

1. LETTER TO MAHESHDUTTA MISHRA

PATNA,
April 30, 1947

CHI. MAHESH,

I went through everything [you sent me]. I like you. You can come when I am here, not in my absence. Ask me after my return.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Do as Mridulabehn says. I do not need [anyone knowing] English. One should know well the Devanagari and Urdu scripts and Hindi as well as Urdu. It is essential that one should be [aware]¹ of the potency of the charkha and the handloom and should also know Bengali and Sanskrit well. My handwriting has come out badly due to haste.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 6718

2. LETTER TO FRANCESCA STANDENATH

[April 1947]²

CHI. SAVITRI³,

I was delighted to receive your letter. Indeed I did not know you were alive. But then there is saying that God keeps those whom he wants to keep even through most stormy weather.

The news you heard that I was going to the Frontier was wholly wrong. But where I am is worse than the Frontier. And yet one rarely knows what is good for us and what is bad. Therefore if we knowingly put ourselves in the hands of Almighty, whatever happens must be deemed good. And I try literally to follow that precept.

Now that you have commenced writing you should continue to write as often as you can.

¹ One word is illegible here.

² As in the source. This was in reply to the addressee's letter dated January 23, 1947.

³ In Devanagari

Tell me, what is your feeling under the new condition? What are you doing now for your living?

Love from,

BAPU

SAVITRI *alias* FRANCESCA STANDENATH
GRAZ IN STYRIA
TRANTMANNDORFGOSSET
AUSTRIA

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

3. TELEGRAM TO P. S. SANE¹

[May 1, 1947]²

ON THE FACTS BEFORE ME YOUR FAST IS WHOLLY WRONG. PANDHARPUR MANDIR WILL BE OPENED SHORTLY TO HARIJANS. YOUR COURAGE AND GREATNESS SHOULD DISDAIN TAUNTS OF MEN HOWEVER GREAT OR MANY. PLEASE STOP THE FAST AND WIRE.³

The Hindu, 3-5-1947

4. TELEGRAM TO BARVE⁴

[May 1, 1947]⁵

YOUR WIRE. I HAVE MET BALASAHEB⁶ AND SHANKERRAO⁷. I AM QUITE CLEAR THE FAST IS WHOLLY INDEFENSIBLE. PLEASE DISSUADE SANE GURUJI AND WIRE.⁸

The Hindu, 3-5-1947

¹ Popularly known as Sane Guruji, the addressee went on a fast unto death on May 1 to secure entry of Harijans into the Vithoba Temple at Pandharpur.

² The report of this and the following item appeared under this date-line.

³ The addressee gave up the fast on May 10, after an assurance that the temple would be opened to Harijans; *vide* also the following item and letter to the addressee, p. 401. The temple was opened to *Harijans* in November, 1947.

⁴ President, Maharashtra Harijan Sevak Sangh, Pandharpur

⁵ *Vide* the preceding item.

⁶ B. G. Kher, Chief Minister of Bombay

⁷ Shankerrao Deo

⁸ *Vide* also "Telegram to G. V. Mavalankar", 7-5-1947.

5. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 1, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It is only twenty days since I had left Delhi. But even as I went I had a feeling that I might have to return soon. But my place was then in Bihar and Noakhali and I could not stay back even for a fortnight. That was why I went to Bihar. I had told you that I was Jawaharlal's prisoner and would return whenever he sent for me. I have come back as soon as I received the summons from him and Kripalani.

You will be happy to learn that when I went to Bihar people left me in peace. They did not bother me on my way. I slept in peace, I was not tired and could even do some work. But that was not the case on my return journey. People created noisy scenes at every place. It did not occur to them that an old, infirm man like me should be left in peace, and his sleep should not be disturbed. Today I felt exhausted as I was not able to sleep well. Even so, I did work during the day, because it is work that sustains me. I cannot live without work; but I could work very little. What I really cannot stand is shouting by the people and the slogans they raise. Through you I wish to convey to all people that they should not greet me with noise and should not raise slogans. It would be all right if the people gathered at the railway stations if they wished, for, if they came, some collection would be made for the Harijan Fund. But they should not make noise.

I wish to tell you what I did in Bihar. The work done there is considerable. Gen. Shah Nawaz has installed himself in a small place. He is now meeting with success in his work. The Muslims who had fled to Asansol under duress have come back. They had to undergo too many hardships at Asansol. They realized that people could be comfortable only in their own place. Their children had grown so emaciated that their bones were sticking out. They were not looked after in any way there. Now these children are provided with milk. It is impossible to get fresh milk because our cattle have gone dry. Hence, these children are being given powdered milk. Powdered milk does not have the vitamins fresh milk has. But the inherent nutritive property of milk is preserved in powdered milk. After their return from Asansol these children have regained health because of the powdered milk and they have started putting on weight.

Then there was the question of rations for the adults. How to provide food for so many people who had come back? They were afraid to go out and buy the rations themselves in a place where they had been persecuted. The Government arranged to have the rations sent to them. But their Hindu neighbours protested saying that the Muslims were their guests and they would themselves bring the rations to their houses, and that it was not necessary for Government officials to trouble themselves on that account.

In another place, where Muslims had been killed in large numbers, those who had survived were hesitating to return. Some I.N.A. men escorted them so that they could get over their misgivings. On seeing the I.N.A. men going with them some Hindus told them that they need not take the trouble. They were going to serve these Muslims. They would protect them even if it meant death. The I.N.A. men said that they were obeying the command of their General, and they could not go back. Then the Hindus pleaded that they would not always be mad. Earlier they had really lost their heads. Was it any bravery that ten thousand people should come together to kill one thousand? They would never do it again. Thus the Hindus drove away the fear from the hearts of the Muslims, and encouraged them to return to their homes. As a result the Muslims themselves asked the I.N.A. men to go back. I am confident that if the situation in Bihar turns out well, the trouble continuing in various parts of India would come to an end. All I wish to say is that all of us have to be courageous. But I hear that people are now indulging in dastardly acts in Delhi also. Every day crimes are being committed insidiously. Shameful things are happening in Dera Ismail Khan too.¹ They have not yet ceased.

People ask me what has happened to our signatures. Why is peace not being established? I did not affix my signature after meeting and consulting Mr. Jinnah. The Viceroy insisted that I should sign the appeal. I asked him what authority I had to sign the appeal. I am not even a four-anna member of the Congress. What good would my signature be? I am a small man. Of course the Quaid-e-Azam is a big man, his signature would carry much weight. But the Viceroy told me that Jinnah Saheb was keen on my signature. He was not ready to affix his own signature unless I affixed mine. He said that if I gave my signature, he would at least know what Jinnah Saheb really meant.

¹ Murders, arson, loot, destruction of property and conversions on a large scale had been reported in Dera Ismail Khan and Hazara Districts.

Thus I put down my signature. I will not discuss what followed.

Signing a peace appeal is nothing new for me. All my life I have done that and I continue to do it. But Jinnah Saheb's signature is a great thing. If all Muslims are under Jinnah Saheb's influence, they must now abide by his words; for he has signed on behalf of the Muslims. But have I given my signature because I am a Hindu? I have influence over none. I belong to no party. I belong to all. If the Hindus of Bihar act in frenzy again I shall fast unto death. In the same way, if the Muslims in Noakhali lose their heads, I shall lay down my life there. I have earned that right. I belong to the Muslims no less than to the Hindus. I belong to the Sikhs, Parsis and Christians in the same measure. I may be crying in the wilderness, but whatever I say would be on behalf of all and addressed to all.

But Jinnah Saheb presides over a great organization. Once he has affixed his signature to the appeal, how can even one Hindu be killed at the hands of the Muslims? I would tell the Hindus to face death cheerfully if the Muslims are out to kill them. I would be a real sinner if after being stabbed I wished in my last moment that my son should seek revenge. I must die without rancour. But why in the first place would a Muslim kill at all when he has been asked not to do it?

But the thing is that they have still to realize that in politics force cannot avail. People ask why our signing the peace appeal is not having any effect. Why are the Muslims still not contained? Why are Dera Ismail Khan and the Frontier Province rocked with violence? Dr. Khan Saheb and Badshah Khan tried to stop it but the people there claimed that they belonged to the Muslim League.

If the people of the Frontier Province, even as supporters of the Muslim League, do not honour the words of Jinnah Saheb, I would venture to suggest that it is his paramount duty to leave everything and work to restore peace. Why is he not following that course? Is he going to achieve Pakistan by following his present course? If he wishes to have Pakistan, let him have it by adopting peaceful methods. When someone achieves something by force, it is snatched away from him by a greater force. Jinnah Saheb's idea of achieving Pakistan by force can never succeed.

But I want to ask even the Viceroy why he is not able to do anything after getting the signatures from both of us. Why does he not take me to task? Why does he not take Jinnah to task? If the

Hindus and the Muslims continue to fight even after that, if the Sikhs continue to fight, the British should step aside.

But what would you do if the British continued to stay here? You say you would take up arms, but the British are not going to be frightened by your arms and give you anything. Even now, they are not talking of granting us freedom because of our arms. They think that India has shown a new way to the world. That is the reason why we are getting our independence. As it is, there are too many people in the world who meet force by force. They even talk of killing two for one, let alone one for one. But, I say there will never be any peace even if you kill not ten but a hundred for one. There is nothing brave about dying while killing. It is an illusion of bravery. The true martyr is one who lays down his life without killing.

You may turn round and ask whether all Hindus and all Sikhs should die. Yes, I would say. Such martyrdom will not be in vain.

You may compliment me or curse me for talking in this manner; but I shall only say what I feel in my heart. While you are listening to me patiently, I shall only express my heart's anguish and ask you to be courageous and not get frightened. If someone wants to scare us into surrendering anything we would part with not even a cowrie. If he comes to persuade us we may give him even crores. If you cannot show such courage and if the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs all become mad, whatever the British may do for us and whatever they may grant us, will never remain in our hands. What we want to achieve we must achieve through persuasion. If we learn this art all will be well with us; otherwise there is absolutely no doubt that India is doomed to perish.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 54-8

6. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,

May 1, 1947

The members of the Congress Working Committee are unnecessarily insisting on my presence. Specially Jawaharlal is earnestly pressing me for it. I, however, do not feel that my presence will be of much help, since my line of thinking at the moment is entirely different. I have come here because I could not resist Jawahar's invitation. Otherwise my heart is in Bihar. It seems I won't have to stay here for long. Maybe, I will have to go to Calcutta. Complete peace has not yet been restored there. Stray incidents are occurring daily.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 283

7. TALK WITH RAJENDRA PRASAD¹

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,

May 2, 1947

I do not wish to stay here for long. I hold that if I am able to do something in Bihar or Noakhali, it will have far-reaching consequences in the whole country. Even if we get swaraj, if there is no peace in people's hearts it will not be of much use. And I believe that I can do more work there than here. But here I am a prisoner of Jawahar and the Sardar. If they release me I would like to leave by the first available train.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 283-4

8. LETTER TO HORACE G. ALEXANDER

NEW DELHI,

May 2, 1947

MY DEAR HORACE,

Naughty of you to be ill. I must make a desperate effort to see you in your bed and make you laugh.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 1445

¹ Who accompanied Gandhiji during his morning walk

9. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

NEW DELHI,
May 2, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I have all your letters. I am unable to write but the work I am doing is the same.

Amtul Salaam is unhappy. Please satisfy her if you can. I have written a letter¹ to her. Please read it and pass it on to her.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9080

10. A LETTER

May [2]², 1947

On the train to Delhi I read about Kshitish Babu's demise. I reached Delhi yesterday, and got from Thakkar Bapa your name and address.

All of us must feel sad about the passing away of an ardent worker like Kshitish Babu. But if we all do his work he should not be dead so far as we are concerned. Bapa tells me that your sister also is with you. I hope you two would render such great service that Kshitish Babu's name would be immortalized through your lives.

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 287

11. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 2, 1947

After a passage from the Koran was recited, a young man shouted, "Stop it. Victory to Hinduism." Hearing this Gandhiji stopped the prayer and said:

Very well, let his wish be granted today.

Gandhiji asked the man to calm down but he continued to shout.³ Gandhiji said:

¹ The letter is not available.

² From the reference to Gandhiji's arrival at Delhi where he reached on May 1. The source, however, has "May 3".

³ In the mean while the police arrived and took the man away.

If my words can reach the policemen I would request them to release the man and allow him to come over here. I do not approve of the police coming here to maintain order during the prayer. If the police go on arresting people every day and I rely on them to hold the prayer, it would be no prayer at all. I can hold the prayer only when all the people gladly allow it to proceed peacefully. You saw that I stopped the prayer when the young man wanted it to be stopped. I would again stop the prayer if he wants me to do so tomorrow. But “Victory to Hinduism” cannot be won in this manner as he has said. He must realize that religion only declines by such acts. How can we protect our religion by preventing others from praying? But I do not blame him. Today the atmosphere is such. Today everything is seen upside down. No one understands the obvious thing. Hence, if someone asks me to stop the prayer, I shall submit to the demand.

But what pains me more is that he created a disturbance in the midst of the prayer. I would not have started the prayer at all if he had made his intention known in the beginning. Where was the need for the police to intervene? It is a matter of shame to me that so much police force should stay here to maintain order during the prayer. How can the police protect my religion? My religion would be protected only when I myself protect it. Or rather, it is pretentious to say that I would protect my religion. It is God who would protect my religion. If there is prayer in my heart, God is bound to protect me. What does it matter if the external prayer is not conducted?

But what can you do? You are all sitting quietly. You have come here to meditate on God and imbibe some goodness. All of you have to suffer because of one person. But you are not going to realize God by getting together to suppress a single individual and carrying on the prayer by force. That would be only betraying yourselves.

I wish that the young man had calmed down and heard what I had to say. I would have brought him round. He would have been convinced if not today then tomorrow, if not tomorrow, then the day after. Whatever it may be, we have to remember that force cannot be employed in furtherance of religion. One would have to lay down one's life in the pursuit of religion. There has been no religion in the world which did not call for the sacrifice of life. Only after one has mastered the art of laying down one's life does one's religion attain strength. The tree of religion is watered only by those who are prepared to die. Religion progresses through one who recites the name of God, who works for God, who praises Him, who undertakes

vows and fasts and pleads with God to show one the way since one cannot find it oneself. Then the people know him for a devotee and follow him. Religion takes shape only that way. No religion has grown by killing. It has grown only by dying. This is the basis of religion. Sikhism has progressed only in this way.

Prophet Mohammed also fled to Medina without fear in his heart and God saved him and Hazrat Ali from thousands of enemies because of their faith in Him. Prophet Mohammed, as it were, strengthened the roots of Islam by risking death.

Similar is the story of Christianity. And Buddhism too, if we regard it as separate from Hinduism, grew only when some people sacrificed their lives for it. I have not found a single religion which did not in the earlier stages call for sacrifices on the part of its followers. When a religion is well established people in large numbers come forward to follow it. This gives rise to bigotry. Now even the followers of Hinduism have stooped to killing and slaughtering although Hinduism never advocated violence.

Today people are scared at the mere mention of religion. I wonder why people are so scared. The Hindus, the Sikhs—why, the whole of the Punjab is in a tumult. And from the other end one hears the shrieks from Bengal. People say that the Punjab and Bengal should be partitioned. But if they have to be divided, why do they go to the Viceroy ? Why do they not come to me? Why do they not come to you? If Pakistan is being granted, is it for the purpose of annihilating the Hindus and Sikhs?

Jinnah Saheb has stated that the Hindu and the Sikh minorities would be absolutely safe in Pakistan and that they would not be persecuted. But why are such conditions not obtaining today? I can have a glimpse of Pakistan in only what is happening in the Punjab and Bengal, isn't it? If that is not what Pakistan is going to be, why does not Jinnah Saheb bring about what he says? Why is not every Hindu in the Muslim majority places protected? Why do the Hindus of Sind, who form only 25 per cent of the population, have to live under the shadow of fear? Does Pakistan mean that all the non-Muslims, the Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and those belonging to other religions have to live as slaves? If that is so, it would not be a true Pakistan. Hindustan too can be considered true Hindustan only when no harm is done even to innocent Muslim children in the Hindu majority provinces.

Jinnah Saheb can question us about the deeds of the Hindus.

The Hindus of Bihar have behaved no better. Indeed they are at fault. But today the Hindus of Bihar are repenting. Even the Chief Minister owns his guilt. If the same thing happens at all places I would know that something worthwhile has been achieved. But today everybody has given up his religion, and if others follow their religions people rush to attack them. This is not correct. The Muslims in their turn should tell their minority neighbours that they could all follow their own religions and that they would not come in their way.

After all, why should we let a thing slip from our hands when we are about to have it ? But everyone is acting like that only. The Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, all should free themselves from this sin of internal quarrels and there is only one way of doing it, namely, to fear God. Then there would be no demand for arms. Then no one would clamour for military [protection] or for weapons. But today there is an all-round demand for *kirpans* such as the Sikhs have. Again the demand is for big *kirpans* as the traditional ones are small. But whom are they going to kill with these weapons? If there are going to be such weapons in all the houses, you would not find me anywhere around.

I have only one solution whereby we can completely wipe out even the firmly entrenched British power. That method is to say 'No', i.e., to non-co-operate. They would be completely uprooted by peaceful non-co-operation. It is a great thing. Once it is adopted we shall not have to go in for military training.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 59-62

12. TALK WITH ASHADEVI ARYANAYAKUM¹

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,

May 2, 1947

This girl won't have any trouble if only I can set right her digestion. She is sick because of some disorder in her intestines. Her health should improve to the extent she and I are able to enshrine Ramanama in our hearts. This girl is my partner in this *yajna*. I have not a shadow of doubt that whatever her thought, word and deed, they are bound to interact on my actions and the purity or impurity of my thought, word and deed will have a bearing on her actions. Therefore the more sincere I am in reciting Ramanama the greater will be her improvement.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 287

13. LETTER TO P. S. SANE

May 3, 1947

BHAI SANE GURUJI,

Your wire. I am sorry you don't understand my simple argument.² Initially you wanted to undertake the fast because of the criticism from some four or five people, and now you are demanding opening of the temple for the Harijans. I do not understand where dharma comes in. In any case I would appeal to you to give up your fast.

Shankerrao and Balasaheb are your friends, not enemies. You should also listen to the advice of friends such as these. May God grant you better counsel.

Yours,
GANDHI

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 288

¹ Ashadevi had drawn Gandhiji's attention to the continuing ill health of Manu Gandhi.

² *Vide* "Telegram to P. S. Sane", 1-5-1947 and "Telegram to Barve", 1-5-1947

14. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI

May 3, 1947

I had hoped you would come only after finding out the price of the mangoes. You should have served them only after ascertaining their price. You did not bring the information on your own and not even after I asked you. I learn that these days a mango costs ten annas. If it is true, I can live without them. Such things do not give me nourishment, rather they are harmful for me. At a time of such distress and when prices run high, you have given me a glassful of juice of four mangoes which cost two and a half rupees. How can I possibly drink it?¹

This clearly shows that God is helping me. I was in a dilemma and was wondering where I stood. Otherwise how could this girl think of making juice of such expensive mangoes for me? But God sent me these children—and particularly those who are dearest to me. You can see how merciful God is to me !

