully resolved to approach my responsibilities and obligations in this spirit."

[3] The report in Pyarelal's "The Fateful Friday", has been collated with the Gujarati version in *Dilhiman Gandhiji*.

one feels hesitant about it, the poor patient will die. So it is with prayers. It irks me if I am late for prayers even by a minute.[1]

Harijan, 15-2-1948, and *Dilhiman Gandhiji*—II, pp. 426-7

CWMG - XC

[1] According to Manu Gandhi's account, as Gandhiji passed along the cordoned lane through the prayer congregation, he took his hands off the shoulders of the two girls to acknowledge the *namaskars* of the prayer congregation. All of a sudden someone from the crowd roughly elbowed his way towards them. Manu Gandhi, thinking that he was coming forward to touch Gandhiji's feet, remonstrated saying something about it being already late for the prayer and tried to stop the intruder by thrusting back his hand. He violently pushed her away, causing the notebook, the spittoon and the *mala*, which she was carrying in her hands, to fall down. As she stooped down to pick up the scattered things, he planted himself in front of Gandhiji and fired in quick succession three shots at point-blank range. The last words Gandhiji uttered were "*Hey Ram*". A spreading crimson spot appeared on the white clothes. The hands which had been raised in *namaskar* to the gathering slowly came down. The limp body softly sank to the ground. Gandhiji breathed his last at 5.17 p. m.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

A. I. C. C. RESOLUTIONS[1]

(1) RIGHTS OF MINORITIES[2]

15-11-1947

The All India Congress Committee welcomes the elimination of foreign rule in India and the establishment of a free and independent State and a Government responsible to the people of the country. The achievement of freedom is the culmination of the long struggle of the Indian National Congress and outcome of the sufferings and tribulations of the Indian people. Freedom brings responsibility and new burdens and problems.

The freedom achieved was not the kind that the Congress had envisaged during its long history. It has been accompanied by secession of parts of the country and disasters of unparalleled magnitude. Hardly was free India born when grave crisis overtook it and events happened which have besmirched her fair name and brought death and desolation to vast numbers of innocent people in circumstances too tragic for words. There have been arson and loot and murder on a mass scale in West Punjab, N. W. F. Province, Baluchistan, East Punjab and adjoining areas. The Committee cannot find words strong enough to condemn these inhuman acts by whatever community perpetrated. It extends its sympathy to all those who have been the innocent victims of this colossal tragedy.

At this moment of crisis, it is necessary that the Congress should declare its faith and policy in clear terms and that the people as well as the Government should follow that policy unswervingly. Even though the Congress agreed to a division of the country in the hope, which has thus far proved vain, that thereby internal conflicts might cease, it has never accepted the theory that there are two or more nations in India. It has firmly believed in the whole of India as a nation bound together by indissoluble cultural and historical links which had been further strengthened in the course of the national struggle for freedom. It was on the basis of this faith that the Congress grew up as a national institution open to all Indians without difference of creed or religion. India is a land of many religions and many races, and must remain so. Nevertheless India has been and is a country

[1] *Vide* pp. 63-7.

[2] According to *Dilhiman Gandhiji*, the draft of this was corrected by Gandhiji.

with a fundamental unity and the aim of the Congress has been to develop this great country as a whole as a democratic secular State where all citizens enjoy full rights and are equally entitled to the protection of the State, irrespective of the religion to which they belong. The Constituent Assembly has accepted this as the basic principle of the Constitution. This lays on every Indian the obligation to honour it.

The Congress wants to assure the minorities in India that it will continue to protect, to the best of its ability, their citizen rights against aggression. The Central Government, as well as the Provincial Governments must accordingly make every effort to create conditions wherein all minorities and all citizens have security and opportunity for progress. All citizens have also on their part not only to share in the benefits of freedom but also shoulder the burdens and responsibility which accompany it, and must above all be loyal to India.

The All India Congress Committee calls upon all Congressmen and the people of India to adhere strictly to those well-established principles of the Congress and not to allow themselves to be diverted into wrong channels by passion or prejudice or by the tragic events that have happened. Real good and progress of India have yet to be achieved and this can only be done by adhering to the ideals and policy of the Congress and discarding and opposing all false doctrines which have done so much mischief to India and her people.

(2) REPATRIATION OF REFUGEES

15-11-1947

The tragic events that have taken place in recent months in the Punjab and elsewhere have resulted in vast migrations of populations, and consequently in tremendous suffering to millions of people. New problems of relief and rehabilitation have arisen of a magnitude which is unparalleled in history. The Government of India have faced these problems with courage and determination. Nevertheless it is necessary to state clearly what the national policy should be in dealing with these problems.

The A. I. C. C. has looked with disfavour on this large-scale migration which brings suffering to millions, upsets the nation's economy and does violence to the ideal which the Congress has held since its inception. It is of opinion that these migrations should be discouraged and conditions should be created both in the Indian Dominion and in Pakistan for minorities to live in peace and security. If such conditions are created the desire to migrate to another part of the country will disappear. In the opinion of the Committee, it is wrong to coerce Hindu and Sikh inhabitants of Pakistan into leaving their homes and migrating to the Indian Union, and Muslims of the Indian Union into migrating to Pakistan.

While it is impossible to undo all that has been done, every effort should be made to enable the evacuees and refugees from either Dominion

ultimately to return to their homes and to their original occupations under conditions of safety and security. Those who have not left their homes already should be encouraged to stay there unless they themselves desire to migrate, in which case facilities for migrating should be made available. It is the duty of the Central Government of the Indian Union and the Government of Pakistan to negotiate on this basis and to create conditions which would enable the evacuees and refugees to return with safety.

In any event the policy to be followed in the Indian Union is to protect the minorities still residing there and to prevent their removal by force or by creating circumstances which compel evacuation.

During these disorders large numbers of women have been abducted on either side and there have been forcible conversions on a large scale. No civilized people can recognize such conversions, and there is nothing more heinous than abduction of women. Every effort, therefore, must be made to restore women to their original homes with the co-operation of the Governments concerned.

The A. I. C. C. has noted with satisfaction the declarations made on behalf of the Governments of the two Dominions and East and West Punjab that forcible conversions will not be recognized and that they would co-operate in the recovery of abducted women.

Such being the policy of the Congress, the refugees in the Indian Union are entitled to every care and attention from the authorities and the people within the Union as long as they have to remain there. They are not to be regarded as interlopers grudgingly placed upon charity. They will have the same rights and be under the same obligations as any other citizen. Where they are living in camps they will be expected to render some social service in co-operation with fellow-refugees, subject to the rules framed for the good government of the camp. Sanitary and other services should be performed by the inmates of the camps under instructions from those fitted for the work and who will themselves take part in these services. Refugees should be engaged in productive work as far as possible on a co-operative basis.

Refugees from West Punjab shall as a rule be accommodated in East Punjab. Those from the other parts of Pakistan shall be accommodated in places that the Central Government, in co-operation with the Provincial Governments, may consider more suitable. Those from a particular locality should, as far as possible, be kept together.

In this task the Provincial Governments should offer their full co-operation and should take in and make suitable arrangements for as many refugees as they can.

No house, not vacated willingly by a Muslim, shall be used for the accommodation of refugees, except by proper legal authority.

The movement of refugees, which is already taking place by train, convoy or otherwise, should be regulated in accordance with the policy laid

down above and no one should be sent away unless he expresses his desire to migrate.

This principle should apply also to the States which have acceded to the Indian Union and from which large numbers of Muslims have been evacuated or driven out.

The A. I. C. C. trusts that the Central Government of the Indian Union, the East Punjab and West Bengal Governments, and the Governments of the States affected by these migrations, will give effect to the policy indicated above and will issue directions to all their officers to act strictly in accordance with it.

(3) STATES

15-11-1947

In view of the fact that in a number of States, people's organizations, instead of rising in power and influence as a result of freedom, are being suppressed and prevented from functioning; and further in view of the fact that Rulers in Punjab and some parts of Rajputana and Central India and in the South Indian States have shown an unpatriotic attitude and have betrayed a woeful lack of imagination and have been party to the liquidation of the Muslim and Hindu population by inhuman means, it becomes necessary to reiterate in unequivocal language the policy of the Congress in regard to the States.

Whatever may be the legal implications of accession and lapse of British Paramountcy, the moral result of the independence of India was undoubtedly the establishment and recognition of the power of the people as distinguished from that of Princes and feudal or other interests hostile to natural popular aspirations. This power, the Congress is determined to uphold at any cost. Therefore, all such interests and specially the Princes should know that the Congress cannot uphold them unless they are demonstrably in favour of regarding the voice of the people as the supreme law. In such a democratic State the individual who wants to assert himself against the popular will cannot count, no matter how powerful he may be.

This meeting of the A. I. C. C. therefore hopes that the Princes will read the signs of the times and co-operate with the people, and those who have acted in a contrary spirit will retrace their steps and revise their undemocratic conduct and function through democratic organizations expressing the people's will. This they can best do by seeking the association and advice of the A. I. S. P. C. which has been endeavouring to act on behalf of the people of States.

(4) COMMUNAL ORGANIZATIONS

16-11-1947

The A. I. C. C. has noted with regret that communal organizations like the Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim League and the Akali Party have sought

to promote their respective interests based on so-called religious considerations in conflict with the national interest. The national interest must mean and include a healthy synthesis of all interests based not on religious but political, social, material and moral grounds. Political activities must accordingly be conducted by political organizations which are based on political and economic policies and which are open to members of all communities.