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 289

15. TALK WITH KIRAN SHANKAR ROY

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI

May 3, 1947

If the British want to give us swaraj after large-scale massacre and migration of population, we do not want it. Jinnah Saheb has stated that full protection will be given to the minorities in Pakistan but it is only a verbal assurance and has not been put into practice. It therefore becomes the duty of the British to remonstrate against the injustice being done to the minorities. The Viceroy should issue a statement to that effect. But I don't see any move in this direction. Maybe, I am growing old and becoming senile. I am, therefore, left all alone to plead for my line of thinking. Gurudev's *bhajan*—*Ekla Chalore* is my only consolation. Now my only wish is to sacrifice myself in this effort. If nothing else, God will at least grant me this wish. Remember, if you divide India today, tomorrow provinces and

¹ Gandhiji gave the juice to the two refugee children who had come with their mothers to see him.

states will be fragmented into smaller parts. And thus Rajputana, Gujarat, Bihar, Delhi, Maharashtra and the Punjab also will follow suit. We might escape its consequences because we are on the brink of death but generations to come will curse us at every step for the kind of swaraj we shall have bequeathed to them.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 290

16. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 3, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You must now be quiet as you are every day, You come here for the prayers, hence you must sit quietly as you arrive. We can always talk. You can talk when you disperse after the prayer. But till then you must remain silent because silence is the essence of prayer.¹

It appears that the rest of the prayer is allowed, but there is objection only to the recitation from the Koran. Hence, from tomorrow I shall start the prayer with *Auz-o-Billahi*. So far the prayer used to begin with a Buddhist hymn which is in the Japanese language. A Japanese monk² used to stay with me at Sevagram. He used to sing this hymn in a strong, melodious voice as he circled round the Ashram for one hour every morning sounding his *dimdim*³. He expressed a desire to sing the hymn in the prayer, to which I agreed, and since then the prayer has always begun with the singing of this hymn. But from tomorrow I shall begin the prayer with *Auz-o-Billahi* and the prayer would be carried on if there is no obstruction from anyone. Otherwise, you will all sit in silence and pray in your hearts, and go back peacefully.

However, I would request you to carry in your hearts the prayers of all religions when you go back. Please understand that all religions are good. Have the faith that all religions are lofty. The fault does not lie with any religion. If the fault lies anywhere, it is with the people who follow these religions. Every religion has produced some evil men. It is not as if any particular religion has a monopoly of

¹ Someone then objected to the recitation from the Koran and Gandhiji stopped the prayer.

² The Rev. G. Haishao

³ A percussion instrument

producing evil men. Hence it is our duty to see the good points in every religion rather than those evil men. Let us pick up the gem-like qualities from every religion and thus enrich our own.

Now let me tell you what I propose to say today. We find ourselves in a very delicate situation these days. India is such a big country that the whole world is watching us. You saw in the Inter-Asian Relations Conference convened by Jawaharlal that all eyes were fixed on India. Sjhariar¹ is not an ordinary man. He is quite a big man. But even he has his eyes on you, that is, on India. Even the people of the Arab countries look up to us with the hope that the Asian countries would be able to follow suit provided India takes the lead. Japan could do precious little. There is no doubt that Japan showed great courage. She also acted shrewdly. But where is she now? She has not been able to lead Asia. She has lagged behind. One feels sad looking at that country.

As for us, we have not even attained our independence as yet. But even now the world is keen to know how we act. This is because we struggled for our independence in a manner no other people did. Such struggles had been carried on in the name of religion. But among struggles for freedom this one is the first of its kind. On April 6, 1919, we took our first step in the direction of independence which now is but a matter of time. And it is universally hoped that with India becoming independent, the whole of Asia and then Africa too would become free. This would mean a new birth for the whole world.

The delegates to the Inter-Asian Relations Conference returned with this understanding. When they came here the atmosphere was vitiated. But they did not look at the dismal things here. Rather they looked forward to our freedom. Those who understand know that when a river is in flood the water goes turbid. Similarly in our country the approach of independence has vitiated the atmosphere. There is a surge of independence in our country and it is likely to cause some disturbances. But it is our duty to see that in course of time we make our freedom pure like the waters of the Ganga which become clear once the floods subside.

How can this be done? India cannot be protected by looking upon irreligion as religion. Nor can we have religious freedom that way. But what is happening today? What happened in Dera Ismail Khan? What happened in Hazara? Why is there such a holocaust in the

¹ Dr. Sultan Sjhariar, Premier of Indonesia

Frontier Province? Why is there such a race for getting swords and spears and guns? Why are those things collected openly as well as secretly? Why are bombs manufactured secretly? Why do people go on proclaiming that they would resort to force and violence and would get things done under threat?

With all this we can protect neither ourselves nor others. In this way neither India nor Asia would be able to achieve freedom; the rest of the world would fail to attain freedom.

Let us all then pray and clearly understand that all religions are one. It would be a great thing if we could be good even as individuals.

The next thing I want to talk about is the Press. One of the newspapers has published reports about the Viceroy's talks with our Ministers. They have also circulated reports about the discussions at the meeting of the Congress Working Committee. It is not a small newspaper. Nor is it run in the interests of our opponents. It is a paper supporting the Congress. It has drawn certain conclusions about the Viceroy's plans. It is highly improper that newspapers should indulge in such speculation. They should let the Viceroy himself make a public announcement about what he intends doing. And why should any surmises be made even about discussions at the Working Committee meeting? Only the official report issued by the Working Committee should have been published.

I know there are a great many journalists who scoop up bits from different places and manage to build up a story. But I would say that these people are grabbing at left-overs of a meal. It is not the function of a journalist to depend on left-overs.

The British have sent here a nice man from amongst them. He has come to save Britain's honour. He has been acting with the same good intention with which he has been sent. Then, what right do we have to give publicity to his actions without consulting him? What right does anyone have to wheedle information out of everybody by sweet words, draw inferences from here and there and then publish them in the paper?

I too have been a journalist for the past fifty years. I know how newspapers are run. I also know how newspapers are run in England and America. But why should we ape the evil practices prevailing in England and America? We shall perish if we imitate the bad things in others.

I do not say that everything this journalist has reported is wrong. Some of the things he has written are correct, some are incorrect. He

has just made a hotch-potch of the thing. I totally disapprove of this kind of journalism.

Through you I wish to address myself to all journalists that they should not try to make money in this manner. If we cannot earn our livelihood in a straightforward manner, let us perish. But why should this journalist talk in a manner that would harm the country? He has even invented a headline no one would have dreamt of.

It would be good to ignore whatever is unwholesome about England and America and adopt their good points.

Today Jawaharlal expressed his sorrow over this to me. To how many people can he go on expressing his feelings? And moreover what consolation can I offer him? We have led a crusade of dharma and it is with dharma that we are going to win our independence. I would request journalists also to help us in this.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 62-6

17. A TALK¹

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,

May 4, 1947

I admit that our struggle for freedom had not been purely non-violent. Had all congressmen honestly followed true non-violence, we would not have been today in a state of utter confusion. It is becoming clear to me day by day that what we regarded as non-violent fight was not really so. Otherwise the dragon of communalism would not have raised its head amongst us; untouchability would have been a thing of the past, distinctions between employer and employee would have ceased to exist and both would have performed body-labour alike without any distinction. Nowhere have we heard it happen the way the honour of our daughters and sisters is being violated in broad daylight in our country. Had we followed the path of truth and non-violence we would not have seen human hearts so devoid of humanity, and society would have been well-organized and without any trace of animosity. Today we do not see a single good sign. Everywhere Congressmen are being condemned and people seem to have lost faith in them. The muslim League may not trust us, but even the States have become indifferent towards us. You and, maybe, I too, are to blame for this. Had we followed truth, non-

¹ With Rajendra Prasad, Amrit Kaur and Harekrushna Mahtab

violence and sacrifice one hundred per cent, not only the masses but even children, would have revered us. Instead the atmosphere is quite different. Even now we should realize our mistake and retrace our steps. Otherwise sixty years' glorious record of the Congress will be wiped out within a decade.

Unless we kindle the flame of unadulterated non-violence and truth within ourselves we shall not realize our goal of complete independence. With that light kindled within us, the tendency towards violence will automatically vanish and riots will be brought under control.

Nevertheless I do not presume that the police will have absolutely no place in a vast country like India inhabited by such a diversity of people. In a situation like this, if we are unable to manage things without the aid of the army, how can we say that we will do without the police? No doubt I cherish a fond vision that we may be able to do without the police, for I would call them not 'police' but 'social reformers'. They will be the servants of the people, not their masters.

Just as in training for violence one learns to kill, similarly in adopting non-violence one should learn the art of dying. There is no place at all for fear in non-violence. Not only that, one has to develop the spirit of sacrifice to such a high degree that one would not hesitate to sacrifice one's family, property and even one's life. A votary of non-violence should fear God alone. One resorts to violence to protect one's physical body. But we should realize that the body is perishable and it is the soul which really matters. And in order to protect the honour of one's soul there is no alternative to non-violence.

There is no school where such non-violence can be taught. Our non-violence is tested only when we act with courage. Today we are being put to this test and in my opinion we have failed in the test. Otherwise every four-anna member of the Congress should have been engaged in quelling the riots or should have died in the attempt. Instead they dare not save their neighbours from being butchered. I have even heard of instances where people ran away in panic to save their lives leavin behind their wives, mothers, sisters and daughters in peril. I shudder when I hear such tales. What cowardice on our part! A truly non-violent person should brave the danger and prove his worth. The courage of a non-violent person is many times superior to the courage of a violent person. But who listens to me? I do, however,

hope to meet death, if anyone should come to kill me, without a trace of anger, calmly, with a smile, and all the while remembering my chosen God. I believe that God will grant me this strength. If there is any shortcoming or ego in me its proof will be found in the hour of my death. I used to talk about living up to 125 years but I no longer have the desire because every day I see only falsehood and treachery all round me. I am, however, growing daily stronger in my conviction that God will bless me with a death befitting a non-violent person.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 292-4

18. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI

May 4, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today the prayer will start with the recitation from the Koran, but before that I would ask if there is anyone who does not want this large gathering to have the prayer. If anyone objects to the prayer after it is started the prayer would be stopped; but that would be an uncivilized act. Hence if anyone has any objection he can stop the prayer before we begin it. Is there anyone among you who wants to do so?

A man cried out from the audience: "Yes, I object."

GANDHIJI: Why?

There can be no recitation from the Koran in a temple.

Do you wish to come in the way of such a large gathering?

Yes.

You must all listen I shall talk to this man. Let us try to know his mind.

Then, turning to the man Gandhiji said :

You need not get excited. Kindly explain to me coolly why I should not pray in this temple today when I do it every day.

The temple belongs to the public. You should not hold your prayers in a public temple.

It is a public temple, no doubt, but the priest and the trustees of the temple are not preventing me. Then why do you want to stop so many people who have come to chant God's name? I really do not understand.

Because I too belong to the public.

Well, then you will not allow the prayer?

No, I will not.

Well, then I stop the prayer. But I want to explain to you all the place of harmony and non-violence in religion. If you continue to stop my prayer every day, you humiliate not me but yourselves. The right thing should be that if one person is unwilling to respect the wishes of so many, he should himself leave the place. How can a single man stand in the way of such a large gathering? This is possible only with me, i.e., in the world of non-violence. Of course the temple belongs to everybody, but this does not mean that one man may go about creating obstructions at his whim. If such a thing is allowed all the activities of the temple would come to a halt. Had I been alone and he had stopped me, it would have been a different matter. But if he went on shouting in the midst of so many people and I continued the prayer, you would all be provoked. You would hurl abuses at him and hand him over to the police. What credit would it bring us? If that happened, what would the world say about us?

Hence I stop the prayer. But they cannot stop the recitation of *Auz-o-Billahi*, etc. It is very much in my mind. We shall not recite it today. We shall observe silence for two minutes during which you will offer the same prayer. True, you do not know *Auz-o-Billahi*, etc., by heart, but while observing silence you should bring it to your mind that Rama and Rahim are but one. In other words, Hinduism and Islam are both great religions and there is no difference between them. I fail to understand why any two religions should be at logger heads. Hence I wish that your *mantra* while observing the silence should be: 'Thou art God, million are thy names.' I had told you that in Hinduism the recitation of *Vishnusahasranama*¹ is very much in vogue. I even believe that God has as many names as there are human beings in the world. *Ishwara*, *Bhagawan*, Khuda, God, or Ormu-zd—whatever name you prefer to say—these are all His names. And, He is over and above all these names. How can anyone ever talk of stopping people from reciting the name of God who is so great that none can know Him? Such an act is sheer impudence, it is barbarism, it is violence.

It would be still better if you could sit with your eyes closed as you observe silence. If, in the mean time, the gentleman sees reason

¹ A hymn containing the thousand names of Lord Vishnu

and decides against obstructing the prayer we shall hold the prayer. If not, I shall tell you what I have in mind.¹

I had to go to the Viceroy today as you already know.² We sat together for one and a half hours and had a nice and useful discussion. I can-not reveal everything to you here. However, I shall talk about one thing.

The Viceroy told me that I should tell my people on his behalf, or, if I had trust in him, on my own that he had come to transfer power and wind up the British Raj in this country. It was not possible to wind up such a vast empire in a day. Such a large army could not be moved out just by snapping one's fingers. But he assured me that the British had no intention of staying here beyond June 30, 1948. He said he had come here to do this task and was doing his utmost to accomplish it.

But he complains that he is upset by what appears in our newspapers. That obstructs his work. It is his complaint that on the one hand we fight among ourselves and on the other blame and discredit the British. Maybe, the British Government committed errors in the past. But now we must forget about the responsibility of the British for our quarrels. Nothing worth while would be gained by harping on the responsibility of the British for this and that. He has advised us not to talk in this vein and to forget the past in deciding the issues that belong to the future.

The Viceroy says that our newspapers do exactly this and their obduracy hampers his work. He says he had said nothing from which the Press could have any clue. Nor had any of his close associates said any such thing.

The Viceroy expects the people of India to behave with a reasonable degree of decency. The headlines carried by the newspapers also largely twist the point. On what basis had the Press reported that Khan Saheb's Government in the Frontier Province would be overthrown? When the nationalist papers indulge in such writing, the Muslim papers try to outdo them.

This, the Viceroy said would only spread poison on both sides and he had not come here to spread poison. If the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians lived together in peace it would give a

¹ The gathering then observed two minutes' silence.

² For a report of the interview as recorded by the Viceroy, *vide* "Interview with Lord Mountbatten", 4-5-1947

good name to the British that they left behind a united India.

The Viceroy also wished to say that if the people of India desired freedom they must remain reasonably peaceful. He said they did not want to leave us quarrelling among ourselves. That is why he is trying his best to solve all issues whatever the result. He carries on his work on the assumption that they are definitely leaving by June 30, 1948.

Appealing to my faith in him he assured me that he took every step in accordance with his conscience. Although he is a naval commander and believes in physical force he has utmost faith in God too as I have, and is guided by nothing but his own conscience. He acts according to his own lights such as God has granted him. Moreover, he could serve the British nation in no other way.

He would try his utmost to see that our people worked together in harmony. He did not wish to do anything which might jeopardize the interests of the minorities. Otherwise it would be said that they had granted everything to the Hindu majority by suppressing the Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs, etc. Who was going to intervene if we chose to fight after they had gone? Right now he was silently making efforts for a compromise. But once his patience came to an end, he would not keep quiet. He said now even the Defence Minister¹ was our own man. But if he too would appear to have failed in handling the situation the Viceroy would exercise his responsibility with the help of the Englishman², who was still the Commander [-in-Chief] of the British army, which was by no means small, and the personnel trained by them. But if the people accepted his advice straightaway, it could somewhat lighten his work.

Not doubt, the Viceroy's task is difficult; but the British are not a people who would run away from a difficult task.

This was not meant to be conveyed to you. But I felt that since we have gathered here in such numbers I might as well tell you about it today, and through you, convey it to the Press.

I told you yesterday that unless Lord Mountbatten proves guilty of a breach of trust, we should not talk about him irresponsibly. If he does nothing even when we behave well, we can tell the British people that their Viceroys come in succession to grant us freedom but all they do is to suppress us.

¹ Sardar Baldev Singh

² Claude John Eyre Auchinleck

We need not express it in an impolite way. Everything can be expressed in an agreeable language. If we behave in an uncivilized manner, we cut our own throats.

It would make their departure difficult if we continue to fight among ourselves. Defence, of course, is in their hands, but that is only to resist foreign aggressors. How can they stop our internal quarrels? They would merely say that the Hindus are condemning the Muslims and the Muslims are condemning the Hindus. What can they do about it? They have got to go. If we went on fighting till the end of June and they failed to do anything we would tell them that they had no more right to stay on and they should quit.

If they stay on, they can stop the Hindus and also the Muslims from fighting by using force against both as they have done before. Thousands of men have been done to death for the killing of a single Englishman. But they cannot do such a thing at the moment of their departure. Hence, it is our duty to make their departure easier by demonstrating our faith in them. Let us not add to their troubles.

But what is happening today? There is scarcity of food and cloth-ing—you and I do get them, but there are millions in the country who do not get any food or clothing. A minister from Madras who came to me today told me that there were floods in the State and that but for the disturbances it would have been possible to reach food to the poor people. One does not think in terms of Hindus and Muslims in the matter of distributing food—it has to be provided to all the people of the country.

But today everyone has but one thought, i.e., of killing and slaugh-tering, and that too in a savage manner. The muslims kill any Hindus they come across and the Hindus kill any Muslims they come across.

If we stoop to such beastly ways and say that we shall mend our ways once the British have gone, it is a wrong attitude.

Let me tell you one more thing. General shah Nawaz came today. He has been working in Bihar even after I came away from there. He draws no salary. Even so he has taken formal leave for fifteen days and is going home. He says that even those Muslims from Bihar who were hesitating to return and who were intimidated by the Hindus have now started coming back. That was because the Hindus realized their duty when they were persuaded and worked continuously for two days and cleared the way for the return of the Muslims

and also helped in putting up the huts that were razed to the ground. Similar good work has been done in other villages as well.

If work proceeds along the same lines all the Muslims who have fled from Bihar will come back. The Government is helping them financially; but the Hindus should bring round those who are terrorizing them or are creating obstacles in their way. Then alone would things get done.

In short, there are some decent people even in the midst of the cry to kill and slaughter. Not every Muslim, every Sikh, every Hindu, is a bad man.

Just as peace is restore in Bihar, so will it be in Dera Ismail Khan and the Frontier Province.

If Jinnah Saheb means what he has written, he has got to stop the riots. The army cannot stop those riots. The riots can stop only when the people are persuaded to stop them. If they do not stop, it means that the people do not pay heed to Jinnah Saheb's words, or, Jinnah Saheb is not keen on stopping the riots.

But why should we harbour unkind thoughts about Jinnah Saheb? When things do not seem to be going well, one does start getting suspicious. If I affix my signature to something and my action is quite contrary to it, it is bound to arouse suspicion. Hence some doubts in his case too. But we shall have to watch Jinnah Saheb's actions till the last moment.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 66-72

19. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

NEW DELHI,
May 5, 1947

Sheth Cachalia,¹ Honorary Secretary of the Transvaal Indian Congress, cabled for a message on the rally which was to take place in Johannesburg of all the non-European races in the Union of South Africa on the question of racial disabilities in the Union. The question is most intricate and almost baffling. It is intricate enough when confined only to the Indian disabilities but the inclusion of all the races while logically correct is fraught with grave danger, if the struggle is not kept at the highest level and is not firmly based on

¹ Ahmed Mahomed Cachalia

truth and non-violence. I wanted to warn the organizers of the rally against rhetorical display or raising idle hopes and to advise them to carry on their demonstration with dignity and restraint. Let no one doubt that the salvation of all the exploited peoples of the earth and, therefore, of the world, lies in the strictest reliance on the coin on whose one face is written 'truth' and on the other 'non-violence' in large letters. Sixty years of experience has taught me no other method.

The Hindu, 6-5-1947, and *Harijan*, 18-5-1947

20. LETTER TO DHARMANANDA KOSAMBI¹

May 5, 1947

Your postcard. Death is our true and unfailing friend. He takes charge of one when one's time is over. So, if you must depart, first enshrine Rama in your heart and then go to meet Him cheerfully. Where is . . .²

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 297

21. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

DELHI,

May 5, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your letter. You have been entrusted with a very great responsibility³. I am sure you will shoulder it well. Of course, you have to learn to overcome your anger. But the forest is not the place for it. You can be sure that you have mastered your anger only when you succeed in restraining it even under provocation. The incident

¹ (1876-1947); scholar of Buddhism; taught Pali in National College, Bombay and Fergusson College, Poona; participated in non-co-operation movement; was professor of Buddhist literature in Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad.

The addressee who was suffering from an acute skin ailment was on a restricted diet. *vide* also "Letter to Balvantsinha", 12-5-1947.

² Omission as in the source

³ Namely, the management of the Ashram at Sevagram during the illness of Chimanlal N. Shah

you mention¹ does not surprise me but the responsibility you have undertaken will save you. You did well in offering an apology to the parents of the boy.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1975

22. *INTERVIEW TO REUTER*²

May 5, 1947

DOON CAMPBELL: Is the communal division of India inevitable? Will such division solve the communal problem?

GANDHIJI: Personally, I have always said 'No', and I say 'No' even now to both these questions.

Do you subscribe to the opinion that Britain will be morally obliged to stay on in India if the outstanding Hindu-Muslim differences have not been resolved by June, 1948?

This is a question that had never been put to me before. It would be a good thing if the British were to go today—thirteen months means mischief to India. I do not question the nobility of the British declaration, I do not question the sincerity of the Viceroy, but facts are facts. Neither the British Cabinet nor the Viceroy, however outstanding he may be, can alter facts. And the facts are that India had been trained to look to the British power for everything. Now it is not possible for India to take her mind off that state all of a sudden. I have never appreciated the argument that the British want so many months to get ready to leave. During that time all parties will look to the British Cabinet and the Viceroy. We have not defeated the British force of arms. It has been a victory for India by moral force. Assuming, of course, that every word of what has been said is meant to be carried out, then the British decision will go down in history as the noblest act of the British nation. That being so the thirteen months' stay of the British power and British arms is really a hindrance rather than a help because everybody looks for help to the great military machine they have brought into being. That happened in Bengal, in Bihar, in the Punjab, and in the North-West Frontier Province. The

¹ The addressee had slapped a little boy whom he had found tinkering with the garden fence.

² This appeared under the title "Quit Now".

Hindus and the Muslims said in turn: 'Let us have the British troops.' It is a humiliating spectacle. I have often said before but it does not suffer in value through repetition because every time I repeat it, it gains force: the British will have to take the risk of leaving India to chaos or anarchy. This is so because there has been no home rule; the [rule] has been imposed on the people. And, when you voluntarily remove that rule there might be no rule in the initial state. It might have come about if we had gained victory by the force of arms. The communal feuds you see here are, in my opinion, partly due to the presence of the British. If the British were not here, we would still go through the fire, no doubt, but that fire would purify us.

What sort of Indo-British relationship do you envisage after June, 1948?

I envisage the friendliest relationship between Britain and India assuming that a complete withdrawal takes place with complete honesty behind it—no mental reservations of any kind whatsoever.¹

Does the clause incorporated in the Draft Constitution on the abolition of untouchability in itself represent a great reform?

No. That clause does not represent a great or any reform. It registers the fact that a great revolutionary reform has taken place in Hindu society. I confess that untouchability has not yet been pulled out root and branch from the soil. Like the evil effects of the British connection, those of untouchability, a much older institution, do not disappear in a flash. It may take some years, perhaps, before a stranger coming to India can say there is no untouchability in any shape or form.

Do you believe the United Nations Organization, as at present constituted, can maintain a lasting peace?

No. I fear the world is heading towards another showdown. It is a fear that permeates many minds. But if all goes well in India, then the world may have a long peace. It will largely depend on the manner in which India takes it. And that will depend largely on British statesmanship.

What is the solution to the Palestine problem?

It has become a problem which is almost insoluble. If I were a Jew, I would tell them: 'Don't be so silly as to resort to terrorism, because you simply damage your own case which otherwise would be a proper case.' If it is just political hankering then I think there is no value in it. Why should they hanker after Palestine? They are a great

¹ According to *The Hindu*, referring to Lord Mountbatten Gandhiji said, "The British have sent their great warrior and statesman as Viceroy to finish the great act."

race and have great gifts. I have lived with the Jews many years in South Africa. If it is a religious longing then surely terrorism has no place. They should meet the Arabs, make friends with them, and not depend on British aid or American aid or any aid, save what descends from Jehovah.

Harijan, 18-5-1947, and *The Hindu*, 6-5-1947

23. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*¹

NEW DELHI,
May 5, 1947

In order to escape from the evil one, I seek refuge in God. O God ! I begin every task with the remembrance of Thy name.

Thou art the compassionate and the merciful. Thou art the Creator of the universe. Thou art Lord and Master. I praise Thee alone and desire only Thy help. Thou will mete out justice on the Day of Judgment. Show me the right path, the path which Thy saints have trod, not the wrong path of those who have offended Thee.

God is one. He is eternal, all-powerful, uncreated. There is none other like Him. He has created all things. None has created Him.

This is a translation of the verses read daily from the Koran-e-Sharif. It passes my comprehension how anyone can object to their recitation. I affirm that the enshrinement of this prayer in our hearts can only uplift and make better men and women of us.

I shall not say more today.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, p. 73

¹Owing to inclement weather the written speech could not be read out on May 5. The following day as Gandhiji could not return in time from a meeting with M. A. Jinnah, the prayers began at 6.30 p.m. Again there was objection to the recitation from the Koran, two minutes' silent prayer was, therefore, offered and this was read out.

24. TELEGRAM TO KSHITIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

NEW DELHI,
May 6, 1947

SHITIS AS UPTA¹
K HADI RATISHTHAN
SODEPUR
HARAGANAS, ENGAL
REACHING CALCUTTA NINTH MORNING DELHI EXPRESS.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 8924

25. LETTER TO H. GREENFIELD²

ALMIKI ANDIR, EADING OAD,
NEW DELHI,
May 6, 1947

DEAR MR. GREENFIELD,

I received your letter of the 17th ultimo on the 25th when I was preparing to come to Delhi. I thank you for it.

Have you sent it to me for suggestions which you could incorporate in the treatise? If that is the case will you please give me the date before which I should send them? In any case the type-script I shall carry about with me to read when I feel I have a little leisure.

Yours sincerely,

GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government—1944-47, pp.1 67-8

¹ Brother of Satis Chandra Das Gupta

² The addressee, Member, Central Board of Revenue, had sought Gandhiji's comments on his treatise "on the subject of salt in India, in order to provide a clear bird's-eye view of our present production, distribution and consumption of salt, and to assist the Cabinet in deciding what form our future salt administration should take."

26. A TALK¹

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,

May 6, 1947

The only effective means for improving the lot of our people and preventing the eruption of violence around us is our *Sudarshan Chakra*²—the spinning wheel.

The history of cotton in our country is worth studying. Thanks to the British rule—even a sample of the cloth woven by our weavers 150 years ago is not available today. As the saying goes the snake has gone leaving only the track behind. If everyone in India spins daily, not an inch of cloth need be imported. Our Government says that Bengal is poor and so is Orissa. But somehow I am not able to swallow this. Cotton is not grown anywhere on such a large scale as in our country. The truth is we are not poor, we are lazy. If we discard laziness and ply the charkha daily for at least half an hour knowing [all its implication], our creative energy will automatically grow. I can do without food but not without sacrificial spinning even for a single day. Swaraj and peace lie in the spinning-wheel. When I first took up the spinning-wheel I did not have much knowledge about it. But my nephew Maganlal Gandhi renounced everything for it and did a lot of research in this field. One who possesses the spinning-wheel enjoys complete freedom. Whereas those depending on mill-cloth become slaves of mill-owners. Every person should determine his own needs and should himself try to fulfil them and seek other's help only when it becomes unavoidable. Unless everyone develops this attitude and becomes completely self-reliant, we can never be really free.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 301

¹ A British woman correspondent accompanied by Sarojini Naidu met Gandhiji while he was spinning.

² The Wheel of Vishnu

27. A TALK¹

BHANGI NIVAS, NEW DELHI,
May 6, 1947

GANDHIJI: Because I was late in returning after meeting Jinnah Saheb, this mad girl² got panicky lest someone might have killed me. That is why I took a few minutes in reassuring her.

VISITOR: Europe is in the grip of industrialization. Do you think India will follow suit? Wherever I had been I found people talking about nothing but industrialization.

What you say is true. Western influence is on the increase. It would not be wrong to say that at present I am the only person having faith in village industries. No doubt I have some co-workers who are busy experimenting in the Sevagram Ashram. But if among crores there are only a hundred or a thousand having faith in village industries, it is like a drop in an ocean. Even so I dare say that India does not require mills or machines to the extent Europe does. If India chooses, it can do without them. But it is not easy to resist the temptation.

I had asked only for two minutes and you have been kind enough to grant me your precious time. I shall never forget it. I shall be taking to my country the sweet memories of these moments.

I am equally delighted to meet you.³

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 305-6

28. DISCUSSION WITH ARUNA ASAF ALI AND ASHOK MEHTA⁴

[May 6, 1947]⁵

SOCIALISTS: Is there any alternative to Pakistan?

GANDHIJI: The only alternative to Pakistan in undivided India. There is no *via media*. Once you accept the principle of partition in

¹ With a British woman to whom Gandhiji apologized for having kept her waiting

² Manu Gandhi

³ Gandhiji later remarked: "These people have this special quality. We must admit that they are outstanding as far as etiquette and discipline are concerned."

⁴ The two socialist leaders met Gandhiji a day after his interview to Reuter; vide "A Letter", 24-7-1947

⁵ *ibid*

respect of any province, you get into a sea of difficulties. By holding fast to the ideal of undivided India, you steer clear of all difficulties.

Then why does not Congress give a clear lead?

Because it feels helpless. It is not in favour of division. But it says, and with perfect logic, that if Pakistan is to be conceded, justice should be done to non-Muslim majority areas of Bengal and the Punjab, and to the Sikhs, and these provinces should be partitioned on the same principle on which the Muslim League demands the partition of India. I do not agree with that view. In my opinion, the Congress should in no circumstance be party to partition. We should tell the British to quit unconditionally. If they do not listen and partition the country in spite of us, we shall know what to do. Why should we make ourselves accessory to what we hold to be evil?

In other words, you think that the British power need not stay on in India for another thirteen months?

Quite so. If their intention is perfectly honest, they should not bother as to what would happen to the country after them. The country is quite capable of taking care of itself. They can quit with a clear conscience.

The Congress leaders have said that the British cannot go away without bringing about a settlement between the Congress and the League.

Supposing no agreement can be arrived at between the Congress and the League even after thirteen months, would that be a 'reason' for them to stay on in India even after that date? I therefore say: Let them quit now, otherwise their going even after thirteen months will be problematical.

But if they go to whom are they to hand over power?

They can hand over power either to the Muslim League or to the Congress, I do not mind which. If they hand it over to the Congress, the Congress will come to a just settlement with the League. But even if they make it over to the League, the Congress has nothing to fear. Only, let the transfer of power be complete and unqualified. The way they do it will provide a test of their sincerity and honesty. so far the British have said that they had yielded to Congress non-violence; it was because of the non-violent struggle launched by the Congress that the Cabinet Mission was sent and the British Government made its famous declaration¹ to withdraw from India. If

¹ Of February 20, 1947; *vide* "Clement Attlee's Statement", 20-2-1947

this is really so, they should have no difficulty in handing over power to the Congress. But so far as I, for one, am concerned, they are free to ignore the Congress and hand over power to the League. They will then have bowed before the power of violence. For that is what the League swears by. We shall then pit our non-violence even against the League's violence. Non-violence was meant not to give fight to the British only. It is ubiquitous in its application and scope. We shall settle with the League by offering our innocent blood to be spilt without spilling any and we will succeed.

Your position is perfectly logical and consistent. You said in 1942 that the British power should withdraw immediately and unconditionally. You have not changed. We are wholly with you there. But a considerable section among Congressmen today has begun to think in terms of collaboration with the British power.

You are right. I have not changed. I would change only if I saw my mistake. But I see none. On the contrary, with every fresh experience I am becoming firmer and firmer in my views.

What is your attitude on the States question?

Irrespective of the Congress policy, Gandhiji told them, he had hitherto been in favour of the preservation of the States. But his attitude in that regard had stiffened of late. The British had allowed the States to exist on their sufferance. In certain matters they kept them completely under their thumb while they gave them free rein in others to serve their selfish ends. They were in honour bound to settle the question of the States before leaving. It would be a gross betrayal to leave that question to be decided after independence. For instance, could the Nizam be free to follow a policy antagonistic to India, or to set up ordnance factories or factories for the manufacture of heavy armour within his dominion?

We do not wish the destruction of the Princes. Let them by all means live, but only as servants of their people . . .¹ If the British are not insincere, they should withdraw from the whole of India including the States, leaving the map of India unchanged.

What is our duty?

If you agree with my analysis, you and those over whom you have influence should join me in preparing the atmosphere for non-violence in the country. I would love to have you with me in that.

The whole country is with you.

In a sense, yes. But I suppose, "the whole country" includes

¹ Omission as in the source

you also. Now tell me how many of you are with me? Is Aruna with me? Are Ashok and Achyut¹ with me? No, you are not. The Congress is not. So I am left to plough my lonely furrow and I am content to do so. If you decide to launch forth with me, I shall take it to mean that you have pledged yourselves to die without killing, abjured the doctrine that the end justifies the means. I have admiration for what Jayaprakash, Aruna, Achyut and others did in 1942. They thought nothing of playing with their lives. I have paid tribute to their fearlessness and courage², But you will now have to cultivate the higher courage which dying without killing calls for. In that campaign sabotage can have no place. You may not agree but it is my conviction that if the Bihar masses had not had the lesson which they had at your hands in 1942, the excesses which Bihar witnessed last year would never have occurred. To me it is little consolation that those who sponsored the sabotage programme did not themselves directly participate in violence. They should have known that once the evil spirit of violence is unleashed, by its inherent nature it cannot be checked or even kept within any prescribed limits. All violence inevitably tends to run to excess. Therefore, I repeat, and I shall continue to repeat with my last breath, that it is for us to inculcate amongst the people the spirit of innocent suffering and self-sacrifice only without any evasion into or truck with its opposite.

I am proceeding to Calcutta. Some people are trying to dissuade me from going there. They say things there are worse even than in Noakhali, that there I shall be faced by ruffians who understand nothing. I tell them, that is the very reason why I want to go there. If in the course of it death comes, I shall welcome it. What better use can there be for this body that has already weathered seventy-eight winters? My death will immediately stop the fratricide.

If you cast in your lot with me, I shall call every one of you, top-rankers, to defy death with me. I own no party. But you will then be my party. Long before you were born I was a socialist. You are arm-chair Socialists. Your ideal is to provide a motor-car and a bungalow to everybody in India. Till that happens, you will continue to live as at present, without sacrificing any of your comforts. I, on the other hand, believe in putting myself on a level with the poorest and the least here and now. My socialism is not of today. I began to live socialism while I was still in South Africa. Even then many labourite

¹ Achyut Patwardhan

² Vide "Answer to Visitors", 7-5-1944 and "Letter to Aruna Asaf Ali", 9-6-1944

socialists, so called, used to come to me with their bedraggled ties of dirty red to invite me to join their ranks. But they remained to join mine instead. For they saw that true socialism can be based only on non-violence.

If you tell me that non-violence is your ultimate goal, but in order to realize it you have to make use of violent means, because in this matter-of-fact world there is no other way, I shall say you are labouring under a great delusion. Cannot even Jinnah, that way, claim to be a votary of non-violence, for in Islam it is clearly laid down that anyone who oppresses the weak is no Muslim? But see where this has taken historical Islam.

Once you open the flood-gates of violence, you cannot control it. You will be borne away before its onrushing tide. I have, therefore, one and only one thing to say to you: Carry to its ultimate conclusion the fearlessness which characterized you in 1942. Now is the time and the hour. If you let it slip away, it may never return. By learning the art of dying without killing you can mould India's destiny. There is no other way.

Can we sum up your position by saying that the British should quite immediately and unconditionally leaving India to God?

You may put it that way. And if in the result there is chaos, that should not frighten us. We shall emerge from the ordeal all the stronger.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 161-5

29. TALK WITH PRATAP DAYALDAS¹

NEW DELHI,

[On or before *May 7, 1947*]²

Asked to clarify his advice that Sind Hindus should migrate in the event of partition, Gandhiji told Paratap Dayaldas:

I said that you should suffer bravely, but non-violently unto death. But if you cannot do that and must make a disgraceful surrender of all including honour, your womenfolk and religion, in that case, the only safe and proper course for you to take is migration, not singly, but of all the Hindus and other non-Muslims,

To a further query as to what would be the plight of the minorities in Sind in the case of a partition of India, Gandhiji replied :

¹ This appeared in *Harijan* under the title "Gandhiji's Advice to Sindh Hindus."

² Gandhiji was in New Delhi from May 1 to May 7, 1947.

That question is to be fought out in the Constituent Assembly, but I am certain that all protection that is humanly possible will be stipulated for. You must not be weaklings.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

30. TELEGRAM TO G. V. MAVALANKAR¹

May 7, 1947

ADA AVALANKAR

ERVINDIA

OONA

WIRED BARVE ABOUT GURUJI.² SIDDAMAPPA BASSAPPA FASTING. KNOW NOTHING ABOUT IT. INQUIRE.

BAPU

Samsmarano, p. 217

31. A TALK³

NEW DELHI,

May 7, 1947

Asked . . . whether Pakistan would die a natural death if conceded, Gandhiji's reply was :

Can you describe Pakistan to me? What reply can be given to an unknown premise? I have tried to understand what it is and have failed. And if the Punjab and Bengal today are hall-marks of Pakistan, then it can never exist.