(5) PRIVATE ARMIES

16-11-1947

The All India Congress Committee has noted with regret that there is a growing desire on the part of some organizations to build up private armies. Any such development is dangerous for the safety of the State and for the growth of corporate life in the nation. The State alone should have its defence forces or police or home guards or recognized armed volunteer force. The activities of the Muslim National Guards, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Akali Volunteers and such other organizations, in so far as they represent an endeavour to bring into being private armies, must be regarded as a menace to the hard-won freedom of the country. The A. I. C.C. therefore appeals to all these organizations to discontinue such activities and the Central and Provincial Governments to take necessary steps in this behalf.

(6) CONTROLS

16-11-1947

The A. I. C. C. has been alarmed at the disturbance of normal life by the various controls, specially in regard to foodstuffs and clothing. These have promoted black-marketing, hoarding, corruption and other evils. They have interfered with the process of self-reliance and arrested the incentive to production specially in the matter of growing more foodstuffs and the manufacture of hand-spun and hand-woven khadi in the thousands of villages in India. The Committee is, therefore, of opinion that the Central and Provincial Governments should give urgent consideration to the problem of decontrol as early as possible without detriment to the public good.

(7) THE CONGRESS CONSTITUTION

16-11-1947

As the goal of complete independence from foreign domination has been achieved and in view of the new role the Congress organization will have to play under the changed circumstances, the A. I. C. C. appoints the following Committee to revise the present Congress Constitution, including the objective as contained in Article I and to submit the revised draft Constitution prepared by it to a special session of the All India Congress Committee, to be convened for the purpose, not later than the end of January, 1948 and

pending the final approval of such a Constitution by the A. I. C. C. to postpone all Congress elections under the present Constitution.

Shri R. R. Diwakar, Shri P. D. Tandon, Acharya Narendra Deo, Shri S. K. Patil, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Shri Surendra Mohan Ghosh and Acharya Jugal Kishore.

(8) CONGRESS OBJECTIVES

16-11-1947

Political independence having been achieved, the Congress must address itself to the next great task, namely, the establishment of real democracy in the country and a society based on social justice and equality. Such a society must provide every man and woman with equality of opportunity and freedom to work for the unfettered development of his or her personality. This can only be realized when democracy extends from the political to the social and the economic spheres.

Democracy in the modern age necessitates planned central direction as well as decentralization of political and economic power, in so far as this is compatible with the safety of the State, with efficient production and the cultural progress of the community as a whole. The smallest territorial unit should be able to exercise effective control over its corporate life by means of a popularly elected Panchayat. In so far as it is possible, national and regional economic self-sufficiency in the essentials of life should be aimed at. In the case of industries, which in their nature must be run on a large scale and on centralized basis, they should belong to the community, and they should be so organized that workers become not only co-sharers in the profits but are also increasingly associated with the management and administration of the industry.

Land, with its mineral resources, and all other means of production as well as distribution and exchange must belong to and be regulated by the community in its own interest.

Our aim should be to evolve a political system which will combine efficiency of administration with individual liberty and an economic structure which will yield maximum production without the creation of private monopolies and the concentration of wealth and which will create a proper balance between urban and rural economies. Such a social structure can provide an alternative to the acquisitive economy of private capitalism and the regimentation of a totalitarian State.

With a view to drawing up the economic programme for the Congress in accordance with the above-mentioned principles, and the election manifesto of the Congress dated December 19th, 1945, the following Committee is appointed :

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Shri Jaiprakash Narain, Prof. N. G. Ranga, Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda, Shri J. C. Kumarappa, Shri Achyut Patwardhan, Shri Shankarrao Deo—with powers to co-opt.

(9)

17-11-1947

This Committee would have liked Acharya J. B. Kripalani to continue as President of the Indian National Congress till the next elections in the normal course but as he has expressed his inability to reconsider his resignation, it regretfully accepts it.

The Committee places on record its appreciation of the services rendered by him both before and during the time he has held the office as President.

Harijan, 23-11-1947

APPENDIX II

EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM PYARELAL[1]

This means that unless we can accept partition as unreservedly as once you accepted the British Empire, even to the length of teaching your children to sing 'God save the King' in the approved English tune, we cannot stay in Pakistan without being guilty of 'disloyalty' to the State. How can then those who cannot in all conscience accept partition as something good or irrevocable for all time have any place in Pakistan?

Feverish preparations are going on to re-enact Kashmir on a small scale in Tripura State. Pakistan officials are deeply involved in it. Some of them are even said to be carrying on a 'palace intrigue' in Tripura State to this end. Three or four days ago, speeches were delivered at a public meeting in Comilla by Muslims exhorting the people to launch an action against Tripura authorities. Hindu subjects of Pakistan were challenged to prove their 'loyalty' by joining in that meritorious action for the extension of Pakistan's boundaries. What should be the attitude of the Hindus? What should the Hindu refugees from Noakhali, domiciled in Agartala (capital of Tripura) do? What advice should we give to those who seek our counsel?

In one sense, however, the situation in Noakhali may now be said to be normal. The policy of the Government is no more to harass or to persecute the Hindus. But the complexion of the administration is communal and their behaviour openly partisan. Discrimination and a steady squeeze in the name of the 'Islamic State' are going on and corruption, inefficiency and lack of discipline in all branches of administration are endemic. Before the partition the Central Government exercised, at least in name, some check. Now even that is gone. For the rest unless war actually breaks out between the two Dominions, there is no imminent danger of any large-scale disturbance taking place. In other words, peace in East Bengal henceforth will

[1] *Vide* "Letter to Pyarelal", pp. 45-6.

depend more on the overall situation *vis-a-vis* the two Dominions than on purely local conditions. . . .

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 529-30

APPENDIX III

LETTER FROM KARL STRUVE[1]

After carefully studying Roy Walker's thrilling story of your admirable work (*Sword of Gold*) I was satisfied that, lifelong as your struggle for non-violence had been, your unlimited devotion had met with success, at least as far as India's leaders and masses were concerned, and the fact that Britain retired from India in apparent goodwill and friendship, seemed to bear out the hope that appreciation of non-violence was no longer restricted to your own country. The first breach into the thick walls of violence seemed made, and the prospects for humanity seemed to have grown more lucid than ever.

All the more depressing were your recent confessions, as reported in the last edition of *Peace News* by George Davies. It grieves me to the heart to read that you had never experienced the dark despair that is today within you. And though it is certainly true that God does not demand success but truth and love from a man, it is a sad sight to behold mankind so deeply entangled by violence as not to yield to the vast extent of soul-force and self-sacrifice given by you and your few friends during a long life.

However, willingly admitting as I do that you are in a far better position to look into the heart of things than I am, I cannot believe that your heroic efforts will be lost upon mankind, that the good seed you have so untiringly sown in all your surroundings, by your words as well as by your example, should be wasted.

Be that as it may, I for one (and I am sure I speak the heart of untold millions) feel it my bounden duty to express my deepest gratitude to you for giving the whole of your life to what you felt to be the one way to salvation for mankind.

Harijan, 11-1-1948

[1] *Vide* pp. 337-8.

APPENDIX IV

LETTER FROM INDIAN REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL[1]

January 1, 1948

The Government of India have instructed me to transmit to you the following telegraphic communication:

1. Under Article 35 of the Charter of the United Nations, any Member may bring any situation whose continuance is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security to the attention of the Security Council. Such a situation now exists between India and Pakistan owing to the aid which invaders, consisting of nationals of Pakistan and of tribesmen from the territory immediately adjoining Pakistan on the north-west, are drawing from Pakistan for operations against Jammu and Kashmir, a State which has acceded to the Dominion of India and is part of India. The circumstances of accession, the activities of the invaders which led the Government of India to take military action against them, and the assistance which the attackers have received and are still receiving from Pakistan are explained later in this memorandum. The Government of India request the Security Council to call upon Pakistan to put an end immediately to the giving of such assistance, which is an act of aggression against India. If Pakistan does not do so, the Government of India may be compelled, in self-defence, to enter Pakistan territory, in order to take military action against the invaders. The matter is, therefore, one of extreme urgency and calls for immediate action by the Security Council for avoiding a breach of international peace.

2. From the middle of September 1947, the Government of India had received reports of the infiltration of armed raiders into the western parts of Jammu province of Jammu and Kashmir State; Jammu adjoins West Punjab, which is a part of the Dominion of Pakistan. These raiders had done a great deal of damage in that area and taken possession of part of the territory of the State. On 24th October, the Government of India heard of a major raid from the Frontier Province of the Dominion of Pakistan into the Valley of Kashmir. Some two thousand or more fully armed and equipped men came in motor transport, crossed over to the territory of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, sacked the town of Muzaffarabad, killing many people and proceeded along the Jhelum Valley road towards Srinagar,

[1] *Vide* p. 356.

the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir State. Intermediate towns and villages were sacked and burnt, many people killed. These raiders were stopped by Kashmir State troops near Uri, a town some fifty miles from Srinagar, for some time, but the invaders got around them and burnt the power-house at Mahora, which supplied electricity to the whole of Kashmir.

3. The position, on the morning of 26th October, was that these raiders had been held by Kashmir State troops and part of the civil population, who had been armed, at a town called Baramulla. Beyond Baramulla there was no major obstruction up to Srinagar. There was immediate danger of these raiders reaching Srinagar, destroying and massacring large numbers of people, both Hindus and Muslims. The State troops were spread out all over the State and most of them were deployed along the western border of Jammu province. They had been split up into small isolated groups and were incapable of offering effective resistance to the raiders. Most of the State officials had left the threatened areas and the civil administration had ceased to function. All that stood between Srinagar and the fate which had overtaken the places en route followed by the raiders was the determination of the inhabitants of Srinagar, of all communities, and practically without arms, to defend themselves. At this time Srinagar had also a large population of Hindu and Sikh refugees who had fled there from West Punjab owing to communal disturbances in that area. There was little doubt that these refugees would be massacred if the raiders reached Srinagar.

4. Immediately after the raids into Jammu and Kashmir State commenced, approaches were informally made to the Government of India for the acceptance of the accession of the State to the Indian Dominion. (It might be explained in parenthesis that Jammu and Kashmir form a State whose ruler, prior to the transfer of power by the United Kingdom to the Dominions of India and Pakistan, had been in treaty relations with the British Crown, which controlled its foreign relations and was responsible for its defence. The treaty relations ceased with the transfer of power on 15th August last, and Jammu and Kashmir like other States acquired the right to accede to either Dominion.)

5. Events moved with great rapidity, and the threat to the Valley of Kashmir became grave. On 26th October, the Ruler of the State, His Highness Maharaja Sir Hari Singh, appealed urgently to the Government of India for military help. He also requested that the Jammu and Kashmir State should be allowed to accede to the Indian Dominion. An appeal for help was also simultaneously received by the Government of India from the largest popular organization in Kashmir, the National Conference, headed by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah. The Conference further strongly supported the request for the State's accession to the Indian Dominion. The Government of India were thus approached not only officially by the State

authorities, but also on behalf of the people of Kashmir, both for military aid and for the accession of the State to India.

6. The grave threat to the life and property of innocent people in the Kashmir Valley and to the security of the State of Jammu and Kashmir that had developed as a result of the invasion of the Valley demanded immediate decision by the Government of India on both the requests. It was imperative on account of the emergency that the responsibility for the defence of Jammu and Kashmir State should be taken over by a government capable of discharging it. But, in order to avoid any possible suggestion that India had utilized the State's immediate peril for her own political advantage, the Government of India made it clear that once the soil of the State had been cleared of the invader and normal conditions restored, its people would be free to decide their future by the recognized democratic method of a plebiscite or referendum which, in order to ensure complete impartiality, might be held under international auspices.

7. The Government of India felt it their duty to respond to the appeal for armed assistance because:

(1) They could not allow a neighbouring and friendly State to be compelled by force to determine either its internal affairs or its external relations;

(2) The accession of Jammu and Kashmir State to the Dominion of India made India really responsible for the defence of the State.

8. The intervention of the Government of India resulted in saving Srinagar. The raiders were driven back from Baramulla to Uri and are held there by Indian troops. Nearly 19,000 raiders face the Dominion forces in this area. Since operations in the Valley of Kashmir started, pressure by the raiders against the western and south-western borders of Jammu and Kashmir State had been intensified. Exact figures are not available. It is understood, however, that nearly 15,000 raiders are operating against this part of the State. State troops are besieged in certain areas. Incursions by the raiders into the State territory, involving murder, arson, loot, and the abduction of women continue. The booty is collected and carried over to the tribal areas to serve as an inducement to the further recruitment of tribesmen to the ranks of the raiders. In addition to those actively participating in the raid, tribesmen and others, estimated at 100,000, have been collected in different places in the districts of West Punjab bordering Jammu and Kashmir State, and many of them are receiving military training under Pakistani nationals, including officers of the Pakistan Army. They are looked after in Pakistan territory, fed, clothed, armed and otherwise equipped, and transported to the territory of Jammu and Kashmir State with the help, direct and indirect, of Pakistani officials, both military and civil.

9. As already stated, the raiders who entered the Kashmir Valley in October came mainly from the tribal areas to the north-west of Pakistan

and, in order to reach Kashmir, passed through Pakistan territory. The raids along the south-west border of the State, which had preceded the invasion of the valley proper, had actually been conducted from Pakistan territory, and Pakistan nationals had taken part in them. This process of transmission across Pakistan territory and utilization of that territory as a base of operations against Jammu and Kashmir State continues. Recently, military operations against the western and south-western borders of the State have been intensified, and the attackers consist of nationals of Pakistan as well as tribesmen. These invaders are armed with modern weapons, including mortars and medium machine-guns, wear the battle-dress of regular soldiers and, in recent engagements, have fought in regular battle formation and are using the tactics of modern warfare. Man-pack wireless sets are in regular use and even mark V mines have been employed. For their transport the invaders have all along used motor vehicles. They are undoubtedly being trained and to some extent led by regular officers of the Pakistan Army. Their rations and other supplies are obtained from Pakistan territory.

10. These facts point indisputably to the conclusion

(a) that the invaders are allowed transit across Pakistan territory;

(b) that they are allowed to use Pakistan territory as a base of operations;

(c) that they include Pakistan nationals;

(d) that they draw much of their military equipment, transportation, and supplies (including petrol) from Pakistan; and

(e) that Pakistan officers are training, guiding, and otherwise actively helping them.

There is no source other than Pakistan from which they could obtain such quantities of modern equipment, training or guidance. More than once, the Government of India had asked the Pakistan Government to deny to the invaders facilities which constitute an act of aggression and hostility against India, but without any response. The last occasion on which this request was made was on 22nd December, when the Prime Minister of India handed over personally to the Prime Minister of Pakistan a letter in which the various forms of aid given by Pakistan to the invaders were briefly recounted and the Government of Pakistan were asked to put an end to such aid promptly; no reply to this letter has yet been received in spite of a telegraphic reminder sent on 26th December.

11. It should be clear from the foregoing recital that the Government of Pakistan are unwilling to stop the assistance in material and men which the invaders are receiving from Pakistan territory and from Pakistan nationals, including Pakistan Government personnel, both military and civil. This attitude is not only un-neutral, but constitutes active aggression against India, of which the State of Jammu and Kashmir forms a part.

12. The Government of India have exerted persuasion and exercised patience to bring about a change in the attitude of Pakistan. But they have failed, and are in consequence confronted with a situation in which their defence of Jammu and Kashmir State is hampered and their measures to drive the invaders from the territory of the State are greatly impeded by the support which the raiders derive from Pakistan. The invaders are still on the soil of Jammu and Kashmir and the inhabitants of the State are exposed to all the atrocities of which a barbarous foe is capable. The presence, in large numbers, of invaders in those portions of Pakistan territory which adjoin parts of Indian territory other than Jammu and Kashmir State is a menace to the rest of India. Indefinite continuance of the present operations prolongs the agony of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, is a drain on India's resources and a constant threat to the maintenance of peace between India and Pakistan. The Government of India have no option, therefore, but to take more effective military action in order to rid Jammu and Kashmir State of the invader.

13. In order that the objective of expelling the invader from Indian territory and preventing him from launching fresh attacks should be quickly achieved, Indian troops would have to enter Pakistan territory; only thus could the invader be denied the use of bases and cut off from his sources of supplies and reinforcements in Pakistan. Since the aid which the invaders are receiving from Pakistan is an act of aggression against India, the Government of India are entitled, under international law, to send their armed forces across Pakistan territory for dealing effectively with the invaders. However, as such action might involve armed conflict with Pakistan, the Government of India, ever anxious to proceed according to the principles and aims of the Charter of the United Nations, desire to report the situation to the Security Council under Article 35 of the Charter. They feel justified in requesting the Security Council to ask the Government of Pakistan:

(1) to prevent Pakistan Government personnel, military and civil, from participating or assisting in the invasion of Jammu and Kashmir State;

(2) to call upon other Pakistani nationals to desist from taking any part in the fighting in Jammu and Kashmir State;

(3) to deny to the invaders: (a) access to any use of its territory for operations against Kashmir, (b) military and other supplies, (c) all other kinds of aid that might tend to prolong the present struggle.

14. The Government of India would stress the special urgency of the Security Council taking immediate action on their request. They desire to add that military operations in the invaded area have, in the past few days, been developing so rapidly that they must, in self-defence, reserve to themselves the freedom to take, at any time when it may become necessary, such military action as they may consider the situation requires.

15. The Government of India deeply regret that a serious crisis should have been reached in their relations with Pakistan. Not only is Pakistan a neighbour but, in spite of the recent separation, India and Pakistan have many ties and many common interests. India desires nothing more earnestly than to live with her neighbour-State on terms of close and lasting friendship. Peace is to the interest of both States; indeed to the interest of the world. The Government of India's approach to the Security Council is inspired by the sincere hope that, through the prompt action of the Council, peace may be preserved.