I cannot understand the meaning of Pakistan. Should Pakistan be attained after so much blood-shed? I am the lone follower of my ideas. Maybe, my intellect is deadened by old age! Still, how can I help mentioning the facts? Since I regard myself as a servant of the nation I would be betraying the faith of the people if I did not express what is in my heart. Personally I will say that the matter concerning

¹ This was in reply to the addressee's wire which read: "Sane Guruji may perhaps be induced to give up fast if majority of temple trustees . . . sign declaration of willingness to open temple . . . Trustees . . . seem to interpret your advice to them and Sane Guruji as meaning that they need take no steps now to open temple in view of new legislation . . ."

² *Vide* "Telegram to Barve", 1-5-1947

³ This was addressed to some local Muslims and representatives of two social organizations of Delhi as also to two Europeans.

Amrit Kaur's report of the talk in *Harijan*, "How Gandhiji Feels and Acts", has been collated with the Gujarati in *Biharni Komi Agman*.

the partition of the provinces should be decided by us peacefully after the British have withdrawn and with mutual consultation. Why should we have the British between us? keeping them between us is an indication of our cowardice and mutual lack of trust. Is it a matter of any credit if two brothers take their quarrel to a third man and seek judgment from him? Moreover I am surprised that no one stops to think that the British would exploit to their advantage this weakness of ours. Looking up to the British for every little thing dissipates our strength and cripples us. I would say even with regard to the Princely States that they are in such a helpless state that I pity them. The British were their protectors. Now, if they want to be happy they will have to be part of India and become servants of the nation handing over their powers to the people.

Since the last two days socialists have been coming to me.¹ I have been telling them the same things. I say that if they are keen on bringing about socialism in the country, they should forget their internal differences, do physical labour and develop character by thoroughly examining their private and public lives. Socialism will not come by occupying positions of power and by delivering speeches from the platform. They must carefully examine every moment of their lives from the time they get up in the morning to the time they retire to bed at night. They must have before them a clear and perfect goal. And if truth and non-violence are not observed scrupulously the socialism which they are trying to bring about would be just shattered and no trace would be left of their existence. The same thing applies to the Congress. If the Congressmen and the Socialists, beautiful both in name and implication, do not follow their principles in action, there will be a revolt in the country and communism will make inroads. I shall not live to see it. But expand your activities in such a way that the future generations do not curse you.

The day we all give up our dharma will be the day of our downfall. Today the Hindus and the Muslims have forgotten their religions. But it is my hope and faith that like turbid flood waters which bring with them all the dirt on the way but turn clear once the flood subsides the present tide in the country will also subside and the atmosphere will clear up and present a hopeful picture to the world because we would have attained our freedom through dharma and *tapashcharya*.

¹ Vide "Discussion with Aruna Asalf Ali And Ashok Mehta", 6-5-1947

There was a time when Great Britain was considered the Empress of the Oceans. There was none to contest her claim. Hence if Britain maintains true and honest friendship with India, she will attain the highest moral stature and the world will bow before her. Not only that, she will attain a position even higher than that of an Empress and all countries will have to look to her to shape the future of the world. This is because I know from experience that the British do possess these qualities and powers. I have lived among the British for many years and a large number of Englishmen and women are my friends.

I have passed some of the best years of my life among them and I have always voted against the name of “Perfidious Albion” for them and have preferred to subscribe to Cowper’s well-known verse “Hypocrisy is an ode to virtue”. But Britain has yet to rise to those heights.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 308-10, and *Harijan*, 18-5-1947

32. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 7, 1947

As soon as Gandhiji arrived at the prayer meeting he inquired whether *smt.* Uma Devi had come She was persuaded to sit on the platform at Gandhiji’s insistence. Gandhiji also invited *Smt.* Vibhavaribai Deshpande and said that these two women had protested against the recitation from the Koran. Gandhiji referred to a letter signed by some twenty persons suggesting that the prayer should not be stopped because a few persons protested.

Do you think there are only two or twenty persons who think like this? I think that all of you who do not protest and sit here silently day after day have the same thought in your minds which is expressed in the letter.

But I would like to request you to be patient. Religion can be pursued only with patience. Hinduism has given great importance to tolerance. Shankaracharya has stressed the importance of patience so much that he has said that we need greater patience to attain *moksha*¹ than to transfer the waters of the ocean to another pit drop by drop with the help of a blade of grass. Now suppose a man starts emptying the waters of the ocean with the help of a jug, if not with a blade of

¹ Salvation

grass, and even finds a hollow place big enough where he can transfer those waters, and if moreover the man lives for hundreds and thousands of years, he may be able to empty the limitless expanse of the ocean. But what would happen to the fresh water pouring into the ocean? How much patience would then be needed to dry up the ocean? Naturally Shankaracharya is speaking of the infinite patience expected of a person desirous of attaining *moksha*. He says that with one foot on the stirrup of a neighing horse and the other ready to mount, we cannot ask our guru to tell us what Brahman is. That is not the way one can know Brahman. All of us who have gathered here have come with a desire to learn. We all desire to attain *moksha*. But do we have the capacity to cultivate the necessary patience? If not, let us at least cultivate enough patience to pray. What good will it do us if we go on praying while a child may be howling away? A prayer to God has to come from the heart. God is not so gullible as to accept words from the lips as prayer. Prayer does not mean mere chanting of words! And why should we insist on such utterance when we are facing opposition of any kind? What we in our superior strength do after having threatened the young man into silence—would you call it pursuit of dharma? Dharma lies in putting up with the young man. I am glad that you who have gathered here in such large numbers followed your religion peacefully and tolerated an ignorant person.

But today we are not faced with a young man but with a lady. I find that she is younger even than my adopted daughter. She is the wife of a secretary¹. She has sent me a letter. I shall discuss it first.

The contents of the letter show not knowledge but sheer ignorance of Hinduism. This manner of protecting religion is, in fact, one that would degrade it. I wish to tell all Hindus and Sikhs that they should not adopt such misguided methods. I shall reply to the questions of this lady one by one.

1. It is not correct to say that a temple is defiled by reading the Koran there. How can praise of God in a temple be contrary to dharma? No one protested when the meaning of *Auz-o-Billahi*, etc., was explained² here in Hindi yesterday. Would it be an irreligious act if someone recited the *Gita* in its Arabic translation? If there is anyone who says so, he is an ignoramus. There was a rule in the Frontier

¹ Of the Akhil Bharatiya Deshi Rajya Hindu Mahasabha, who ran *Rajasthan Samachar*, a daily

² Vide "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 5-5-1947

Province that the Koran might not be subjected to translation. But Dr. Khan Saheb, who is now the Premier, is a sensible man. He said that if the Koran were translated, it would spread wider. More people would read it and understand it. If Khan Saheb offered his *namaaz* in this temple, would the temple be defiled? The *namaaz* consists of recitations from the Koran. Would such recitation be a sin?

2. You might say that the Muslims have sinned against the Hindus. But have the Hindus lagged behind? You should know what the Hindus have done in Bihar. They killed women and children, set houses on fire and chased the Muslims out of their homes. Now if a Muslim came forward and said that the readers of the *Bhagavadgita* had committed great sins, what a travesty of truth it would be. To a certain extent I am willing to admit that the Muslims have committed atrocities, that they have sinned. But what is beyond my comprehension is the contention that because a reader of the Koran happens to be a sinner the Koran itself is sinful. That way, the *Gita*, the Upanishads, the Vedas, in fact, all religious books, can be proved to be sinful. People draw different meanings even from the *Gita*. Some people interpret the *Gita* in quite a different way from how I do. I find in the *Gita* the message of non-violence, while others say that the *Gita* ordains the killing of the *atayis*¹. Can I go and stop them from saying so? I listen to them and do what I feel is correct.

3. Saying that I have not read the *Gita* in a mosque only means that I am a coward, does it not? Granted that I am a coward and am afraid of saying my prayer before the Muslims in a mosque. But if I am a coward in one place, need I be a coward everywhere? Do you want me to be a coward here also?

You ought to know that in many places I stay with the Muslims, where I regularly offer my prayers without hesitation. And, while I was touring in Noakhali I often held my prayers very near the mosques although not actually inside one. Once I held the prayer within the enclosure of a mosque, in a building on its premises. And I used to have all the paraphernalia of the prayer with me. There used to be the beating of the drum and *Ramdhun* with the clapping of hands. We did not have the drum with us but we did have *Ramdhun* with clapping of hands in the premises of the mosque. I told the local Muslims that just as they took the name of Rahim, I would take the name of Rama. I said that it was not worthy of those who took the

¹ One who is guilty of heinous crimes, viz., the incendiary, the poisoner, the assassin, the robber, the usurper of land and the ravisher (I. 36)

name of Rahim to stop people from taking the name of Rama. And they did not stop me from taking the name of Rama.

You talk of atrocities. There have been many atrocities in Noakhali. But let me tell you that the atrocities committed by the Muslims in Noakhali are not equal to those committed by the Hindus in Bihar. I am a witness to this fact. I have been to Noakhali and I have also toured Bihar.

Anyone who says that I cannot go and offer my prayer before the Muslims does not know Gandhi. What does this poor Uma Devi Know of the stuff Gandhi is made of? I am not ashamed of myself but of what she has been saying. I am ashamed of this gentleman of a secretary who, in spite of holding office in the Hindu Dharma Sabha, is so terribly ignorant. When the ocean catches fire, who can extinguish it?

But the fact is she is not opposed to the particular prayer but to the Arabic language. Yesterday, when a translated version of the Koranic portion was read out it did not hurt anyone.

Gandhiji then repeated the translated version.

Now see, I have read out the whole prayer again. It has not hurt even this lady. She finds nothing wrong with it. Had she found anything sinful, would she have allowed me to read it? Would she not have stopped me and said: 'Keep quiet. I do not wish to hear it.'

But how could she stop me? In what other way can I pray to God? Does she want that I should not refer to God as *Aja*¹? Or that I should not consider Him Immortal? Or that I should not call Him Almighty? Or that I should not refer to Him as the Lord? What else then can I say in my prayer? What ignorance, then, to say that whatever we wish to say in our prayer becomes sinful when we put it in the Arabic language? We must save ourselves from this gross ignorance.

Let us then pray to God to protect us from darkness. In our Hindu prayers even the words chosen say: "Lead us from darkness to light."² I feel very bad that instead of appreciating such an unparalleled religion we should discard it like a stone. And it hurts me all the more when the wife of a man who wishes to serve religion is bent upon bringing down religion by such acts. In our society the husband is entrusted with high duties. It is his duty to prevent his wife's

¹ The Unborn

² तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय। *Brihadaranyakopanishad*, III. 28. Vide "Ashram Bhajanavali"

thoughts from going astray. But this gentleman has imparted to his wife a training in utter intolerance. How can religion survive under such conditions?

If we continue to be like this, Hinduism is certainly not going to survive. Nor will India be able to survive. We shall not be able to save India even if the British quit. In Independent India we have to live like brothers. Those who are enemies today would become friends tomorrow, Would you then tell your Muslim neighbour that he should not read the Koran? Would it in any way raise the status of Hinduism?

Hence I am asking you to pray in silence. For, if so many people sit silently and pray and do not betray their anger against a couple of individuals, we shall be purified, we shall become pious.

You all know that I had gone to meet Jinnah Saheb yesterday. I cannot tell you everything that took place between us. We have come to an agreement that what we talk would remain between us, and not be allowed to leak out. None the less, I have conveyed to Badshah Khan, Pandit Jawaharlal and our other leaders the gist of my talks with Jinnah Saheb. Here too I shall briefly mention it. We both have signed a document¹ which involves two points. The first thing is that we shall not coerce anyone to fulfil our political objectives. Each side will try to convince the other about its own point of view and would never resort to threat or bullying.

The other point is about restraining the people from indulging in acts of violence and other atrocities. You must have realized from Jinnah Saheb's Press statement² yesterday that we have clear political differences. Jinnah Saheb wants Pakistan. Congressmen have also decided in favour of acceding to the demand for Pakistan. But they insist that the Hindu and Sikh [majority] areas of the Punjab and Bengal cannot be included in Pakistan. Only the Muslim [majority] areas can be separated from India. But I for one cannot agree to Pakistan on any account. I cannot tolerate any proposal for vivisectioning the country. There are many things happening which I cannot bear. But they still do not stop. They go on happening. But in this case,

¹ *Vide* "A Joint Appeal", 12-4-1947

² Which was issued with Gandhiji's concurrence; *vide* "M. A. Jinnah's Statement to the Press", 6-5-1947

when I say that I cannot bear it, I mean that I do not wish to be a party to it. In other words, I am not going to be influenced by them in this matter. If they want to have Pakistan, let them, settle it with their fellowmen. I cannot talk as a representative of any one party. I represent everyone. It is my attempt to be a trustee of all the Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs and Parsis, Jains and Christians living in this country. I wish to be their trustee even if I have not the capacity or fitness for it. Hence, I can-not be a party to the formation of Pakistan. When I know that what Jin-nah Saheb wishes to do is a dangerous thing, how can I put my signature to the proposal of acceptance of Pakistan? I conveyed this point to him very patiently. We did not quarrel. We talked to each other cordially.

I told Jinnah Saheb in polite words that he could not have Pakistan by resorting to force. He could not compel me to acquiesce in the formation of Pakistan. None but God can compel me. If he wishes to have it by persuasion, why, he can have not only Pakistan but the whole of India.

I have joined him in issuing the peace appeal and in order to make that appeal effective I have requested Jinnah Saheb to take from me whatever work he might wish to take. I told him that I would go with him even a thousand times if that was necessary.

Let me also tell you that everyone had tried to stop me from going to Jinnah Saheb. They asked me what I would gain by going to him. But did I go to him to gain anything? I went to him to know his mind. If I have not gained anything by going to him, I have not lost anything either. I claim to have his friendship. After all he also belongs to India. Whatever happens, I have to spend my life with him. How can I refuse to go to him?

We shall have to live in amity. We should not compel anyone even to live in harmony. I would say that if they want Pakistan they should bring us round to their point of view. Let them also convince others that [the formation of] Pakistan is in the interest of everyone in which case I would definitely agree to their proposal. But if they expect to force me into granting it—well I am not going to give my consent.

You might ask me why India cannot be divided. You might wonder what harm it would do. Let me tell you my head is not empty. I have in my head many ideas concerning this matter. But please read

and hear [from others] about these ideas. Today I have given you a fairly good amount of my time.

Now I am going to Calcutta. I do not know what I would be able to do there. Nor do I know how long I would stay there and when I would return. I have given my word that I would come whenever Jawaharlal, Kripalani or the Viceroy sent for me. And I do hope I shall be seeing you again.

In the mean while, please understand that nothing will be gained by preventing me from holding the prayer. I get the advantage of remaining silent. Nor would you people who have suppressed your anger and remained silent benefit less. But those who cause the obstruction have everything to lose. You people should help them see reason. You would remember that when there was trouble during the prayer the other day, the Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha had pacified them by persuasion. You should also persuade them in the same way. You should win them over not by threats and force but with peaceful argument that in Gandhi's prayer there is only religion, not irreligion. If they fail to be convinced I have the patience to offer silent prayer. Even in this temple I would offer the same prayer all by myself. The same prayer was offered the day before yesterday when it rained. It was the same temple and the same Hindus were present. But again today there was a protest. This is the sad state to which we are reduced.

Hence I request you to convince these people by your non-violent behaviour so that they may tell me that I am free to have my prayers here, whether it is in Arabic or Persian or Sanskrit.

Now please sit quiet for two minutes and offer silent prayer. Better still if will keep your eyes closed.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana-Pravachan—Part I, pp. 74-81

33. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

IN THE RAIN TO PATNA
May 8, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

It strikes me that I should summarize what I said and wanted to say and left unfinished for want of time, at our last Sunday's¹ meeting.

¹ May 4; *vide* "Interview with Lord Mountbatten", 4-5-1947

I

Whatever may be said to the contrary, it would be a blunder of the first magnitude for the British to be a party in any way whatsoever to the division of India. If it has to come, let it come after the British withdrawal, as a result of understanding between the parties or of an armed conflict which according to Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah is taboo. Protection of minorities can be guaranteed by establishing a court of arbitration in the event of difference of opinion among contending parties.

2. Meantime the Interim Government should be composed either of Congressmen or those whose names the Congress chooses or of Muslim League men or those whom the League chooses. The dual control of today, lacking team work and team spirit, is harmful for the country. The parties exhaust themselves in the effort to retain their seat and to placate you. Want of team spirit demoralizes the Government and imperils the integrity of the services so essential for good and efficient government.

3. Referendum at this stage in the Frontier (or any Province for that matter) is a dangerous thing in itself. You have to deal with the material that faces you. In any case nothing should or can be done over Dr. Khan Saheb's head as Premier. Note that this paragraph is relevant only if division is at all to be countenanced.

4. I feel sure that partition of the Punjab and Bengal is wrong in every case and a needless irritant for the League. This as well as all innovation can come after the British withdrawal, not before, except always for mutual agreement. Whilst the British power is functioning in India, it must be held principally responsible for the preservation of peace in the country. That machine seems to be cracking under the existing strain which is caused by the raising of various hopes that cannot or must not be fulfilled. These have no place during the remaining thirteen months. This period can be most profitably shortened if the minds of all were focussed on the sole task of withdrawal. You and you alone can do it to the exclusion of all other activity so far as the British occupation is concerned.

5. Your task as undisputed master of naval warfare, great as it was, was nothing compared to what you are called to do now. The single-mindedness and clarity that gave you success are much more required in this work.

6. If you are not to leave a legacy of chaos behind, you have to

make your choice and leave the Government of the whole of India including the States to one party. The Constituent Assembly has to provide for the governance even of that part of India which is not represented by the Muslim League or some States.

7. Non-partition of the Punjab and Bengal does not mean that the minorities in these Provinces are to be neglected. In both the Provinces they are large and powerful enough to arrest and demand attention. If the popular Governments cannot placate them, the Governors should during the interregnum actively interfere.

8. The intransmissibility of paramountcy is a vicious doctrine, if it means that they¹ can become sovereign and a menace for independent India. All the power wherever exercised by the British in India must automatically descend to the successor. Thus the people of the States become as much part of independent India as the people of British India. The present Princes are puppets created or tolerated for the upkeep and prestige of the British Power. The unchecked powers exercised by them over their people is probably the worst blot on the British Crown. The Princes under the new regime can exercise only such powers as trustees can and as can be given to them by the Constituent Assembly. It follows that they cannot maintain private armies or arms factories. Such ability and statecraft as they possess must be at the disposal of the Republic and must be used for the good of their people and the people as a whole. I have merely stated what should be done with the States. It is not for me to show in this letter how this can be done.

9. Similarly difficult but not so baffling is the question of the Civil Service. Its members should be taught from now to accommodate themselves to the new regime. They may not be partisans taking sides. The slightest trace of communalism among them should be severely dealt with. The English element in it should know that they owe loyalty to the new regime rather than to the old and therefore to Great Britain. The habit of regarding themselves as rulers and therefore superiors must give place to the spirit of true service of the people.