16. The text of this reference to the Security Council is being telegraphed to the Government of Pakistan.

Sardar Patel's Correspondence, 1945-50, Vol. I, pp. 345-50

APPENDIX V (A)

VALLABHBHAI PATEL'S STATEMENT TO THE PRESS[1]

NEW DELHI,
January 12, 1948

I am sure all of you have read the Press statement of Mr. Ghulam Mohammad, Finance Minister of Pakistan, on the payment of cash balances to the Pakistan Government. The Finance Minister of Pakistan has had a varied career of responsibility as a civil servant—Finance Minister of Hyderabad State, and a participant in 'big business'. One would not normally expect in his statements the defects of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*. But I regret to observe that not only does his statement abound in these, but in his utter desperation at seeing his financial anticipations wrecked by the actions of his own Government in regard to Kashmir, he has cast discretion and judgment to the winds and descended down to the familiar arts of a bully and a blackmailer.

I use these epithets deliberately, for to anyone reading his statement dispassionately it would be obvious that he has tried to browbeat the Reserve Bank of India into submission by a liberal use of threats and insinuations, has charged the Government of India with bad faith in the hope that the charge would gain for him his coveted ransom, and has tried to invoke the assistance of international opinion in the expectation that the threatened exposure before the world would make the Government of India bend in its attitude on this subject. I quite concede that the desperate situation in which he finds himself calls for rather drastic remedies but we are entitled to expect of him a balanced approach to this problem rather than these filibustering tactics, the failure of which is as certain as daylight. Further, in his overzeal to achieve

[1] *Vide* p. 435.

his object by all manner of means, the Pakistan Finance Minister has, I would presently show, paid little attention to truth and shown little regard for facts.

Let us first deal with his statement that "none of us had the slightest indication that the Kashmir problem would be dragged in", his accusation of bad faith and similar other statements of an accusatory nature. To deal with these I would give in brief a resume of the course of negotiations. The series of meetings held between the representatives of the Pakistan and the Indian Governments in the last week of November were intended to iron out all our differences including the question of Kashmir. The discussions held were not confined to mere partition issues, but covered Kashmir, refugees and other important evacuation matters as well. On the 26th November talks on Kashmir were held in an atmosphere of hope, goodwill and cordiality, and were continued simultaneously with the discussions of financial and other questions on subsequent days. On the 27th November, informal and provisional agreement was reached on the two issues of division of cash balances, and the sharing of the uncovered debt. The Pakistan representatives were in some haste and tried to hustle us into agreeing to announce these agreements. We resisted it. Indeed, on the 27th evening, I issued a statement to the Press asking them not to speculate on the nature of the talks, but to wait until an authoritative statement was issued after the talks had concluded.

Here is what I said then: "All-out efforts are being made for a settlement on all outstanding matters, but any speculations on the nature of the talks would do more harm than good. All that I can say at present is that discussions are being held and the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister of the Pakistan Government are staying on till Saturday. A detailed statement will be issued when the talks are concluded. Till then reports about any settlement on any individual item or issue between the two Governments must be regarded as premature and lacking authority."

The next morning my statement which was read at a meeting at Government House at which both the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister of Pakistan were present, that we would not regard the settlement of these issues as final unless agreement had been reached on all outstanding issues. I made it quite clear then that we would not agree to any payment until the Kashmir affair was settled. Accordingly, no announcement of the agreement was made. In the meantime, Pakistan representatives postponed their departure and talks on Kashmir and other matters were continued with rather varying results on different issues. Working in this somewhat improved atmosphere, we reached a settlement on all other outstanding issues relating to partition, and the informal agreement was reported to the Partition Council at its meeting on the 1st December, though they were to be reduced to writing later. This was completed on the 2nd December, but it was agreed even then not to make an announcement on the subject until after the Lahore discussions on Kashmir and other outstanding issues had been, as was then hoped, successfully concluded.

The position was further confirmed by the submission made on the 3rd December by both the parties before the Arbitral Tribunal that the prospects of all the references being settled were very good, that a further meeting was to be held on the 8th and 9th at Lahore and the situation would then be clearer. The discussions were resumed at Lahore on the 8th and 9th December. But in the meantime, it was found that feverish attempts were being made by the Pakistan Government to secure the payment of Rs. 55 crores which it had been agreed to allocate to Pakistan out of the cash balances. We resisted these attempts. Nevertheless, evidently in an attempt to isolate the issue and force our hands contrary to the understanding reached, the Pakistan High Commissioner on the 7th December gave a Press interview announcing the agreement reached on the financial issues. When, however, we stuck to our previous position and reiterated it during the Lahore discussion, though in deference to Pakistan's insistence on the announcement of the agreement on financial issues we agreed to make a short statement on the 9th December in the Legislature, which was then sitting in Delhi, the Pakistan Finance Minister showed also such indecent haste in rushing to the Press in this matter that he actually gave an interview on the subject on the 7th December itself. Pakistan's game was by then quite clear. Armed with this understanding on the question of public announcement by us of the agreement on financial issues, their attitude on the Kashmir stiffened and the prospect of agreement which seemed so near at Delhi receded. I then felt it necessary in my statement to the Assembly on 9th December to make it quite clear that the implementation of this agreement was to be as far as possible simultaneous with the settlement of the Kashmir issue. The Pakistan Government did not take any exception to this statement at the time. In the subsequent detailed statement which I made on the 12th in the presence of the Pakistan High Commissioner, I again repeated that the successful implementation of this agreement depended on the continuation of goodwill, spirit of accommodation and conciliation on the other vital issues. Quite obviously Kashmir was one of such issues. Pakistan still made no protest. To all approaches for payment of the Rs. 55 crores, we returned a negative answer. Then came the final talks on the Kashmir issue on the 22nd December. It was then for the first time during these discussions that the Pakistan Prime Minister took exception to our stand that the financial and Kashmir issues stood together as regards implementation and asked for immediate implementation of the payment of Rs. 55 crores. We made it clear to him then and subsequently in our telegram dated the 30th December that we stood by the agreement but that in view of the hostile attitude of the Pakistan Government in regard to Kashmir the payment of the amount would have to be postponed in accordance with our stand throughout the negotiations.

Thus it is our case that far from our having done anything unfair to Pakistan or in breach of any agreement, it is the Pakistan representatives who

were all the time trying to soft-pedal the Kashmir issue in order to secure concessions from us on the financial issues and to manœuvre us into making an isolated public announcement on the subject without reference to other vital issues between the two Governments. We consistently and successfully resisted this despite attempt by the Pakistan High Commissioner and Finance Minister to force our hands. Far from there being bad faith on our part, we genuinely and sincerely meant this settlement as part of an overall settlement which would have been conducive to the maintenance of friendly and peaceful relations between the two sister Dominions.

It is also our claim that in agreeing to these terms of the financial settlement, we were actuated by generous sentiments towards Pakistan and a sincere desire, as I made clear in the Partition Council, "to see Pakistan grow into a prosperous neighbour". We hoped that Pakistan would reciprocate on other issues which unfortunately still divided us. That the financial settlement was attractive to Pakistan and would be a great asset to Pakistan's economy is clear from the statements issued by the Pakistan High Commissioner and Sir Archibald Rowlands (former Finance Member of Viceroy's Council). It is, therefore, quite plain that having secured terms which were essential to hold Pakistan's finances together, the Pakistan Government failed in their obligation to respond to India's gesture on other issues.

I would also point out that the Government of India took a more comprehensive view of our obligation to the securing of a just and peaceful settlement than the Pakistan Government. We realized throughout that neighbourly relations between ourselves and Pakistan could be restored and maintained only if the spirit of amity, tolerance and goodwill pervaded throughout the entire field of controversy; the Pakistan Government obviously intended to take undue advantage of our generous attitude and exhibit these virtues in a narrow, restricted and selfish sphere. The need for a comprehensive view was and still is quite clear. Apart from other factors, India has taken over the entire debt of undivided India and depends on Pakistan's bona fides and goodwill to make equated payment by easy and long-term instalments of its debt to India after a four-year moratorium period. We cannot, therefore, afford to let conflicts endanger our credit and security and throw into the melting-pot some of the vital points in the financial agreement itself. Obviously, therefore, India must provide against strained relations worsening into open breach and thereby, as I was careful to point out in my statement of the 12th December, "placing all the good work achieved in jeopardy".

We are, therefore, fully justified in providing against Pakistan's possible continuance of aggressive actions in regard to Kashmir by postponing the implementation of the agreement. We have made it clear to the Pakistan Government more than once that we stand by the agreement which we

reached. The agreement does not bind the Government of India to any fixed date for payment and we cannot reasonably be asked to make a payment of cash balances to Pakistan when an armed conflict with its forces is in progress and threatens to assume an even more dangerous character, which is likely to destroy the whole basis of the financial agreement and would endanger other parts of the agreement, such as arrangements for taking over of debt, and division of stores, etc.

The Pakistan Finance Minister claims the amount of Rs. 55 crores as belonging to Pakistan. He has apparently overlooked the fact that on the 14th August 1947, after the Partition Council had decided to allocate the working balance of Rs. 20 crores to the Pakistan Government, the then undivided Government of India issued an order in the following terms to the Reserve Bank:

> "PLEASE TRANSFER TWENTY, HALF OF FORTY CRORES, FROM CENTRAL CLOSING CASH BALANCE ON THE 14TH INSTANT TO PAKISTAN AND BALANCE TO INDIAN DOMINION AS OPENING BALANCE ON THE 15TH."