II

10. I had a very pleasant two hours and three quarters with Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah on Tuesday last. We talked about the joint statement on non-violence. He was agreeably emphatic over his belief

¹ They States

in non-violence. He has reiterated it in the Press statement¹ which was drafted by him.

11. We did talk about Pakistan *cum* partition. I told him that my opposition to Pakistan persisted as before and suggested that in view of his declaration of faith in non-violence he should try to convert his opponents by reasoning with them and not by show of force. He was, however, quite firm that the question of Pakistan was not open to discussion. Logically, for a believer in non-violence, nothing, not even the existence of God could be outside its scope.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur saw the first eight paragraphs, the purport of which she was to give to Pandit Nehru with whom I was to send you this letter. But, I could not finish it in New Delhi. I finished it on the train.

I hope you and Her Excellency are enjoying your hardearned rest.²

Yours sincerely,

GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY

SIMLA

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 247-50

¹ *Vide* "M. A. Jinhās Statement to the Press", 6-5-1947

² Acknowledging this on May 11, the Viceroy thanked Gandhiji "for the advice you were kind enough to send me which I appreciated receiving."

34. *ADVICE TO STATION MASTER*

PATNA,
May 8, 1947

I do not find fault with you for coming to ask me.¹ You have been trained that way. Will you go to every compartment and ask the occupants as you ask me? If you would not go there you should not have come here either. I am not a Government official. These Ministers are but they have not come to meet me in their official capacity. They have come as family members. If they had not come I would not have been able to do anything to them. But at heart we are old colleagues. They have come to me like many others who would have come to meet their relatives passing through the station. It is your duty to blow the whistle and start the train at the correct time, even if the highest official may be in the train. It is another thing if your superiors have given you any instructions in writing. Except in such a case you must carry on your routine work. It would be good training for you and also for these Ministers as well as the people. You should not be scared at the sight of the Ministers. They are servants of the people. Hence you should in fact be fearless in their presence. The Ministers too should regard persons in their departments not as servants but as their younger brothers. Then alone would we be happy and be able to enjoy the fruits of democracy. So the rule which applies to other passengers in this train also applies to me. Of course I must admit that the rule is not observed fully. For instance, even though we travel third, this compartment is reserved for the two or three of us. But I can do nothing about it. If this is not done, everybody would want to get into this compartment. So, this practice of obliging me by reserving my compartment has been continued since the days of the British. I am not saying this to scold you. Please do not feel hurt. But this is an occasion from which all of us can learn something, and how would you know if I do not mention it to you? And I am a teacher after all, and it is my nature that I cannot help correcting what my conscience regards as an error. Well, I have given you these few minutes and now do not hesitate to start the train at your convenience. I know you have come to me to show me courtesy,

¹ As Gandhiji was busy talking to the Bihar Ministers the Station Master came to enquire whether he could start the train.

but I have ventured to mention these things as they occurred to me.¹

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 317-8

35. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ²

IN THE RAIN,
May 9, 1947

QUESTION: The Government are at present unable to supply the requisite material for building purposes. Should a non-official organization now take up this task?

ANSWER: In my opinion the task of rehabilitation is entirely Government's work. If a private agency takes up any financial responsibility it would be a dangerous thing. For it would carry with it the implication that those who have been rehabilitated by private financial help would also be defended privately. I hold this to be impossible and unwise, if not impossible. It should be our endeavour to induce local Muslims to help the evacuees in rehabilitation when Government aid is inadequate. But if neither the former nor the Government prove no helpful, no non-official organization should or can undertake the task for reasons given above.

Many cases are being withdrawn by the police after enquiry as evidence is reported to be lacking; we have heard of more than 600 of such cases. Should these be reopened and a legal committee set up for the purpose? The Noakhali District Relief, Rehabilitation, Rescue Committee has a legal branch. But it is not active. Should Satis Babu try to take up this work with the help of the N.D.R.R.R.C.?

I think this we must not do on any account. The legal committee must work efficiently and effectively. It does not fall within our province. Our province is to teach the people to help themselves even up to the point of defence against Government or other oppression; that is the meaning of 'Do or Die'.

Rice now sells at Rs. 25 a maund. The Government have stopped selling rice to riot-affected people at controlled rate. If we store rice and sell at controlled rate it

¹ The Station Master was very pleased and said that in his 45 years of life that was the first instance of strict discipline and fearlessness and wished that every department had a disciplinarian like Gandhiji.

² Some workers met Gandhiji at Burdwan Station on his way to Calcutta. A number of questions had been kept ready to which Gandhiji dictated answers on the train.

will require a capital of 20 lacs of rupees. Should we undertake this work?

I think, in dangerous areas such as Noakhali, we must not supply rice through private agency. I would far rather that after a clear statement the people trek to safer parts and in doing so they get all the help necessary, financial or other.

It is strange but true that every difficulty that faces us in Noakhali is present in Bihar almost to the same extent as in Noakhali. Realization of this fact should make us think furiously and enable us to deal with the Noakhali problem clearly and bravely. We should on no account countenance any lethargy, falsehood, cowardliness or selfishness on the part of the refugees.¹

The Hindus being influenced by your preaching of ahimsa may in the near future get beaten by the Muslim League followers. This is the general feeling in view of the belief that the Muslims are being secretly armed on a wide scale.

The assumption is serious. If it is sound, it casts a grave reflection upon the Provincial Governments. In any event, how I wish the Hindus were influenced by my teaching of ahimsa which is a force mightier than the force of arms however powerful. No teacher can be held responsible for a caricature of his teachings. Do we not know how geometrical propositions are caricatured by indifferent pupils? Are the teachers to be blamed? The utmost that can be said against me is that I am an incompetent teacher of ahimsa. If such be the case, let us pray that my successor will be much more competent and successful.

After the British withdrawal from India, there is a likelihood of chaos and anarchy prevailing in the country. There is a fear that the nationalists unless they immediately started learning self-defence with fire-arms, may suffer and ultimately find themselves under the heels of the Muslim League whose followers believe only in fighting. Pakistan or no Pakistan, the trouble is coming because there is the secret hand of imperialism working behind the scenes. Would you not modify your theory of ahimsa in the larger context of such a political situation overtaking the country for the sake of individual defence?

The nationalists are not worth the proud name they bear, if they fear the Muslim League as you imagine. Can the nationalists exclude the followers of the League from the sphere of their action? I am not thinking of vote-catching devices. I am thinking of the Muslims as Indians, the same as others, needing their care and attention. If the leaders have ceased to believe in ahimsa, they should boldly and

¹ What follows appeared in *Harijan* under the title "Ahimsa, A Fact of Life".

frankly say so and set about putting their house in order. For me there is no scope for any change. Ahimsa is no mere theory with me, it is a fact of life based on extensive experience. How can a man who had tasted apples and repeatedly found them sweet be induced to describe them as bitter? Those who say they are bitter have tasted not apples but something looking very much like them. Ahimsa should not fear the secret or open hand of imperialists assuming for the sake of argument that it is working as suggested in the question,

My Days with Gandhi, pp. 223-4, *Harijan*, 25-5-1947, and *Biharni Komi Agman*

36. LETTER TO VIDYAVATI

May 9, 1947

CHI. VIDYA¹,

You will learn from the back of this what I have done.² Now something will have to be done there itself. What makes you think you will go mad? Those who have faith in God can never lose their head. Bear with patience whatever unhappiness comes your way.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Hindi original: Rani Vidyavati Papers. Courtesy: National Gandhi Museum and Library

37. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING³

SODEPUR,

May 9, 1947

Gandhiji said that he had not expected to come to Calcutta but when he had reports from friends about the events in Calcutta he thought that he should come to Calcutta and put in his work in pursuit of the same object that had taken him to Noakhali and then to Bihar. They saw before them Gurudev's portrait with floral decorations. The 25th of *Baishakh* was Gurudev's birthday. That was why they had two hymns from the pen of Gurudev sung to them. Great men never died and it was up to the people to keep them immortal by continuing the work they had commenced.

¹ Of Hardoi

² This was a letter from the Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals, Bihar, regarding the admission of a Talukdar from U. P. to the European Mental Hospital, Kanke.

³ The report in *Amrita Bazar Patrika* has been collated with the version in *The Hindu*.

The second hymn that was sung to them, namely, *Hinshaya unmatta prithvi* (the world was mad with violence) was most apposite at the moment when Hindus and Muslims were fighting. The purport of the hymn was that God should take them from darkness unto light, from untruth unto truth and from misery unto bliss indefinable. That was the *mantra* with which he had armed Deenabandhu Andrews and Pearson¹ when he permitted them to proceed to South Africa. These two were amongst the best of Gurudev's numerous devotees throughout the world.

It was a good thing, proceeded Gandhiji, that Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah's words uttered to the Pathan deputation that had waited on him were to the same tune. They should read those words for themselves. If they all followed the advice India would truly become a unique land of real peace.

You know that I am joint signatory to the document² on non-violence. That at once imposes on me the duty of fasting unto death if either Hindus or Muslims descended to the level of savages or beasts. Let the Hindus of Bihar and the Muslims of Noakhali remember the fact.

Continuing, Gandhiji said that he had earned the right of fast by the service he had rendered and was still rendering to the Muslims of India. The poet Iqbal had taught them already that true religion did not teach men to hate one another. Let them all take that lesson to heart and render India a land of peace and brotherhood amongst men.

The British are surely going to quit India and if we have any differences between ourselves, let us make it completely our own affair and not approach the British for a settlement. As for the latter, they have no duty except to quit at the earliest possible moment. If they fulfil that part of their task, all else can be settled between ourselves as between brother and brother.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 10-5-1947, and *The Hindu*, 10-5-1947

¹ William Winstanley Pearson

² *Vide* "Talks With Sikhs", 12-4-1947

38. INTERVIEW TO ABUL HASHEM¹

SODEPUR,

Saturday, May 10, 1947

Hashem Saheb opened his case² by stating that Bengalis were after all Bengalis, whether Hindu or Muslim. They had a common language, a common culture and did not wish to be ruled by Pakistanis who lived a thousand miles away. Gandhiji said :

But haven't we been so long ruled by people who live seven thousand miles away?

Yes, but then that would mean that Pakistanis of the West would rule over us in Bengal.

But supposing they do not rule over you, and you wish to form a voluntary alliance with Pakistan because you have a common religion which both of you wish to propagate throughout the world, then where is the objection?

But then you are talking of Pan-Islamism.

Yes I am. Perhaps you do not know how deep the Muslim feeling about it is. I had evidence of that even while I was a student in England many years ago. What is then your objection to a voluntary federation of different countries professing the same religion?

Hashem Saheb did not reply.

Then Gandhiji asked me³ to bring a Bengali primer which he had been reading lately. When this was brought, Gandhiji proceeded to tell Hashem Saheb that, to all intents and purposes, he was trying to become a Bengali. He found hardly any difference between the language of a Bengali Hindu and a Bengali Muslim. Bengal was the only province in India where common Muslims did not understand Urdu. His intention in learning the Bengali language was to be able to read Gurudev's poems in the original, for, from them he received the message of the Upanishads, which lay at the root of the culture of the whole of India.

Hashem Saheb said that every Bengali looked upon Rabindranath with the

¹ Secretary, Bengal Provincial Muslim League, who was accompanied by two students and Sarat Chandra Bose, President of the All-Bengal Anti-Pakistan Committee. The report in *My Days with Gandhi* has been collated with the Gujarati version in *Biharni Komi Agman*.

² For a tripartite division of India into India, Pakistan and United Sovereign Bengal

³ N. K. Bose

highest veneration, and in this, Muslims were one with Hindus. That was the chief reason why Bengali Muslims did not want Bengal to be broken up into two.

It is the spirit of the Upanishads which binds Rabindranath to the whole of Indian culture. Does not Bengal derive her deepest culture from what is the priceless heirloom of all India? If that is so, and Bengal wishes to enter into voluntary association with the rest of India, what would you say about that?

Hashem Saheb had no reply for this question either.

You have not really made up your mind about Pakistan. Please think about it once more, and then we shall discuss the new proposal.

You are following the same path of non-violence as was followed by Lord Buddha and the Prophet. People consider you a reincarnation of these. You must extinguish the fire of violence in Calcutta. You must also do something so that our brethren in Bihar can live in peace

First and foremost, it is a mistake to consider me a reincarnation of Buddha or of the Prophet. I have never made any such claim. I am an ordinary man. Of course I do try to follow the principles of life as preached by our scriptures and our great men. I have even succeeded to a certain extent. Yet, I do not claim that I am a person with divine qualities or higher than you. I am a servant of all human beings, be they Hindu or Muslim. I do wish I had the power to end the bloody strife raging among men and women of the same country. I should then be happy. Great men like Lord Krishna and Lord Buddha were so many incarnations of God. Our scriptures say that these great men had the divine power to establish peace and happiness. But you will realize that I am no divine person since I am not able to establish peace. And, if I presume to be such a person, I would not be able to survive in the world even for a minute. I have certainly been tested in my vows of truth and non-violence. That is why I have come here after touring Noakhali, Bihar, Delhi. I wish either to do something in this field or die. If you feel what Gandhi is doing is correct and Gandhi is needed in Calcutta I would first of all wish to make an humble request if you would allow me.

Yes, of course. You can command us to do anything.

The first thing is that if you are loyal to the party to which you belong and for which, you work you must ask Jinnah Saheb why, after signing the peace appeal with Gandhi, he is sitting in Delhi when thousands of Hindus are dying in the Punjab, the Frontier Province

and Noakhali and thousands of women are being raped. Why should every worker belonging to your party not stand by the Hindus and protect them? If you are keen on saving the Muslims you will have to give protection to all these Hindus. And as far as you are concerned, you must go and post yourselves in Noakhali whether or not you get the orders from Jinnah Saheb. You must prove to the Hindus that they are your brothers and sisters and if any Muslims come to kill them in the name of religion, you would offer to die first and protect them, that their mothers, sisters and daughters are your mothers, sisters and daughters. Let me tell all three of you that if you prove it not by words but by your actions, you would uphold your religion, and bring glory to your organization and this would have its effect in the whole country and your leaders would shine out by such remarkable acts. Today your leaders and your organization stand discredited in the world. If you want to strengthen your organization, if you want to allow the Muslims of India to live in peace and happiness and unity, this is the only way and there is no other. I know very well that you are not going to be convinced by what I say. But I would be untrue to you if I did not tell you what appears truth to me. This is so because I consider you all as my brothers and my friends, and my duty as your friend and brother obliges me to speak to you the truth.

My Days with Gandhi, pp. 227-8, and *Biharni Komi Agman*, pp. 327-8

39. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

SODEPUR,

May 10, 1947

Today I spoke to them¹ frankly so that they may act properly instead of saying things just to please me. Now I know that they will not do anything, but at least they will not think that they have done their duty merely by coming here and praising me as if I were the Buddha or the Prophet. I must speak out what I feel. I am longing for work, not praise. One should not put much trust in a person who praises one to one's face. Instead I consider my critics as my well-wishers because they caution me by pointing out my mistakes, which is beneficial to both the parties. Either the critic realizes his mistake or the person criticized corrects himself if he is in the wrong.

One who desires to follow the non-violence of the brave in one's daily life must shed despair and cowardice, should be careful

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

even in the most trivial things and should not give in under threat or intimidation. There is no dearth of such brave persons in India. Still the world may say that since Indians had no weapons they could not learn to use them. Dying demands much greater courage than killing. The foreigners have branded us as cowards, and we must disabuse them of this notion. Instead what is happening is just the opposite. Man's mind is such that it is often influenced by things which are repeatedly hammered into it and he changes accordingly and becomes what he in fact was not. The British have ruled over us for the past 150 years and called us a weak people and in spite of our inherent strength we have become weak. They have robbed us of our self-confidence.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp.329-30

40. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,

May 10, 1947

Speaking at the prayer gathering Mahatma Gandhi addressed himself to two questions that were asked of him. In view of the sourness between Hindus and Muslims that seemed to be daily growing, was it possible for the two to become friends? He answered emphatically that the enmity could not last for ever. They were brothers and must remain so in spite of temporary insanity. But perpetual feud was not an impossibility between communities as it was not between two individuals. He hoped that that would not happen, for he prophesied that in that case they would bury the two religions in India and would sell their freedom for a mess of pottage.

The second question was, could partition of Bengal be avoided in view of the rising Hindu opinion in its favour. Gandhiji recognized the force of that opinion. He was not in a position to pronounce an opinion. But he could say without fear of contradiction that if there was partition, the Muslims majority would be responsible for it, and what was more, the Muslim Government that was in power. If he were the Chief Minister of Bengal, he would plead with his Hindu brethren to forget the past. He would say to them that he was as much a Bengali as they were. Differences in religion could not part the two. He and they spoke the same language, had inherited the same culture. All that was Bengal's was common to both, of which both could be equally proud. Bengal was Bengal. It was neither the Punjab nor Bombay nor anything else.

If the Chief Minister could possibly take up that attitude, he (the speaker)

would undertake to go with him from place to place and reason with Hindu audiences and he made bold to say that there would not be a Hindu opponent left of the unity of Bengal, the unity for which Hindus and Mussalmans had fought together so valiantly and undone “the settled fact”¹ of so powerful a Viceroy as Lord Curzon. If he were Suhrawardy he would invite the Hindus to partition his body before they thought of partitioning Bengal. If he had that sturdy love for Bengal and Bengalis, whether Hindus or Mussalmans, that love would melt the stoniest Hindu heart. As it was, fear and suspicion had seized the Hindu mind.

He could not forget Noakhali or even Calcutta, if all he heard was true, as it was equally true of the Muslim mind in Bihar and he had not hesitated to tell the Hindus of Bihar that they should remove all suspicion and fear from the Muslims mind. He believed in the sovereign rule of the law of love which made no distinction of race, colour, caste or creed. He was glad that he had in Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah a powerful partner in the belief, which was no secret from the world.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 11-5-1947

41. TELEGRAM TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

CALCUTTA,
May 11, 1947

PANDIT NEHRU
CARE HIS EXCELLENCY VICEROY
SIMLA

YOUR WIRE² . HOPE REACH DELHI SIXTEENTH MORNING. HAVE YOU
SEEN MY SOCIAL LETTER³. RAJKUMARI KNOWS.

BAPU

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

¹ The partition of Bengal which took place in 1905 was described later by Lord Morley, the Liberal Secretary of State for India, as “a settled fact” but was annulled in 1911.

² Requesting Gandhiji’s presence at the forthcoming meeting of the Congress Working Committee on May 16. On May 10, the Viceroy had announced that a conference of the Congress, Muslim League and Sikh leaders would be held on May 17 to announce the plan of the British Government for transferring power to Indian hands. The leaders invited were: Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, M.A. Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan and Sardar Baldev Singh. On May 11, however, it was announced that the proposed conference was postponed to June 2, 1947.

³ *Vide* “Letter to Lord Mountbatten”, 8-5-1947

42. LETTER TO A MINISTER¹

May 11, 1947

Your letter regarding. . . Why do you write to me in English? What happens to be your mother tongue is our national language. Then why should we bother to write in English? Yes, you can say that the means for writing in English are readily available in Minister's offices. You can employ clerks who can write in Hindustani instead of in English. It would mean less expense and greater convenience for the common man. After all only a handful of people in India know English. Swadeshi administration cannot be run for their sake. Whatever you do today will be pursued even after the British rule is completely eliminated from the country. You must also remember that you have to serve those people who are exploited the most, and represent them with credit.

Now I come to the points of our correspondence. I have not read the Panchayat [Raj] Bill of the United Provinces. I do not subscribe to the view that there should be a Harijan in all the elected bodies. Nor should you hold such a view. It would not be proper to insist that Harijans should be taken on such bodies even if none is found qualified. The important thing in tackling such problems is to make the Harijans better informed. But here I have suggested something fundamental. . . .

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 332-3

43. A LETTER

May 11, 1947

. . . Shri . . . has passed on to me the letter you wrote to him. Why did you write in English? Your mother tongue and . . .s' is the same. I can see from your letter that your knowledge of the English language is poor. . . .

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 333

¹ Omissions in this and the following two letters are as in the source.

44. LETTER TO GOVIND BALLABH PANT¹

May 11, 1947

. . . has written to Shri . . . regarding the Panchayat Raj Bill. . . . He has sent both the letters to me. The remarkable thing is that all the letters are in English. And . . . 's English is a wonderful specimen. His letter to the Congress party is also in English. Our laws are also in English. We are possibly going to be free from British imperialism; but we might never gain freedom from the domination of the English language. If we do not, what will the masses do? Or, are all our efforts meant for the handful of English-knowing people in the vast ocean that is India? But this is a digression.

Before I can give my opinion on the point under consideration I must know the nature of your Bill and what. . . has to say in reply.

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 333

45. A TALK

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,

May 11, 1947

When such ugly incidents occur we call their perpetrators goondas. But after all who are these goondas? They are our brothers. We condemn their deeds as goondaism but we too are to be blamed for them. Whatever good or evil is being done in the country, all, men and women, are equally responsible for it. Man is no different from other animals, as far as eating, sleeping and other functions are concerned. The only distinction is that being endowed with reason man can try to lead a moral life and distinguish himself from animals. "The path of God is trodden by the brave, not by the coward." Non-violence requires such courage. But today it is being regarded as cowardice. The path of God is the path of truth and non-violence. But while following that path we might have erred somewhere. I myself believe in acknowledging and correcting the mistakes I might have committed. Confession of one's guilt leads to self-purification. True non-violence does not consist merely in taking the blows. It means we should speak out what we consider to be the truth and act accordingly when the occasion arises. That is why for the last two days I have been telling the truth to the Government here. To remain silent at this hour

¹ Chief Minister of U. P.

would be a sign of unmanliness which would put non-violence to shame. A votary of non-violence must cultivate this courage, and for this it is necessary to give up all attachment.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 333-4

46. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

KHADI PRATISHTHAN SODEPUR,

May 11, 1947

Again I have to go to Delhi¹. We are mere sojourners. God created us for the journey in this world—so we must move on. No stability is possible in my life at least for the time being. It is possible only if I die or Indians understand [my message]. You know I used to consider attainment of independence an easy task but its preservation is going to be difficult. The signs at present are not good. This is the hour of our trial. Our capacity for sacrifice will also be put to test. Without the wherewithal one naturally leads a simple life but it is very difficult to do so when one has [wealth], and to consider it as belonging to God, not to oneself. The first *shloka*² in our prayer reads:

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीयाः मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥

One who recites the above *shloka* should first surrender to God all his possessions and then take for use only what is required for oneself. To take more than one's needs is sin. Just as we are considered thieves if we take what belongs to others, similarly, since everything here belongs to God we will stand guilty before God if we take more than our share. Thus true sacrifice will be proved at this hour. Try as we may, no sacrifice will endure without renunciation.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 334-5

¹ Vide "Letter to A Minister", 11-5-1947

² *Ishopanishad*, 1: "All this that we see in this universe is pervaded by God. Renounce it and enjoy it. Do not covet anybody's wealth." For Gandhiji's explanation of this *shloka*, vide "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 23/28-10-1930 and "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 11-11-1930

47. *ADVICE TO MILL-WORKERS*¹

May 11, 1947

We do not judge properly when and against whom we may offer strikes. Nowadays in India, going on strike is regarded as an act of bravery. There are strikes in mills over trivial matters. For insignificant issues students in schools and colleges go on strike. Have you ever considered who are the worst sufferers in such situations? It is the workers and the students who suffer the most. The rich people and the Government schools and colleges have nothing to lose. If the mills are closed for a day or a month, the mill-owners would not have to worry about their daily bread. But what would happen to you who live from day to day? Similar is the case with Government clerks and postmen going on strike. Of course I believe in equal wages at all levels. Why should a sweeper get only four annas a day while a lawyer may get one hundred rupees? But the world has not yet reached that ideal state, because people pay huge fees to lawyers and barristers in their own interests. It will take many years before incomes would be equalized in our society. If injustice is being done to you, go to your employer with an open mind, try to convince him about your point. But do not go on strike being swept away by others in the current of their parties and 'isms' that are daily coming up like mushrooms. You are an illiterate lot, you are workers. Hence see that others do not take undue advantage of you. I believe that the mill-owners too will now have to see reason. If they continue to suck the blood of the workers their mills will be reduced to ashes. Their huge mansions, their cars and all other things are the result of your labour. However, it is my impression that the majority of the mill-owners are sensible. I do hope that they will understand the prevailing situation in the country and treat the workers accordingly. If not now, in the coming year or two mill-owners and workers will have to develop relations like father and sons. Therein lies the good of both. If this does not happen both will come to grief. I have no doubt about it. Hence I humbly suggest that

¹ Workers of the Birla Mills were on strike and had turned violent. Some of them called on Gandhiji.

you must all go back to work. Choose and appoint a committee of five persons from amongst you. Let the five go to the mill-owners and present the entire case to them. You must understand their difficulty and they must understand yours. Finding a proper way by mutual compromise is in the interest of both sides.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 336-7

48. INTERVIEW TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY¹

SODEPUR,

Sunday, May 11, 1947

H. S. Suhrawardy, the chief sponsor of the united sovereign Bengal scheme, drew a rosy picture of the proposal. Gandhiji said that a new Bengal could not be born in utter disregard of the past. When the past was so full of wrongs, how could people believe in the sincerity of the new proposal unless past wrongs were set right? Suhrawardy-said, his Government had been wholly impartial and equal justice had been meted out to all; otherwise how could it have the support of a large number of Hindus? Gandhiji expressed the opinion that this was no different from the argument of British imperialists.

A friend of mine² had written a letter in which he described the utter incompetence of the Government and the veiled connivance of police officers in encouraging Muslim rioters. Gandhiji had read his letter and asked me how to hand it over to the Chief Minister. The latter went through it and said, “Yes, it is a bad case. But I am sure, you realize that this is an exception.”

Then with Gandhiji’s permission, I placed before Suhrawardy another case of murder³ in which the police had not taken up any enquiry even when seven days had passed. Suhrawardy tried to bypass the charge against his Government by saying, “Do you know, there are more than half a dozen versions of that event? One even accuses me of complicity in the murder.” Gandhiji had been silently listening to our conversation. He now broke in by saying:

Yes, you are responsible not only for that murder but for every life lost in Bengal, whether Hindu or Muslim.

¹ Who was accompanied by Mohammad Ali and Abdul Hashem.

The version in *My Days with Gandhi* has been collated with the one in *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*.

² N.K. Bose, author of *My Days with Gandhi*

³ Of Jadunath Sarkar’s son

Suhrawardy immediately retorted, “No, it is you who are responsible for it, for you have denied justice to the Mussalmans.”

I have rarely seen Gandhiji lose his temper in public. For one moment he flared up and said:

Don’t talk rot !

But immediately he became restrained and calmed down. He told Shaheed [Suhrawardy] that if he was really serious about his new Bengal, he should go amongst the hooligans, wherever there was disturbance, and stop the mischief by risking his own life if necessary.

If you do it even for a day, it will transform the atmosphere—not only in Calcutta but in the whole of India.¹

My Days with Gandhi, pp. 230-1, and *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 182

49. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING²

SODEPUR,
May 11, 1947

Mahatma Gandhi said that he had the privilege of receiving Shaheed Sahib at Sodepur. He had wished to go to the latter’s house but he would not let him go to his place. He had no information to give on the interview save that he had to repeat what he had said yesterday.

Gandhiji then addressed himself to the two questions put to him at the prayer meeting. The first was: “You have advised us to work for an undivided Bengal. But can there be an undivided Bengal with a divided India? What can we do to preserve a united Bengal in a united India?”

The answer was that if what he had said was well understood it followed that nothing could happen without the joint wish of both Hindus and Muslims. If a third party was not to decide their fate it would only be decided by their joint will. Then there was no question as yet of a divided India. If the distant event unfortunately did come to pass, the joint and free will of Hindu and Muslim Bengalis would decide which of these divisions to join.

¹ Later Gandhiji remarked: “What a curious man ! It matters nothing to him what he says. He wants people to trust him because, he says, the new Bengal which he wants to build will assure to all communities equal treatment. But the future is the child of the present. If what is happening in Calcutta today is an earnest of things to come, it does not bode well for his plan.”

² There was a mammoth gathering, representing all communities. Many had to turn away for want of space.

The second question was: “The British have not quit. Should not that be our first demand? Can we not wait to settle matters between ourselves *after* power is really transferred to the Indian people?”

This question really did not arise for, when the whole of Bengal had one united mind, it was irrelevant whether it was expressed today or after the British power had actually withdrawn.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 12-5-1947

50. NOTE TO MANU GANDHI

May 12, 1947

The more you rest, the sooner you will recover. Try to enshrine Ramanama in your heart. In this way you will not be omitting any of the jobs you do for me. Understand that when you rest yourself that too is a part of my work. Since you have dedicated yourself wholly to me you must lie down as long as I ask you to. Instead you go on working and I have to explain to you the meaning of the *Gita*. At the prayers you daily recite the verse from the *Ishavasya Upanishad* but you do not act upon it. How can your body stand it if you go on preparing *khakhra*¹ and do the other odd jobs for me? The body does not belong to you; it belongs to God. Even if we live in rented quarters we have to keep them clean in our own interest. The same thing applies to the body. Hence ruining one’s health by overworking amounts to an offence against God.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 338-9

51. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

SODEPUR,

May 12, 1947

CHI. LILI,

I got your letter today. I am returning the papers, duly signed, by air-mail.

¹ Slow-baked crisp *chapatis*

The news about Chakrayya¹ is shocking. I am glad you are there. Do what you can now. A letter on that subject also is enclosed.²

Sushila has been causing you a lot of worry. What God has ordained will happen.

Come when you wish. Do not get nervous at all. It is enough if we do our duty.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

You will see from the newspapers where I shall be on the day you write to me.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9610. Also C. W. 6582. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

52. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

SODEPUR,

May 12, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your three letters before me. I would like Chimanlal to stay on at Sevagram whether his health improves or gets worse. Sending for Dubeji will do him no good. Milk, fruit and vegetables—raw or cooked—should prove quite a good diet for him. Groundnuts, if taken, should first be soaked in water for 36 hours. But it is not indispensable. A cold-water bath in a tub may prove good; it can be tried. Do all this and ask him to repeat Ramanama and then let matters take their own course. I can't consider Uruli for him.

Kosambi may live on water, if he cannot digest any food whatever. If he cannot take even water, then, of course, there is no help and the body will slowly die. Inner peace being established, there remains nothing more to be achieved. However, do as Vinoba says, Show this to him.

Chakrayya has reached Bombay, writes Lilavati. I have written to

¹ A Harijan from Andhra who had joined the Sevagram Ashram in 1935 and became an expert craftsman. He was sent on account of a protracted illness for treatment to Bombay where it was diagnosed as brain tumour.

² The letter is not available.

him as also to Dr. Purandhar, the ophthalmologist.

If Hoshiari has no more internal complaint she ought not to fall ill again. You are being tested severely.¹

Do not wait [for my advice]; but keep me informed of any changes in Kosambi's condition. I prefer cremation but I shall not insist on it.²

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1976, and *Bapuki Chhayamen*, p. 389

53. LETTER TO PRABHAKAR

SODEPUR,

May 12, 1947

CHI. PRABHAKAR,

I finished my post. After that I read some more letters from another file in which I found your letter. You have done the right thing about Chakrayya. I came to know about him from Lilavati.

I am happy to learn the good news about the hospital there. You are right when you say that where there is consciousness of dharma even thorns seem like flowers. There is some complaint from Sankaran; I am enclosing the letter. What is it about? I have written to him to talk to you and I say the same to you. We are but a few. If there were to be reservations amongst us where would we find straightforwardness? Look into it.

I hope you are in good health.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9036. Also C. W. 9160. Courtesy: Prabhakar

¹ What follows is translated from *Bapuki Chhayamen*.

² Kosambi had expressed a desire to be buried after death, if being the least expensive disposal of the body.

54. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

SODEPUR,
May 12, 1947

The thought that is uppermost in my mind today is how to combat the goonda rule that seems to be fast enveloping us. This I say of all India, perhaps it is true more or less of the whole world.

Let the Hindus not deceive themselves with the belief that it is well with the Hindus. As a devout Hindu that I claim to be, I wish to affirm that we Hindus will be living in a fool's paradise if we harboured any such thought. Goondaism is no preparation for taking the place of foreign rule. The thoughtless interference at prayer meetings is not a small symptom of the disease I am describing.

Intolerance is a form of goondaism. It is no less disgraceful than the savagery which we see announced in the daily Press. Let all political workers, be they Hindus, Muslims or any other, ponder well over what is happening before their eyes. Let it not be said by the future generation that we were trying to learn how to lose the liberty before it was even gained. I would ask all the schoolmasters of India, now that they are no longer under the observation of the foreign masters, to recognize their true function even at the risk of their lives and give the right bent to the minds of those whom it is their proud privilege to mould.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 13-5-1947

55. INTERVIEW TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY²

May 12, 1947

These people say only one thing, namely, they consider the Hindus and the Muslims as equals. They say their Government makes no distinctions of any kind. But I told them in plain words: "Jinnah Saheb does not do what he says. Being the President of a big organization like the Muslim League he could eliminate rowdyism if he wished. I represent no one. I possess no power. Of course, there is one thing and it is that the Hindus regard me as their servant and they

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

² The first paragraph, translated here from the Gujarati in *Biharni Komi Agman*, is a gist of the interview as reported by Gandhiji to Manu Gandhi. Finance Minister Mahomed Ali, Abul Hashem and Abdul Hakim were also present.

trust me. That was how the Hindus in Bihar were pacified. And how much are those people expiating even now ! In the same way, Jinnah Saheb and all of you can do what you wish. And I should make it plain that I do charge you with having adopted now the policy of encouraging rowdyism. Through you I wish to send a message to Jinnah Saheb conveying the agony of my heart, because I am his faithful friend. The triumph of Islam lies in doing what you preach. In that lies the good of all. But right now it seems that I shall see such days only when God wills so. I am sure that if the Ministers follow my words, Jinnah Saheb too would have to adhere to his words. But that is not the case today. In view of the false propaganda by Jinnah Saheb, I am wondering where the ship of our country would drift. In the course of our non-co-operation movement against the British rule we courted imprisonment, faced lathi blows and innumerable young men even faced bullets. But it seems to me that compared to the present ordeal that was easy. I started working for Hindu-Muslim unity from my childhood days. In order to earn my livelihood I went to South Africa as an adviser to a Muslim¹. He looked after my children and my family. I went to the unknown land of South Africa only with an orthodox Muslim family. How could I then be an enemy of the Muslims? Jinnah Saheb thinks I am his worst enemy. But how can my conscience accept the charge? Let him at least give some evidence of my enmity. We can live in peace only if we assimilate in our life the principle that we are all God's creatures. I have bitter words to say to you and you may be displeased and angry with me on that account and you may even abuse me. But that is not going to affect me in any way, because I believe that, when my task is over, God will recall me. This world moves by the will of God. I have experienced this several times in my life. Hence I am not worried about it. That is why I am able to say this. If the Muslims believe that they can take things by force they will have nothing at all. But, by peaceful means, they may have the entire country for themselves. There was an unprecedented awakening during the Khilafat days. But today the Muslim League leaders have aroused such hatred among the Muslims that they think it sinful to talk with the Hindus. But I am telling not only the Hindus and the Muslims but also the British and all human beings that we are

¹ Abdullah Sheth of Dada Abdulla & Co.

all born equal . God has granted in equal measure to everyone the right to live. Hence we should not be enemies. And let me also warn you to be on the alert even if the British are instigating you. If they think that they can firmly establish their rule by driving a wedge between us, it is an absolute impossibility. And it would be sheer stupidity if anyone thinks that such a thing could be done. I also asked these people, while Jinnah Saheb said that everything would settle down once Pakistan was granted, what was the situation wherever the Muslim League was in power? See what is happening in this city right before our eyes. Nobody knows what real Pakistan means. I am a student of the Koran. I have come in contact with many learned Muslims. None of them has said that Islam ordains punishing the innocent, raping of women, slaughtering and ruining and rendering homeless happy families, breaking into their houses at night, plundering their property and shedding blood.”

Gandhiji reiterated to them that the only way in which they could prevent the partition of Bengal was by getting Jinnah to implement the joint peace appeal to which he was a signatory. For this the Bengal Ministry and Shaheed Suhrawardy, its head, would have to act in the manner he had suggested¹ on the previous day.²

Suhrawardy Saheb confessed that the chief obstacle was that no Hindu would listen to him today; he found it hard to prove the utter sincerity of his proposal.

Gandhiji said, he would act as Suhrawardy’s secretary, live under the same roof with him and see to it that the Hindus at least gave him a patient hearing. Was he prepared to accept the offer?

Suhrawardy Saheb said nothing and bade him good by.³

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 341-3, *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, pp. 182-3, and *My Days with Gandhi*, p. 232

¹ *Vide* “Interview to H. S. Suhrawardy”, 11-5-1947

² This paragraph is from *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*. What follows is from *My Days with Gandhi*.

³ As N. K. Bose took Suhrawardy to his car, the latter muttered almost to himself, “What a mad offer ! I have to think ten times before I can fathom its implications.” When Bose reported the matter to Gandhiji, he immediately took up his pen and on two slips of paper wrote down a letter to H. S. Suhrawardy. *Vide* the following item.

56. LETTER TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY

[May 12/13, 1947]¹

I recognize the seriousness of the position in Bengal in the matter of the partition. If you are absolutely sincere in your professions and would disabuse me of all the suspicion against you and if you would retain Bengal for the Bengalis—Hindus or Mussalmans—intact by non-violent means I am quite willing to act as your honorary private secretary and live under your roof till Hindus and Muslims begin to live as [the] brothers that they are.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 10562. Also *My Days with Gandhi*, pp. 232-3.

57. LETTER TO KANTI GANDHI

SODEPUR,

May 13, 1947

CHI. KANTI,

I have your letter. I hope you received my reply to your previous letter. Quite a few days have passed since I sent it.

I like the views you have expressed about the Charkha Sangh in your present letter. I am sending it to Krishnadas² for information. He may accept from it whatever appeals to him.