A copy of this telegram was endorsed to the Pakistan wing of the then Finance Department, and no objection was, or has been, raised to this accounting. It follows from this that so far as the bank accounts are concerned, there is no balance of the old undivided Government to be operated upon; the money stands in the name of the Indian Dominion and it is only on the authority of the Indian Dominion that any share can be allocated to the Government of Pakistan. The relevant portion of the Partition Council minutes also runs thus:

> "In addition to the 20 crores, already made over to Pakistan, 55 crores will be allocated to Pakistan in full and final settlement of its claim for a share of the undivided Government's cash balance and of the cash balance investment account."

It is clear, therefore, that nothing belongs to Pakistan until the Government of India transfer the amount to its account.

This clear-cut position makes the Pakistan Finance Minister's outburst against the Reserve Bank appear somewhat hysterical and rhetorical. The Reserve Bank cannot do anything without the specific instructions of the Government of India who are the only competent authority to operate the account. He has accused the Government of India of interfering in the discharge of its duties towards the Pakistan Government and has characterized this alleged interference not only as an unfriendly act, but as an act of aggression. I wish to say in the most emphatic terms that this accusation is completely baseless and devoid of any element of truth whatsoever. I understand that the Reserve Bank of India first received the demand for the payment of Rs. 55 crores on the 6th of this month in a memorandum

handed over to the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank at Karachi. I also understand that the Governor to whom this memorandum was telegraphed by the Deputy Governor has sent an appropriate reply. So far as the Government of India are concerned, I would say that when the Reserve Bank mentioned an approach by the Pakistan Government for temporary accommodation from the Bank, the Government of India made it clear to the Bank that it was a matter for the Bank alone to decide. Indeed, the Government of India have made every effort to avoid dragging the Reserve Bank into the controversy. The blame for attempting to force the Reserve Bank into taking sides must rest with the Pakistan Finance Minister. Neither the manner nor the nature of the attempt reflects creditably on the honesty of purpose and the motives of the Pakistan Government.

Gentlemen, I think I have said enough to prove how unfounded and insubstantial are the allegations made by the Pakistan Finance Minister against the Government of India. We have also shown how we have held consistently to the position that the settlement of the financial issues cannot be isolated from that of other vital issues and has to be implemented simultaneously. There can be no question of our repudiating the agreement reached. We only desire that the appropriate atmosphere conditioned by the agreement must be created for its implementation. If the Pakistan Government desires for payment of cash balance in advance, it is obvious that they are motivated by factors wholly opposed to the spirit underlying the agreement. We are thus fully justified in resisting these machinations which, if successful, would vitiate the very basis of the agreement and adversely affect, by facilitating Pakistan's aggressive designs on India, the implementation of other vital parts of the agreement.

The Bombay Chronicle, 13-1-1948

APPENDIX V(B)

GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUE[1]

The Government of India have fully clarified their position in regard to the financial settlement arrived at between them and the Government of Pakistan. They have declared that they abide by that settlement, but that the implementation of it, in regard to the cash balances, must be considered as part of an overall settlement of outstanding questions in issue between India and Pakistan. They regret that the Finance Minister of the Pakistan Government should have advanced arguments which are unsupported by facts and which they cannot accept. The factual position has been clearly stated in the statements issued by the Deputy Prime Minister, and

[1] *Vide* p. 435.

the Finance Minister of the Government of India. The facts and arguments contained in these statements represent the deliberate and unanimous opinion of the Cabinet. They regret that the Finance Minister of the Pakistan Government should have again challenged these incontrovertible facts which justify fully the position taken up by the Government of India both on legal and other grounds.

The Government have, however, shared the world-wide anxiety over the fast undertaken by Gandhiji, the Father of the Nation. In common with him they have anxiously searched for ways and means to remove ill will, prejudice and suspicion, which have poisoned the relations between India and Pakistan. Impelled by the earnest desire to help in every way open to them in the object which Gandhiji has at heart, the Government have sought for some tangible and striking contribution to the movement for ending the physical suffering of the nation's soul and to turn the nation's mind from the present distemper, bitterness and suspicion to constructive and creative effort. The Government are anxious to remove as far as possible, without detriment to the national good, every cause, which leads to friction between India and Pakistan.

In view of the appeal made by Gandhiji to the nation, the Government have decided to remove the one cause of suspicion and friction between the two States which, consistently with national honour and interest, it is in their power to remove. They make this spontaneous gesture in the earnest hope that it will be appreciated in the spirit in which it is made and that it will help in producing an atmosphere of goodwill for which Gandhiji is suffering crucifixion of the flesh and thereby lead this great servant of the nation to end his fast and add still further to his unparalleled services to India.

The Government have decided to implement immediately the financial agreement with Pakistan in regard to the cash balances. The amount due to Pakistan on the basis of the agreement, i. e., Rs. 55 crores, minus the expenditure incurred by the Government of India since August 15 on Pakistan account will, therefore, be paid to the Government of Pakistan.

The decision is the Government contribution, to the best of its ability, to the non-violent and noble effort made by Gandhiji in accordance with the glorious traditions of this great country, for peace and goodwill.

The Hindustan Times, 16-1-1948

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CHRONOLOGY

(*November 11, 1947—January 30, 1948*)

November 11: Gandhiji was in Delhi.
Had talks with Shankarrao Deo, J. B. Kripalani, Rajendra Prasad, Manibehn Patel and Amrit Kaur.
Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.
In his address at prayer meeting defended Government of India having taken over administration in Junagadh.

November 12: Had talks with Muslim students and H. S. Suhrawardy.
Broadcasted message for refugees at Kurukshetra Camp from All India Radio in the afternoon.
Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.
Addressed prayer meeting.

November 13: Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.
Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, Sucheta Kripalani, H. S. Suhrawardy, Dr. Jivraj Mehta, Profulla Chandra Ghosh, Shankarrao Deo, B. G. Kher, Jawaharlal Nehru, Prabhavati and Anantrai Pattani.
Addressed prayer meeting.

November 14: Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.
Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, Mridula Sarabhai, Dr. Kitchlew, Sudhir Ghosh and H. S. Suhrawardy.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Burma Independence Bill passed in House of Commons.

November 15: Gandhiji attended Congress Working Committee meeting.
Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, J. B. Kripalani, C. Rajagopalachari, Sudhir Ghosh, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dada Dharmadhikari and Anantrai Pattani.
Addressed A. I. C. C. meeting. Resolutions on "Rights of Minorities", "Repatriation of Refugees" and "States" passed by A.I.C.C.
J. B. Kripalani resigned from Congress Presidentship.
Gandhiji addressed prayer meeting.

November 16: Attended Congress Working Committee meeting. Had talks with H. S. Suhrawardy, Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Resolutions on "Communal Disturbances", "Private Armies", "Controls", "The Congress Constitution" and "Congress Objectives" passed by A. I. C. C.

November 17: Gandhiji attended Congress Working Committee meeting.

Had talks with Rameshwari Nehru, A. V. Thakkar, Horace Alexander, Jamnadas Dwarkadas and Rammanohar Lohia.

His speech was read out at prayer meeting.

A. I. C. C. accepted J. B. Kripalani's resignation, elected Rajendra Prasad as President and concluded its session.

November 18: Gandhiji had talks with Rajendra Prasad, Jayaprakash Narayan, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Syed Mahmud, Sucheta Kripalani, Gopalaswami Iyengar, Dewan of Rampur, Shah Nawaz Khan, Dada Dharmadhikari, Gopalrao and Achyut Patwardhan.

Explained Congress Resolution on "Rights of Minorities" in his prayer address and appealed to people to support and follow it.

Constituent Assembly met for the first time as Dominion Parliament. G. V. Mavalankar elected its Speaker.

November 19: Gandhiji had talks with Rajendra Prasad, Rameshwari Nehru, Amrit Kaur, Dr. Syed Mahmud, Sir Akbar Hydari, Jairamdas Doulatram, Shah Nawaz Khan, Mahamayaprasad, H. S. Suhrawardy and Lord Ismay.

Addressed prayer meeting.

November 20: Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, Shankarrao Deo, C. Rajagopalachari, Sophiabehn and Sudhir Ghosh.

Visited Refugee camp near Okhla along with Sucheta Kripalani in afternoon. Went to Government House to meet C. Rajagopalachari and ailing Sarojini Naidu.

Addressed prayer meeting.

Indian Resolution calling for a Round Table Conference on treatment of Indians in South Africa failed to pass in United Nations General Assembly.

Princess Elizabeth married Philip Mountbatten.

November 21: Gandhiji had talks with Rajendra Prasad, Shankarrao Deo, Rameshwari Nehru, Choithram Gidwani, K. C.

CWMG - XC

Neogi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Egyptian Delegation, Rammanohar Lohia, Dr. Chimanlal and Harekrushna Mehtab.
Addressed prayer meeting.

November 22: Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, Rameshwari Nehru, Mahavir Tyagi, Gopalaswamy Ayyangar, John Matthai, Shah Nawaz Khan, Mridula Sarabhai, Nalini Sen, Indira Gandhi, Pheroz Gandhi, Gopalrao Kale, Rammanohar Lohia, Sucheta Kripalani, Naliniranjan Sarkar and Vallabhbhai Patel.
Addressed prayer meeting.

November 23: Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, Horace Alexander, B. G. Kher, Morarji Desai, Maharani of Vijayanagar, Sophiabehn, Reddiar, A. V. Thakkar, K. Srinivasan, Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, Vallabhbhai Patel, Khandubhai Desai, Girijashankar Bajpai and Jawaharlal Nehru.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Visited ailing Manibehn Patel.

November 24: His speech was read out at prayer meeting.
Met Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, Horace Alexander, Mridula Sarabhai, Anantrai Pattani, Khwaja Abdul Majid, Rameshwari Nehru, Brijlal Nehru, Raja of Bilaspur and Amrit Kaur.

November 25: Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, Khwaja Abdul Majid, Sophiabehn, Aruna Asaf Ali, Subhadra Gupta, Jawaharlal Nehru, Amrit Kaur and Lady Mountbatten.
Addressed prayer meeting.

November 26: Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, Abul Kalam Azad, Rameshwari Nehru, Gopinath Bardoloi and Jawaharlal Nehru.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Vithoba temple at Pandharpur thrown open to Harijans.
Lord Mountbatten resumed office of Governor-General.
Ceylon Independence Bill passed by House of Commons.

November 27: Gandhiji called on Lord Mountbatten. Visited ailing Liaquat Ali.
Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, J. B. Kripalani, Sheikh Abdullah, Jamnadas Dwarkadas and Balwantrai Mehta.
Addressed prayer meeting.

November 28: Had talks with American visitors, Sheikh Abdullah, Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. Sjahrir, Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru.
Spoke at Guru Nanak birthday celebration.
Addressed prayer meeting.

November 29: Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, Surendra Mohan Ghosh, Muslims from Panipat and Jawaharlal Nehru.
Addressed prayer meeting.

November 30: Had talks with Maulanas, Kasturbhai Lalbhai Shah, S. Radhakrishnan, Vallabhbhai Patel, Dinshaw K. Mehta and Jehangir Patel.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Agreement signed between India and Hyderabad.

December 1: Gandhiji had talks with Lt.-Gen. K. M. Cariappa, Rajendra Prasad, Dinshaw K. Mehta, Jehangir C. Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru.
His speech was read out at prayer meeting.

December 2: Visited Panipat, had talks with Muslim refugees, Muslim leaders and Dr. Gopichand Bhargava. Spoke at public meeting.
Met Mridula Sarabhai.
Addressed prayer meeting.

December 3: Had talks with Mehar Chand Khanna, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, Lt.-Gen. K. M. Cariappa and Jawaharlal Nehru.
Addressed prayer meeting.

December 4: Had talks with Amrit Kaur, Jehangir C. Patel, Khurshed Naoroji, Burmese Premier and Syamaprasad Mukherjee.
Addressed prayer meeting.

December 5: Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, Anugrahanarayan Singh, Mridula Sarabhai, Ghanshyam Singh Gupta, Jawaharlal Nehru, Renuka Ray, Dr. Jivraj Mehta and Annada Chowdhary.
Addressed prayer meeting.

December 6: Had talks with Horace Alexander, Khurshed Naoroji, Abul Kalam Azad, Vallabhbhai Patel, Saralabehn Sarabhai, G. V. Mavalankar and M. S. Subbulakshmi.
Subbulakshmi sang *bhajan* at prayer meeting.

CWMG - XC

Gandhiji addressed the gathering.
Inter-Dominion Conference held in Lahore to consider ways and means for restoration of abducted women and forced converts.

December 7: Gandhiji addressed Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust meeting.
Had talks with Sindhi friends, Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sucheta Kripalani and Mridula Sarabhai.
In his address at prayer meeting stated that restoration of abducted women should be a matter of first priority with Indian and Pakistan Governments.

December 8: Had talks with U. N. Dhebar, Bhaktiba, C. P. Ramaswami, Sucheta Kripalani, J. B. Kripalani, Renuka Ray and Jawaharlal Nehru.
His speech was read out at prayer meeting.
Control on sugar removed.

December 9: Gandhiji had talks with Shankarrao Deo, Saralabehn Sarabhai, Khurshed Naoroji and Jawaharlal Nehru.
Attended meetings of Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust and All-India Spinners' Association.
Had discussion with women workers of K. G. N. M. Trust.
Addressed prayer meeting.

December 10: Had talks with H. S. Suhrawardy, Jayaprakash Narayan and Satis Chandra Das Gupta.
Had discussion with members of K. G. N. M. Trust, teachers and students.
Addressed Hindustani Talimi Sangh meeting.
In address at prayer meeting dwelt on the activities of A.I.S.A.

December 11: Had talks with J. C. Kumarappa, Amrit Kaur and Jawaharlal Nehru.
Addressed Constructive Works Committee meeting.
Met rulers of Sangli, Aundh, Phaltan, Miraj (Senior) and Ramdurg.
Demonstration held in Calcutta against Security Bill.

December 12: Gandhiji had talks with D. B. Kalelkar, Shankarrao Deo, Ghanshyamdas Birla and Dr. Gopichand Bhargava.
Addressed Constructive Works Committee meeting.
Spoke at prayer meeting.

December 13: Had talks with D. B. Kalelkar, Acharya Jugal Kishore, R. R. Diwakar, Pandit Sundarlal, Satis Chandra Das Gupta, Lakshmidas and Jamnadas Dwarkadas.
Addressed prayer meeting.

December 14: Had talks with Y. M. Parnerkar, Perinbehn Captain, Khurshed Naoroji, G. Ramachandran, Saundaram, Satis Chandra Das Gupta, Amrit Kaur and Jawaharlal Nehru.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Had discussion with constructive workers.

December 15: Had talks with Pyarelal, Maulanas, Anantrai Pattani, J. C. Kumarappa and Amrit Kaur.
His speech was read out at prayer meeting.

December 16: Had talks with Pyarelal, Satis Chandra Das Gupta, Arun Chandra Guha, Princess of Belgium, Amrit Kaur, Vallabhbhai Patel and visitors from Jammu.
Addressed prayer meeting.

December 17: Sent message to U. P. students.
Had talks with Shankarrao Deo, Sushila Pai, Sir Datar Singh, Dr. Acharya, Maharaja of Bhavnagar, Maulanas and Jawaharlal Nehru.
Addressed prayer meeting.

December 18: Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, Shankarrao Deo, H. S. Suhrawardy, French Ambassador, Rammanohar Lohia, Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, Swaran Singh and Jawaharlal Nehru.
Addressed prayer meeting.

December 19: Addressed Meos at Jesarah, a village in Gurgaon tehsil.
Had discussion with Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru in the morning and again in the evening. Had talks with Pyarelal, Dr. Chandubhai, Dinkarbhai Desai, K. M. Munshi and Maharaja of Kapurthala.
Addressed prayer meeting.

December 20: Had talks with Rana Petis, Sri Prakasa and Jawaharlal Nehru.
Met people from Bahawalpur, Mirpur and Jammu.
Addressed prayer meeting.

December 21: Had talks with H. S. Suhrawardy, Brijlal Nehru, Rameshwari Nehru, Sheikh Abdullah, Begum Abdullah, Dr. Kitchlew, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, Nawab of Chhatari, Prince of Kutch, Maharaja of Bhavnagar and Anantrai Pattani.

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Addressed prayer meeting.
Met Vijayalakshmi Pandit and Jawaharlal Nehru.
United Deccan State formed.

December 22: Gandhiji had talks with Pandit Sundarlal, H. S. Suhrawardy, Lakshmidas Asar, Raosaheb Patwardhan, Rammanohar Lohia and Jawaharlal Nehru. His speech was read out at prayer meeting.
Rajendra Prasad took over as President of Congress.

December 23: Gandhiji had talks with J. B. Kripalani, Sucheta Kripalani, Lakshmidas Asar, H. S. Suhrawardy, Nawab of Khamwat, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lady Mountbatten, Vallabhbhai Patel and K. M. Munshi. Met local Muslims, people from Bahawalpur and Rawalpindi.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Had discussion with Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru.

December 24: Met J. B. Kripalani and Maulanas.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Had discussion with Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru in the evening.

December 25: Had talks with Sevakram, Dinshaw K. Mehta, Jehangir C. Patel, Rameshwari Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru and women delegates from Indonesia.
Met local Maulanas.
In address at prayer meeting referred to Kashmir dispute and spoke against inviting a third party for arbitration.

December 26: Had talks with Sevakram, Dinshaw K. Mehta, Shamaldas Gandhi, U. N. Dhebar, Balwantrai Mehta, Sardar Nihalsingh, Choithram Gidwani and Kikibehn.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Had discussion with Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru.

December 27: Called on Lord Mountbatten at 10.30 a. m. Had talks with Jehangir C. Patel, Vallabhbhai Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, deputation from Ajmer led by Haribhau Upadhyaya and Martanda Upadhyaya.
Addressed prayer meeting at Sambhal, a village.

December 28: Had talks with Jehangir C. Patel, Shamaldas Gandhi, U. N. Dhebar, Maharaja of Patiala, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah.
Addressed meeting of cloth merchants.
In address at prayer meeting advocated decontrol of cloth.

December 29: Had talks with U. N. Dhebar, Shamaldas Gandhi, Balwantrai Mehta, Anantrai Pattani and Jawaharlal Nehru.
In address at prayer meeting paid tribute to Hakim Ajmal Khan.

December 30: Had talks with Rameshwari Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Sheikh Abdullah, Diwan of Kutch and Abul Kalam Azad.
In address at prayer meeting appealed to Nawab of Bahawalpur to arrange for evacuation of Hindus and Sikhs.
Had discussion with Jawaharlal Nehru and J. B. Kripalani.