I have no time to go into details and correct the errors of fact in your statements. Nor is that necessary. You will learn from experience.

You probably know that khadi work is being decentralized.

I have written about your studies in my previous letter.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 7384. Courtesy: Kanti Gandhi

¹ As the addressee could not be contacted on the phone till late at night, Gandhiji signed the letter the next morning, that is May 13, and had it personally delivered to the addressee.

² Son of Chhaganlal Gandhi

58. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

SOEPUR,
May 13, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

Charu¹ is leaving earlier as you are not well. As it is, his presence was not necessary [here]. He makes himself useful in many ways. But this is my home. My convenience is looked after well enough. The real centre is there². No one should go away from there. That is why Ajit did not come.³ Now have complete rest and get well. I have no time to write anything else.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9081

59. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

May 13, 1947

Look, I am now fresh after ten minutes of rest. So long as God grants me this capacity to take a short nap, everything is well. The day this capacity is reduced I must realize that my non-attachment has weakened and I am on my way down. I am telling you this, because you have promised to be with me till the last moment. Didn't Ba also, while on her way to the jail, instruct you that she should be draped in a sari made from the yarn spun by me? Similarly, whenever I tell you such things, you must remember to note them down because I wish to reach the stage of a perfect *sthitaprajna* and attain perfect non-attachment. The success of my attempt depends solely on how I meet death. One can say nothing till the moment of death comes, because though the body ages physically, the mind does not. Hence, if I were to declare right now that I have reached such a state, there would be no greater fool than I. On the contrary, I would be fit to be called a

¹ Charu Chandra Chaudhari

² Namely, at Noakhali

³ Ajit De, who had been looking after Gandhiji's personal requirements during his tour in Noakhali, was not permitted to accompany him when he left for Bihar in February.

presumptuous fellow. But, if it occurs to me to utter the name of Rama with my last breath, it should be taken as a proof of the success of my attempt. And as you are a witness to this *yajna* of mine, I do wish that you should be my witness in this and not go before me. Even though there have been differences between me and my old and intimate friends, I find myself more firm in my ideas and this gives me great satisfaction and contentment.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 346

60. ADVICE TO CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS

May 13, 1947

Independence is now as good as come. But it is only political independence. Let not anyone think that once the British quit India there will be more comfort and convenience and the constructive programme would become superfluous. But from the prevailing atmosphere it seems that for at least a decade after independence our condition would continue to deteriorate. This political freedom no doubt will remove the restraints over us and we shall be able to accomplish our cherished aims. Real hard work will have to be done only after independence. Unless poverty and unemployment are wiped out from India, I would not agree that we have attained freedom. Real wealth does not consist in jewellery and money, but in providing for proper food, clothes, education, and creating healthy conditions of living for every one of us. A country can be called prosperous and free only when its citizens can easily earn enough to meet their needs. But today the situation is so tragic that on the one hand there are people who roll in pomp and luxury and on the other there are people who do not have enough clothes to cover their bodies and who live on the brink of starvation. Today men are sitting idle having no work to do. A man should have full opportunity to develop himself. That will happen only when there is an awakening among the constructive workers. The country does need politicians. But now when it is necessary to work hard for the prosperity of the country we need devoted constructive workers. I am convinced that people who are wedded to machinery are going to be disillusioned. Everyone, if

only after being disillusioned, will have to ply the charkha. One has to be self-reliant in everything. If people do not start working of their own free will, time and circumstances will make them do so. But right now I find it suffocating to see the manner in which we are marching towards freedom. I find no light anywhere. Now that the British are contemplating transfer of power every community is keen on grabbing it. But, if we do not do our duty, we will be giving a chance for the people to say that slavery was better than this freedom. To the extent the constructive workers are bold and fearless, these qualities would be reflected in their actions and through their work spread in the atmosphere. If the nation breathes such a healthy air, it would definitely grow healthy. So, the time has come for every constructive worker to gird up his loins and plunge into action. Let him put this moment to good use and justify the life God has granted him.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 346-7

61. INTERVIEW TO SHYAMAPRASAD MOOKERJEE

SODEPUR,

Tuesday, May 13, 1947

Shyamaprasad¹ had heard that the scheme for united sovereign Bengal had received Gandhiji's blessings. So he had come to ascertain the truth of the report. Gandhiji replied that he had not yet made up his mind about it but was trying to find out what the proposal really meant. Then he asked Shyamaprasad for his own opinion on the scheme.

Shyamaprasad began by saying that although Mr. Suhrawardy was apparently its author, it was really being sponsored by the British commercial interests in Bengal. If Bengal were partitioned, it would create serious difficulties for the jute industry, for the mills would be in West Bengal and the raw materials in another State. Moreover, he said that the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, had personally asked him to give the proposal careful consideration. Gandhiji said:

So your objection is on account of its parentage ! No, I want you to criticize the scheme on its merits.

Then Shyamaprasad proceeded to say that although Mr. Suhrawardy was now sponsoring the cause of a united Bengal, yet, once division had taken place, what was there to prevent this Bengal from seeking voluntary alliance with Pakistan? He could

¹ President of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha

surely manipulate a decision of this kind by means of the majority of Muslim votes. Gandhiji said:

But has he not spoken of “mutual consent”, between Hindus and Muslims in the formation of a separate Bengal?

Shyamaprasad asked what difference that made so long as the majority of the Legislative Assembly were Muslims. Gandhiji replied:

But a decision by a simple numerical majority is not by “mutual consent”. I would interpret that term differently. It ought to mean that if a majority of Hindu members and a majority of Muslim members agree to form a separate sovereign State, then it comes into being by “mutual consent”, not otherwise. That majority may be 51 to 49 or may be fixed at any other figure by mutual discussion before the agreement is entered into. And if Suhrawardy has to win the majority of the Hindu members of the Assembly over to his side, don’t you see that the present communal situation in Bengal will immediately change for the better?

But supposing Suhrawardy does succeed in winning over many Hindu members and a separate state is formed, then, one day, that state may federate itself with Pakistan if the decision is by majority of votes.

No. Such a decision should also be by “mutual consent” as interpreted before separation from India.

Shyamaprasad then asked what would happen if the majority of Hindu members wanted to federate with India and the majority of Muslim members with Pakistan.

Then there would be a partition of Bengal. But that partition will be brought about by mutual agreement of the people of Bengal and not by the British. It is a partition by the British which has to be prevented at any cost.

But can you contemplate Bengal lying separated from the rest of India?

You ask me that question !

Finally, Gandhiji said to Shyamaprasad that we should take Mr. Suhrawardy’s new proposal at its face value, even if we may have no faith in him personally. Preservation of united Bengal in a united India should not be made the condition precedent in the present negotiation, that would defeat one’s purpose. Having placed faith in the *bona fides* of Mr. Suhrawardy’s proposal for a united Bengal, we should work out its logical implications. An admission that Bengali Hindus and Bengali Mussalmans were one would really be a severe blow against the two-nation theory of the League. If therefore Mr. Suhrawardy was prepared to accept the real meaning of the term “mutual consent”, it would mean either the end of the League or of Mr. Suhrawardy.

My Days with Gandhi, pp. 233-5

62. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,
May 13, 1947

At today's prayer meeting Gandhiji dealt with the questions that were put before him.

The first was: What could we do to save ourselves and our culture—whether Hindu or Muslim?

Gandhiji said that he thought that nobody else could protect their culture for them. They had to protect it themselves and could destroy it by their folly. Thus, if Bengal had one culture, as he believed it had, it was for the people of Bengal to protect it.

The second question was: When everything at the top goes wrong, can the goodness of the people at the bottom assert itself against its mischievous influence?

In answer, Gandhiji said that if the people at the top went wrong, it was certainly open to, and it was the duty of those at the bottom, to remove the wrong top even as he would remove an umbrella which appeared to be at the top but which was sustained by him.

Thus Pandit Nehru was at the top. But in reality he was sustained by them. If he went wrong, those at the bottom could remove him without trouble. Coming nearer home if they found Suhrawardy Saheb to be unworthy, they at the bottom could certainly remove him, not by physical force but by the way he [Gandhiji] had had the honour of putting before them. The argument that he was elected by the Muslim voters was beside the point.

It all boiled down to the fact that if the people at the bottom were ignorant, they would be exploited. Such was the case with the English. When the people realized their strength and the fact that the bottom sustained the top, it would be well with them. Therefore, he would say that if the top was wrong there was something radically wrong with the bottom. Let them, therefore, dispel their ignorant helplessness.

Before he dealt with the question, Gandhiji told some demonstrators that they need not be afraid of his doing anything that they did not like. He represented nobody but himself. He could only give advice which they were free to accept or reject. Therefore, if Bengal was divided or united, it would be their act.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

63. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR N. MORARJEE

SODEPUR,
May 14, 1947

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

I got your birthday wire. May you live long and render much service.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 4809. Courtesy: Shantikumar N. Morarjee

64. TALK WITH DR. B. C. ROY

KHADI PRATISHTHAN, SODEPUR,
May 14, 1947

GANDHIJI: When there is a fire raging all around, I have no desire to prolong my life by taking rest.¹

DR. ROY: It is not for yourself that you have to take rest. Is it not your duty to take rest so that you may render more service to people?

Yes, I shall certainly do so if people listen to me and if I could be of some help to them or to the authorities. But now I do not feel that I can be of any use to any one. Perhaps my mind is growing weak ! Still, instead of taking rest at such a critical juncture I would rather “do or die”. I wish to die in harness, with the name of Rama on my lips. My faith in this *yajna* is growing so strong that I feel God will grant me this wish. I am the lone adherent of my views today. But Gurudev’s *bhajan Ekla chalore* sustains me. That is why I do not feel lonely and God gives me the courage to put up a determined fight with many of my friends. This to me is a manifestation of God—His Divine help. God does not mani-fest Himself in human form, nor is He seen with adornments as depicted in pictures. If we can remain in a

¹ In view of Gandhiji’s extreme fatigue and exhaustion Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy had advised him to stop all interviews and take rest.

state of constant awareness and thus tread the path of righteousness, this itself is Divine Grace and a means to have a glimpse of Him.

She¹ will not have frequent bouts of fever if she had Ramanama firmly enshrined in her heart. Maybe, I too have not attained the ideal; otherwise this girl, who stays with me all the twenty-four hours and serves me with devotion, should not fall ill. After all I have made her my partner in this *yajna*. If Ramanama is firmly rooted in my heart, this girl should be free from her ailments.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 352-3

65. TALK WITH COLLEGE STUDENTS

May 14, 1947

Students are the true heirs of the country. The nation can be saved only if they turn out to be good citizens. But the education you have received so far is absolutely irrelevant now. The British had a selfish motive in introducing this system of education because they wanted to rule over you. They provided you a system of education that produced clerks. It was an administrative trick of the British to give us such education as would automatically bind us to their service, as clerks to bosses in an office. If I could have my way or if my words could reach the ears and hearts of all, I would say that the system of education should be fundamentally changed as soon as independence is achieved and we should impart training as envisaged in *Nayee Talim*, so that every student becomes self-reliant and does not have to face the problem of employment after leaving school. Under the present system of education students have to spend a lot on textbooks. But more than that, think of the expenses of college life. The moment the students start learning English they must have the latest types of jackets, trousers, shoes, socks, fountain-pens, watches, perfumed oils, etc. ! This has become a natural thing. But now that India is going to achieve freedom the State will be free to shape the people the way it chooses without any restrictions of any kind. I would suggest that the students learn the letters, language, arithmetic, history, geography and all other subjects through agriculture and body-labour. If we put in their hands hoe and spade, their expenditure on western dress

¹Manu Gandhi

would be automatically eliminated, for it would not be convenient to the students themselves to do the digging in such a dress. They would find it easier to do the job in plain shorts and shirts. Thus there would be an automatic transformation in the lives of the students. Similarly they would acquire the knowledge about what seeds are sown in what manner, where a particular crop can be raised in abundance, in which century and under whose rule as also why there used to be good crops of cotton, foodgrains, oilseeds, and in what quantity, etc. Through such subjects a student comes to acquire knowledge of every other discipline. I say this just by way of an illustration. But if education is planned according to the principles of *Nayee Talim*, I am confident that a twelve-year old boy or girl would acquire the capacity to be self-sufficient in matters of food and clothing. Today even twenty-five-year old students who have obtained their M. A. degrees after wasting thousands of rupees of their parents are despondent not knowing what to do after completing their studies. Even in terms of health such a student, though alive, seems starved. Whereas, a boy brought up in Nature's lap under the educational system of my conception would be healthy and since he would be surrounded by a spiritual atmosphere he would also maintain his mental health.

Moreover, students have been very much exploited by various political parties too. It seems to me to be a great blunder. This mistake ought to be corrected now. We must think afresh about the type of education that should be made available to the children of a free nation. The students too must start thinking independently. But that does not mean that they should resort to strikes and throw stones at their teachers to have their demands accepted. Rather, they must deal with the management in a persuasive manner.

As I said a little while ago, once we stop imparting the western type of education the fashions that have come with it would disappear of themselves. When the students, instead of considering their studies an irksome task, start looking upon it as their national duty and derive true pleasure out of it, I shall accept it as true education. Our ancestors have rightly described student-life as the life of an ascetic. But before expecting any such thing from the students I must say that it will be the primary duty of the government of independent India to create the necessary atmosphere. Just as it is the duty of the mother to provide milk to the child that is born, so that it develops and grows well, it is the duty of the government to look after the education of the students.

Gandhiji asked many questions of the two girls in the group. He asked them

where and what they were studying.

You had come for two minutes but I have given you ten minutes. It is a matter of pleasure for me to mix with students and talk with them whenever I meet them. Of course, I am not able to fully satisfy my desire in this matter as I am busy with many other activities. But tell me—will you give me just five rupees each for this autograph? Moreover, I have signed in Bengali. Should I not get a higher fee for it? ¹

I have made it a profession to serve *Daridranarayana*. Hence whatever other occupations I may take up my own profession will always be the focal point. But if you cannot pay me more, help me in my work of communal unity. Let there be no distinctions of caste or community among the students. And, if you cannot help the suffering poor at least sympathize with them by being good to them. If you do this honestly, I shall take it that you have paid me a good price.²

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 353-6

66. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

SODEPUR,

May 14, 1947

Gandhiji said that he was leaving for Patna and then proceeding to Delhi, and hoped to return to Calcutta after his work in Delhi was finished.

He had spent two hours in visiting the scenes of the recent disturbances in the company of the Chief Minister and could see that the destruction was small compared to the August disturbances³. He hoped this was the last of disturbances in Calcutta.

Gandhiji then replied to the two questions put to him. The first question was: Calcutta has virtually become divided into Hindu and Muslim zones. What can be done by the citizens so that normal life can once again be restored? Gandhiji replied:

The only way is for at least one party to be wholly truthful and non-violent. Then they will fear no one but God. Such men are the men of courage. All parties will make friends with them and even goondas will shed their goondaism before them. I know of no other

¹ There was a roar of laughter. The students said: "Bapuji ! You have adopted a Bania's technique !"

² One of the girls then donated her gold ring on behalf of the group.

³ Of 1946

better way. I have appealed to the Muslims who are in a majority to take the lead.

The second question was: Why do you ask the Hindus to study the Koran also? Is it not enough if they study their own religion? Replying, Gandhiji said:

It is the duty of everyone to study the scriptures of other religions besides his own. This enables people to keep their religion pure and rid it of blemishes. Moreover we have Christians, Muslims, Parsis and followers of other religions amongst us. It behoves the Hindus to study their religious books if they regard them as their brothers.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

67. TELEGRAM TO MRIDULA SARABHAI

[Before May 15, 1947]¹

MRIDULABEHN

CARE DR. SYED MAHMUD

BANKIPORE

(PATNA)

PANCHGANI BUNGALOW AVAILABLE ON TERMS. REACHING THURSDAY
PUNJAB MAIL.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 10578. Courtesy: D. C. Jha

68. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

PATNA,
May 15, 1947

CHI. MIRA,

Your two letters. I do not reach there before 25th so far as I can see. I do not know what you should do now. No more time.

Love.

BAPU

SHRIMIRABAI

P. O. RISHIKESH

DIST. DEHRADUN

From the original: C. W. 6526. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9921

¹ According to the donor this telegram was communicated on telephone during May-August, 1947. Gandhiji reached Patna on May 15, 1947 which was a Thursday.

69. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

PATNA,
May 15, 1947

CHI. SUSHILA,

Your letter is lying in front of me. I will not misunderstand you for not going [to Manilal].¹ If Vijayalakshmi desires your presence there, you should stay.

I met Krishnakumar. He stayed with me for three days. He did not like the condition of refraining from correspondence. I told him I would be able to decide only after seeing Sita again. He seems to be a nice person. I could not talk much with him. Sushila Pai was with me at that time. I asked her to have a frank talk [with him], which she did. If both of them willingly agree to wait for seven years, I would have no objection to their marriage. More when you come. I shall be here till the 24th, then Delhi. Arun has done well.

Tell Arun and Ila to write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5004

70. A LETTER

May 15, 1947

CHI. . . ,²

Your letter. I could not find the second edition of *Bhajanavali*.

Consult either Vinoba or Kaka regarding the best sayings of the Prophet. I am not in a position to concentrate on this task.

I am a little surprised and also sorry to hear about your marriage. There must be something wrong somewhere as what should be a natural thing seems to be extremely difficult. I am writing this to caution you, not to dissuade you. Do as Vinoba says.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 369-70

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Manilal Gandhi", "Letter to Manilal Gandhi", 29-4-1947

² The name is omitted in the source.

71. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

PATNA,
May 15, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I read your letter today in Patna. I had it yesterday at Sodepur.

Kashinath's statement is in bad taste. It could hardly be worth anything since he never had the courage to make a truthful statement. I do not know what we can do now. Maybe, something can be done if he has the courage to stick to a truthful statement and has enough evidence to prove that such is the case.

It is also painful that Kashinath's brother paid the money. If people continue to part with their money at the bidding of goondas or live in perpetual dread it will only encourage the goondas to indulge in their evil doings. Such people should go and live somewhere else.

I shall be here till the 24th. I have to reach Delhi on the 25th.

I hope you are all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9082

72. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

PATNA,
May 15, 1947

Gandhiji addressed the prayer gathering today in Bankipore Maidan at Patna after a fortnight. In the interval, he said, he had been to Delhi and Calcutta. He had not foreseen his visit to Calcutta. For, his vow of do or die was taken only for Noakhali and Bihar. But what he heard about Calcutta made him feel that he might be of some use there. And he could say that he had not been entirely unsuccessful. In Calcutta also he was serving Bihar. For the cause was the same. By going to Calcutta or elsewhere, where he might be called upon to go in future, though the possibility was very remote, he did not leave out Bihar or Noakhali. It only extended the field of the operation of his do or die mission. He felt that success at one place would be followed by success at other places. The future was, however, in God's hands.

During his absence Gandhiji had kept himself informed about the work going

on in Bihar. During the day he had received more information. Affairs in Bihar moved slowly. The Biharis were, however, not slow when they committed acts of madness. There was no reason why they should be slow in making amends. The rains were coming. They were working against time. The Ministry had concentrated the control of rehabilitation work in Ansari Saheb's hands for the sake of efficiency. General Shah Nawaz, who had gone on a short leave, would be presently in their midst. If sufficient capable women workers imbued with the spirit of loving service came forward to work among the Muslim women, he felt sure the work would go forward.