December 31: Had talks with Subhadra Gupta, Anantrai Pattani, Amrit Kaur and Congress volunteers.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Government of India decided to refer Kashmir issue to United Nations Security Council.

January 1, 1948: Gandhiji had talks with Amrit Kaur, Anantrai Pattani, Gyani Kartarsingh and Sardar Dilip Singh.
In his address at prayer meeting appealed to Government to enforce prohibition.
Government of India took over administration of 25 Orissa States.

January 2: Kashmir issue referred to United Nations Security Council.
Gandhiji had talks with Dev Prakash Nayyar, Chandrani and Jawaharlal Nehru.
Addressed prayer meeting.

January 3: Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Amrit Kaur and Maulanas.
Addressed prayer meeting at Wavell Canteen refugee camp.
Provisional Government of Junagadh dissolved.

January 4: Gandhiji had talks with Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Sundarlal, Zakir Husain, Jawaharlal Nehru and Muslim leaders.
In his address at prayer meeting justified Government of India having taken Kashmir issue to United Nations Security Council.
Free Republic of Burma proclaimed.

January 5: Gandhiji had talks with Munnalal G. Shah, Subhadra Gupta, Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulanas.
In his written speech for prayer meeting commented on decontrol of food.

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January 6: Met Khurshed Naoroji, Krishnan Nair, Raja and Rani of Mandi, Rameshwari Nehru and Brijlal Nehru.
Had talk with Jawaharlal Nehru.
In address at prayer meeting advised dock workers in Bombay against going on strike.
U. N. Security Council adjourned hearing on Kashmir issue.
Sikh refugees in a Gurudwara in Karachi attacked by Muslim mob.

January 7: Gandhiji had talks with Gopalaswamy Ayyangar, M. S. Aney, Abdul Ghani, Rameshwari Nehru and Mridula Sarabhai.
Met people from Punjab, Sindh and N. W. F. P.
In speech at prayer meeting, remonstrated with Pakistan Government about incident in Karachi.

January 8: Had talks with D. B. Kalelkar, J. B. Kripalani, Sucheta Kripalani, Kikibehn, Rukmini Erulkar, Vallabhbhai Patel, Anantrai Pattani, A. V. Thakkar, Dr. Kitchlew, Sheikh Abdullah and Jawaharlal Nehru.
In his speech at prayer meeting advised students not to go on strike.

January 9: Had talks with Vallabhbhai Patel, Manubhai Pancholi, Balwantrai Mehta, Mohanbhai Motichand Gadhadawala, Sriman Narayan, Jawaharlal Nehru and Rameshwari Nehru.
Addressed prayer meeting.

January 10: Had talks with Anantrai Pattani, N. V. Gadgil, Iranian Ambassador and Jawaharlal Nehru.
In prayer speech assured evacuation of refugees from Bahawalpur.

January 11: Had talks with Shankarrao Deo, Rajendra Prasad, Bhimsen Sachchar, Sorabji Rustom, Pragjibhai and Anantrai Pattani.
Addressed prayer meeting.

January 12: Vallabhbhai Patel in statement to Press, replied to allegations made by Finance Minister of Pakistan and justified Government of India's stand that settlement of the financial issues could not be isolated from vital issues like Kashmir.
Gandhiji met Jamnadas and Vallabhbhai Patel. In written speech at prayer meeting, announced decision to go on fast to establish communal unity.

Called on Lord Mountbatten.
Had talks with Jawaharlal Nehru, Jamnadas and Devdas Gandhi.
M. S. Aney sworn in Governor of Bihar.

January 13: Gandhiji began fast at 11 a.m. with prayers.
Had talk with Vallabhbhai Patel.
Met Amrit Kaur, Abul Kalam Azad, Jairamdas Doulatram, H. S. Suhrawardy, Purushottamdas Trikumji and Anantrai Pattani.
In address at prayer meeting said he would end his fast when peace returned to Delhi.
Train carrying non-Muslim refugees from Bannu attacked at Gujrat railway station by tribesmen; hundreds were killed and wounded and women abducted.

January 14: Gandhiji continued fast.
Had discussion with Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, John Matthai and Shanmukham Chetty.
Met deputation from N. W. F. P., Amrit Kaur, Maharaja of Patiala, Gurbachansingh, Sucheta Kripalani, Mehar Chand Khanna, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed and H. S. Suhrawardy.
Was examined by Drs. Jivraj Mehta, Bidhan Chandra Roy and Sushila Nayyar and advised rest.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Health bulletin announced that "each day's fast increased both immediate and future danger" to Gandhiji's life.

January 15: Gandhiji met Jawaharlal Nehru, Pandit Sundarlal, Goswami Ganesh Datt, V. T. Krishnamachari, Kasturbhai Lalbhai Shah, Shankarrao Deo, Acharya Jugal Kishore, B. G. Kher, Maharaja of Devas, Rajendra Prasad, Shah Nawaz Khan, Jairamdas Doulatram, Shanmukham Chetty and K. C. Neogi.
On third day of fast, became considerably weak and had to be carried in an armchair.
Spoke briefly on microphone, lying in bed; his dictated speech dealing with questions put by journalists, was read out.
Government of India announced implementation of financial agreement with Pakistan regarding balance of payment as gesture of goodwill.
Debate on Kashmir issue began in United Nations Security Council.

January 16: Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad, Jayaprakash Narayan, Prabhavati, Shankarrao Deo,

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Rammanohar Lohia, Sucheta Kripalani, Shah Nawaz Khan and Sikh deputation called on Gandhiji.

Health bulletin said that Gandhiji's kidneys were not functioning properly.

Gandhiji, lying in bed, spoke a few words on microphone; his dictated speech was read out at prayer meeting.

Jawaharlal Nehru, Jairamdas Doulatram, Amrit Kaur and Jayaprakash Narayan addressed public meetings appealing to people to maintain peace and save Gandhiji's life.

January 17: Gandhiji's condition deteriorated on fifth day of fast. Health bulletin said it was most undesirable to let fast continue and appealed to people to create conditions for ending fast without delay.

Abul Kalam Azad, Sir Padmasingh, Gopinath Bardoloi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Satyanarayan Sinha, Lord and Lady Mountbatten, Rammanohar Lohia and Nawab Sadaquat Ali Khan called. Gandhiji had talk with Rajendra Prasad and G. D. Birla.

Lying in bed, addressed a few words on microphone; his dictated speech was read out at a mammoth prayer gathering.

Abul Kalam Azad, at a public meeting, announced seven conditions on which Gandhiji was prepared to end fast.

Representatives of different communities and organizations assembled at Rajendra Prasad's residence in evening.

January 18: Sixth day of fast.

Gandhiji complained of stomach ache, was extremely restless.

Over a hundred representatives of various groups and organizations in Delhi came to Gandhiji, signed a declaration of assurance on seven conditions. Rajendra Prasad signed declaration as Congress President. On receipt of assurance prayers were held and Gandhiji broke fast at 12.15 p.m.

Gave message to Sikhs on Guru Govind Singh's birth anniversary.

Lying in bed, spoke on microphone for twenty minutes; his dictated speech was read out at prayer meeting.

January 19: Had talks with Jamshedji, Jehangir C. Patel, Dinshaw K. Mehta, H. S. Suhrawardy and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Was carried to prayer ground in a chair, his written speech was read out at prayer meeting.

Central Peace Committee formed to implement assurances given to Gandhiji.

Government decided to decontrol cloth.

January 20: Gandhiji had talks with Jamshedji Mehta, Jawaharlal Nehru and Amrit Kaur.

While addressing prayer meeting a bomb exploded a short distance away. Gandhiji continued address after the interruption.

Madanlal Pahwa was apprehended.

United Nations Security Council agreed to set up a three-power commission to mediate between India and Pakistan over Kashmir dispute.

January 21: Security measures were tightened in Birla House. Gandhiji turned down suggestion for searching people coming to prayer meeting.

Met Sikh deputation.

Had talks with Iftikhar-ud-Din and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Addressed prayer meeting, had to be carried in a chair.

January 22: Had discussion with Jawaharlal Nehru. Addressed prayer meeting.

January 23: Had talks with Jawaharlal Nehru and Sucheta Kripalani.

In his speech at prayer meeting, paid tribute to Subhas Chandra Bose on his birth anniversary.

Kathiawar rulers signed covenant approving creation of Saurashtra Province, a United State.

January 24: Gandhiji attended Congress Working Committee meeting.

In speech at prayer meeting, stressed need to return all abducted women unconditionally.

Had talk with Jawaharlal Nehru.

January 25: Attended Congress Working Committee meeting. Addressed prayer meeting.

January 26: Had talks with Gopichand Bhargava, Prafulla Chandra Ghosh and Annada Chowdhary.

Attended Congress Working Committee meeting.

His written speech was read out at prayer meeting.

January 27: Visited shrine of Khwaja Kutub-ud-Din Bakhtiar at Mehrauli; addressed gathering there.

Had talks with Govind Ballabh Pant, Abul Kalam Azad, Maharaja of Vijayanagar, Justice Ramlal, Mehar Chand Khanna, Jawaharlal Nehru and Rameshwari Nehru.

Gave interview to Kingsley Martin and Vincent Sheean. Had discussion with R. R. Diwakar, Acharya Jugal Kishore and members of Congress Constitution Sub-committee.

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Addressed prayer meeting.

January 28: Had talks with Rajendra Prasad, members of Central Relief Committee, Nawab Sadiq Ali Khan, Jawaharlal Nehru, Amrit Kaur and Vincent Sheean.
Addressed prayer meeting.

January 29: Had talks with Prabhavati, Jayaprakash Narayan, Padmaja Naidu, Krishna Hutheesinh, Indira Gandhi, Rajen Nehru and Sudhir Ghosh.
Gave interview to Margaret Bourke-White and General Secretary of Y. W. C. A.
Addressed prayer meeting.
Prepared draft constitution of Congress suggesting disbanding of Congress organization and setting up a Lok Sevak Sangh.
Had talk with Devdas Gandhi.

January 30: Revised draft constitution of Congress.
Had talks with Pyarelal, Sudhir Ghosh, Maulanas and Sindhi deputation.
Had discussion with Vallabhbhai Patel, took his evening meal at 4.30 p. m. while discussion continued.
Manibehn Patel interrupted discussion to remind Gandhiji that it was time for prayer.
Gandhiji started for prayer meeting supported by Manu Gandhi and Abha Gandhi on either side. As he was approaching the prayer ground, three shots were fired at him at close range. Gandhiji sank to the ground breathing his last at 5.17 p. m.

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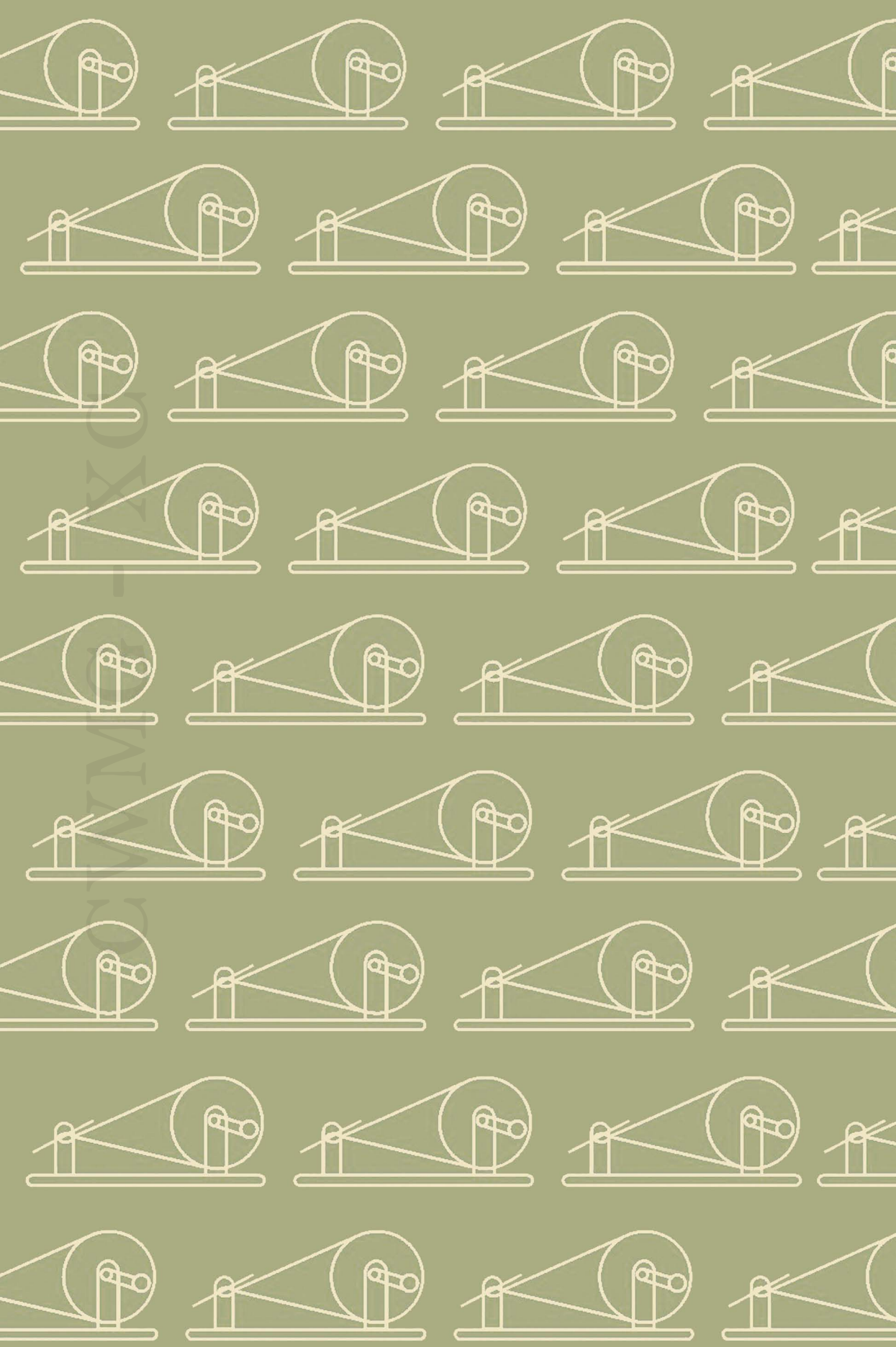
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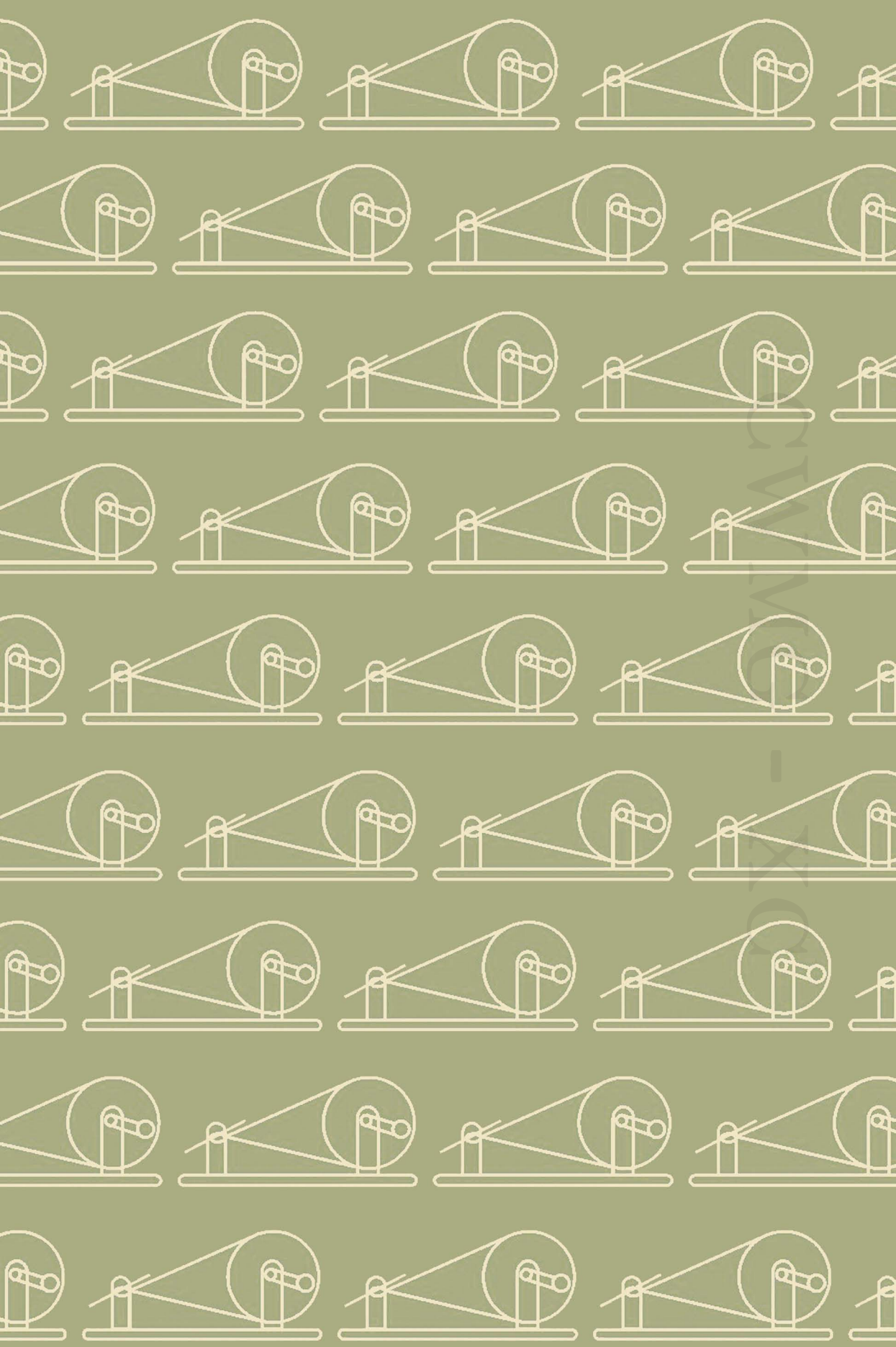
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299	* para 2, line 5	Ghaznavi	Ghazni

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