Gandhiji was sure that if Bihar succeeded in instilling confidence in the Muslims, her influence would be felt throughout India. Some Hindus wrote to Gandhiji to ask if he expected them to flatter and fawn on the Mussalmans. He, as a life-long fighter, with truth and ahimsa as his weapons, could not countenance that. What he counselled was the control of their baser instincts of anger and hatred. And if avoiding harshness and adopting perfect gentlemanliness was flattery, he would not hesitate to use that word.

Gandhiji then informed the congregation that he could not bear the strain of touring every place in the heat. He had to content himself with holding his prayer meeting at different places every day.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

73. FROM THE DIARY¹

May 15, 1947

Bengali after prayers. Had juice. Talked to Madalasa² about Manudi. I told her that Manudi was going to be with me as long as I lived. I have allowed her to join me on this condition. She can leave me but I will not leave her. I wish to develop the fine qualities that she possesses. I spoke about such other things.

* * *

Alighted at Gulzar Bagh. Had a walk after I came. Massage, bath. Talked with Mridula during the meal, with Dev before taking a nap. . . .³ Manu has a severe stomach-ache, she also had vomiting and is running temperature. I therefore called in the doctors who examined her. Manu's complaint was diagnosed as appendicitis. I had her removed to the hospital immediately. She will be operated upon at

¹ As Manu Gandhi was hospitalized she could not maintain her diary for five days. She later copied out extracts from Gandhiji's diary at his instance.

² Daughter of Jamnalal Bajaj, married to Shriman Narayan

³ Omission as in the source

night. I called back Madalasa and Santok¹. They came. Watched Manu's operation at the hospital. Mridula and Madu were keeping her company. But they were not allowed inside the operation theatre. I had put on a surgical mask and watched the whole operation. She was taken to the room upstairs at 10.30. I entrusted her to the doctor's care and returned at 11.10. I went to bed after 11.30. Dr. Col. Bhargava² performed the operation.

In place of Manudi, Madu is attending upon me. I continued to think of Manudi during the night.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 360 and 366

74. LETTER TO GLADYS OWEN

PATNA,
May 16, 1947

DEAR GLADYS,

I am glad that you went to Lahore and did what was possible. I am sending you a copy of my reply. I think it is wrong for friends to come to India to learn non-violence, whether from me or anybody else. Don't you?

I am plodding. The work is difficult but faith to be faith has to overcome mountains. We have to try to cultivate such faith.

Love.

BAPU

MISS GLADYS OWEN

NUR MANZIL

LAL BAGH

LUCKNOW

From a photostat: G. N. 6200

¹ Widow of Maganlal Gandhi

² Col. Dwarka Prasad Bhargava

75. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

PATNA,
May 16, 1947

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

My pride has been humbled. Last evening Manu was operated upon for appendicitis in a hospital. I was by her side. It is a little before six in the morning just now. A man came to inform me that Manu says she is all right.

I had suspected even in Delhi that it was appendicitis. I had hoped that treatment with mud-pack would help her to get well. But it did not help her sufficiently. I, therefore, called in the doctors yesterday. They advised an operation, and I therefore got her operated upon. Thus it is that God humbles man's pride. I do not know what new lessons He is still going to teach me. Whom can I advise now, 'Die but do not give up nature cure.' I will be satisfied if I can put that into practice in my own life.

You must not worry. Madalasa and Santok visited Manu at twelve. She is fine. I will go and see her in the evening.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

76. LETTER TO DINSHAW K. MEHTA¹

May 16, 1947

. . . There was a telegram yesterday saying that Jehangir² would be going to Japan for some time. I did not worry knowing that he was by your side. I never stop thinking about you. I was attracted by you and followed you and got myself involved in nature cure. But having got into it I see and am increasingly realizing that probably there is a great difference between our approaches. I do not think I can change my outlook now. Probably you cannot change yours either. And so, we must both decide about our course of action. There is no need for

¹ Omissions in this and the following two letters are as in the source.

² Jehangir Patel, who, along with Gandhiji and the addressee, was a trustee of the All India Nature Cure Trust at Uruli Kanchan.

you to rush to me. I am passing through a process of change, am trying to perfect myself. I have to be constantly on the move. I am striving to perfect my non-violence. I cannot divert my attention from it and take up other things. For me nature cure too comes under non-violence. As for you, your dharma, your *sadhana* consists for the present of two things. You must serve Maji, remain by her side and give thought to your own needs. This cannot be done by being with me, because Maji is not with me and I am not with her. About money too you have to think for yourself.

Now, the second thing is a matter of shame for me. Chi. Manu always follows my instructions, and so, I was wondering how far I could take her with me. Even while I was in Delhi I had suspected that she had appendicitis. But my knowledge being absolutely superficial, how could I trust myself? Even so I treated her with earth and water. I also laid down her diet. I used to ask her to have enemas. After constipation she started having motions. Then it was that her appendicitis was detected. Two naturopaths came my way. But the poor fellows had very little knowledge. I have still not come across a perfect naturopath. I was eager to put you in that category. But in trying to do so I realized that I myself was by nature a true naturopath, though an imperfect one. Then I came here and since I had to be here for ten days I found some spare time. Instead of one, four doctors arrived. They recommended an operation. Accepting defeat I allowed the operation. Today is the second day. I am dictating this in the morning. I have received information from the hospital that Manu is well. I did not at all like the idea of the operation. If I had expert knowledge I would never have allowed it. What would you have done in a similar situation? I am asking this question so that I can have some help in future. You can reply at your own convenience when you have the time. There is no hurry. According to my present information I have to be in Delhi on the 25th. God alone knows where I shall be tomorrow. I hope your mind is at peace. Maji must be all right. . . . and both the children must be fine.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 373-4

77. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 16, 1947

CHI . . . ,

Received your letter. It is good that Rameshwardas has sent his reply. I will be satisfied if your itching stops completely and you are able to take proper food. It is a matter for concern that Sankaran and you are not getting on well together. But what can be done about it? Win him over if you can ; but this too not at the cost of your health.

I had to swallow my pride and get Manu operated upon for appendicitis yesterday. I knew it had to be done, but I had it put off from Delhi to Calcutta. I got her examined by doctors as we had ten days here. My fear was right. They suggested an immediate operation. I agreed. Today there is a message from the hospital that she is doing well.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 370

78. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 16, 1947

CHI . . . ,

Your telegram. I am sending. . . I do not know where he is today . . . had mentioned your telegram. I agree with your view. Their love is pure but their temperaments differ a lot. If he writes to that effect the problem would be solved the sooner. I can issue a public statement only when both of them agree. I do hope that the matter would soon be settled.

Both of you must be doing well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 370

79. LETTER TO DHARMANANDA KOSAMBI

May 16, 1947

BHAI KOSAMBI,

I get regular reports about you. Balvantsinha has conveyed to me your message as well. I am very happy that you are staying in the Ashram.

I have no doubt that you will depart in peace.¹

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 372

80. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

PATNA,

May 16, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

Your letter, written in the early hours before prayers. It is a pleasure to read all that you write about Kosambi.² I am enclosing a letter for him.³ You may hand it over or read it out to him if he is still alive when this reaches you.

I have no doubt whatsoever that his stay in the Ashram has sanctified it.

Sankaran's letter is enclosed. It would be good if something could be done.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1977

81. A LETTER⁴

May 16, 1947

CHI. . . . ,

. . . . writes to say that you and . . . do not get along well. In your capacity as a physician you have to win the heart of the patient; the patient has not to win the physician's. When the patient wins the heart

¹ The addressee passed away on June 1.

² The addressee had written at length about the mental and spiritual tranquillity of Kosambi.

³ *Vide* the preceding item.

⁴ Omissions in the letter are as in the source.

of the physician, the physician becomes the patient and *vice versa*. That is how it should be with you. If the patient needs the services of the physician, but is not able to accept the treatment in full, the physician should try to adjust himself to the patient and serve him to the best of his capacity. He must handle him with great patience. If you have caught the meaning of my words, act accordingly.

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 371

82. LETTER TO A PHYSICIAN

May 16, 1947

I had read your letter as soon I received it. But I saw the accompanying article only today. I was happy to read it. It is not enough to say that you have cured all your patients through yoga exercises. You ought to have indicated the particular exercises and mentioned whether diet, etc., played an important part.

In all books whether worthwhile or no, details are mentioned. You should do the same.

I thought of you when out of sheer despair I had to seek the help of doctors for my own little girl. I told myself how nice it would have been if I could have cured this girl with the help of yoga exercises, etc. She had appendicitis and inflammation. She could not be cured with the earth-water-and-diet [treatment]. I consulted two naturopaths. They also could not help. A *hakim* even suggested treating her with *myrobalan* and wood-apple. This also did not help. Now she is lying in the hospital. I who believed in nature cure and yoga exercises had to confess defeat. I did not like it. But I could do nothing about it. If the girl took fruit she used to get seven or eight motions. She was kept on just a little buttermilk. I could stop neither her motions nor the inflammation of her appendix. Now, tell me, what should I have done in such a case?

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 372

83. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

GULZARBAGH,
May 16, 1947

Gandhiji referred to his visit to the refugee camp¹ nearby prior to the prayer meeting. He had not been able to see it as thoroughly as he would have liked to do. But what he saw and heard from the Superintendent made him really glad.

The camp was being run on the principle of self-help. Men worked and were paid their due. The children also worked, though they were paid more than what they would be otherwise entitled to. Such self-help bred self-respect.

They were innocent men and women, who had suffered at the hands of the Hindus who had gone temporarily insane. It was their duty, therefore, to make all the amends they could. They should go and visit the refugees in the camp, interest themselves in every detail of their lives, and seek to help them in every way they could. If they did that, Gandhiji said, it would be in part payment of the debt that they owed to the wronged refugees.

Similarly, they need not beg the refugees who had left the province through fear or due to false propaganda, to come back. They should win them back by the magnetic power of their love. If they could create such an atmosphere of affection and brotherliness most of the Muslims who had left the province would return. His work and that of the Government would be considerably lightened. And Bihar would truly become ‘vihar’ (a garden), as its name signified.

The Indian Nation, 18-5-1947

84. *FROM THE DIARY*

May 16, 1947

After prayers went through the Bengali literature that had arrived from Santiniketan. Quite early a message came that Manudi was all right. Once during the night while coming out of the anaesthesia she had called for me. But she soon woke up and sent word that she was well. Wrote letters to Khurshedbehn, Pyarelal. Went for a walk. Madu had come but I asked her to go and visit Manudi; so she left early. In Manudi’s absence everything is going topsy-turvy. It

¹ Industrial Home for refugees

shows how much of my work was taken up by the poor girl. She is crazy about serving me.

For these few days Madan Babu will attend to the massage and Dev will bathe me. Sailen read out the newspapers. 9.45 Sat down to my meal. 10.30 The Khaksars called. Then I slept for a little while. I woke up at 11. Took coconut water. While sleeping, in the absence of Manudi Madu massaged with ghee. After getting up wrote letters to Jaisukhlal, Satis, Rameshwari Nehru, Sushila Nayyar. Had mud-pack at 12 and went to sleep after dictating a letter to Chimanlal. Shriman, Santok went to see Nalanda. Got up at 1 o'clock. While spinning dictated letters to Bisen for Balvantsinha, Kosambi, Sankaran ; after the spinning, for Kalyanam, Savitri (Austria), Perry, Martin and Mira. Went to sleep when the eyes were heavy with sleep. Got up at 3.15. Dictated a letter to Vrijlal Nehru. Dictated a letter to Gladys Owen. Talked with Ansari and Mridula. Prabha arrived. Took jaggery. Omitted taking milk. 5.15 Jayaprakash arrived as I was setting out.

Jayaprakash too accompanied me. Sat by Manudi's side for twenty minutes. She is well. She has not yet passed urine. She has grown very weak. Prayers were held at Gulzarbagh. Manudi's absence was felt very much. Returned from there at 7.45. Talk with Anugraha Babu and Ansari. From tomorrow Prabha will come for the massage. Dictated something for *Harijan*. Went through the discourse written by Dev. At 8.30 p. m. a message arrived that Manudi had passed urine after an injection. She is being given penicillin every three hours. Ramanand Mishra's man had come. He talked about fasting. Advised to refrain from undertaking a fast. Afterwards took a walk. Mridula kept me company. Gave myself a sponge bath. Slept at 9.30.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 366-7

85. LETTER TO GOPALDAS A. DESAI¹

PATNA,
May 17, 1947

BHAI . . .

I have received your telegram. You had never ceased to be a Prince. I was quite sure that you were going to regain the title which had been snatched away from you. This has appeared in the

¹ Ruler of Dhasa principality in Saurashtra, who had been deprived of his title and estate in July 1922. These were restored to him on May 13, 1947.

newspapers. I was not at all surprised. Your telegram was received today. When it came to Calcutta I had already left. Now that you have got back your title I hope and expect you would be humbler, purer and more devoted to service. With the restoration of the title, your field of service has not narrowed ; rather it has widened. Your responsibility has increased. You should add glory to the title. We are all passing through critical times. It is not possible to predict today who amongst us would pass the test.

Blessings to you both from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 375-6

86. A LETTER¹

May 17, 1947

There is a letter from Chi. . . to Sushila. But actually it is meant for me. Read that letter if you have not already done so. Think over it and solve her difficulty. Or, write to me if necessary.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 376

87. A LETTER

May 17, 1947

CHI. . . ,

Your letter to Sushila has arrived today after having gone to all sorts of wrong places. You should not be impatient. What I have told you is the eternal truth. God always removes the troubles of true servants. That is why He is called the Remover of troubles. . . .I have written to. . . I suppose he will meet you. I shall be in Delhi on the 25th. But you will have more correct information for the newspapers.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 376

¹ Omissions in this and the following two letters are as in the source.

88. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 17, 1947

CHI. . . .

Received your letter. I think it is difficult to make any provision for destitutes from the Kasturba Fund. Even if something could be done, it is in the hands of Labanyalata¹. But if you feel particularly for any such person, write to me. I shall find some way out. Apart from the Fund we have, there is no programme for relief to destitutes.

As for Satis Babu I have decided that in view of his bad health he ought not to be exposed to risk. Didimony² must be doing well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 375

89. LETTER TO RAMANAND MISHRA

PATNA,
May 17, 1947

CHI. RAMANAND,³

I have had a talk with Bachchu Singh⁴. I shall do whatever I can. There is no need to hurry with the hunger-strike. Bachchu Singh will tell you the rest.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 8024

¹ Labanyalata Chanda, Agent in Bengal for the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust.

² Taralika

³ The source has "Ramnandan".

⁴ *Vide* "Letter to Gopaldas A. Desai", 17-5-1947

90. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU¹

PATNA,
May 17, 1947

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,²

Your note³. I must deny myself the pleasure of going to Mussoorie. I am quite fixed up here and can easily delay coming to Delhi till 31st May⁴ or even a day later.

Give my love to all at Mussoorie and take full rest whilst you can.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

91. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

PATNA,
May 17, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI PATEL,

I got your letter and Jawaharlal's. I don't feel like going to Mussoorie at all. You may stay in Mussoorie as long as you can. Whatever days I can get here will be spent usefully; if therefore, you agree, I shall reach Delhi on the 31st; or any time you wish. I should

¹ This and the following letter were sent to the addressees through a messenger who had brought their letters in the evening. *Vide* p. 488.

² The superscription and the subscription are in Hindi.

³ Dated May 16, which read: "You must be following the rapid developments taking place here. Mountbatten is going to London on Sunday next for two weeks. I understand you intend arriving here on the 25th. Vallabhbhai and I feel that it would be a very good thing if you would come to Mussoorie for a few days before coming to Delhi. This would suit us and it would also give you a few days of rest. . . . I was in any event thinking of going to Mussoorie for a few days. . . . Vallabhbhai is also going to Mussoorie."

⁴ The Congress Working Committee meeting scheduled for May 16 was postponed to May 31.

like you to take complete rest in Mussoorie. We shall discuss the problems in Delhi.

I read about Darbar in the newspapers. I was sure that it would happen. There was a telegram from him today and I have replied to him.¹

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 354

92. FROM THE DIARY²

PATNA,

May 17, 1947

After prayers talked with Madu³. Dictated letter to . . . Received a message on telephone that Manu is all right. Letter to Secretary, Bihar Catholic Association. Went for a walk; Shriman and Madu accompanied. Prabha gave the massage. Intimated that I was not going to have *khakhras* today. A telegram from Sushila⁴ came from Delhi offering to come to help Manudi. I sent wire that it was not necessary. No letter from Sushila for many days. Talked with Santok and Bala during the bath and the meal. Dr. Mahmud called. Afterwards had a nap. On getting up took coconut water and listened to the mail read by Dev. Sailen came. I told him that since the news about Manu had appeared in the papers they [the Press correspondents] were now free [to write]. I said this because on reading the news in the papers telegrams started coming in one after another. Especially since her sisters would be needlessly alarmed. Sailen read out the newspapers. 12.15 Went to the privy, Had a talk with Mridula. At 1 p.m., lay down with mud-packs. At 1.40 took off the mud-packs. Dev brought the mail. It took a lot of time. Went through Dinshaw's letter. Wrote to . . . because he had said categorically that Manu did not have appendicitis.

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Gopaldas A. Desai", 17-5-1947

² Omissions in the item are as in the source.

³ The source has "Manu", obviously a misprint.

⁴ Dr. Sushila Nayyar

Dictated to Bisen letters for Hemprabha Devi, Darbar Saheb, Jugatram and Annapurna. . . . Bachchu Singh, Ramnandan Mishra's representative, called. At 4 Mrityunjaya Prasad and Naleshwar Prasad had come. 4.15 Jayaprakash, Prabhavati and three others talked about the police strike.¹

The dentist came to see me. 5.30 Went to the hospital to see Manudi. Stayed there for 30 minutes. Manudi was overcome with emotion on seeing me. Went to Dinapur for prayers. Returned at 6.40². Talked with Anugraha Babu.

Messenger came with special letters from Jawaharlal and Sardar. . . . Wrote replies and handed them over. 8.45 Went for a walk. Mridula was with me. Retired to bed at 10.15.

Today neither the prayer nor the discourse was satisfactory. The crowd was very large. In the absence of any arrangement there was no peace³. Therefore we returned after finishing only the prayers. Prayers were at Dinapur.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 374-5

93. LETTER TO LADY MOUNTBATTEN

NEW DELHI,
May 18, 1947

DEAR SISTER,

So you are celebrating [the]⁴ silver jubilee of your wedding amid a shower of congratulations and good wishes. Let me add mine to them. I hope that your joint career here will blossom into citizenship of the world.

I hope your daughter is fully restored.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

LADY MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA

From a photostat: G. N. 10831

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 27-3-1947

² The source has "5.40", evidently a slip.

³ A huge crowd of nearly a hundred thousand people had assembled but because of persistent noise Gandhiji told the gathering that he was leaving the prayer-ground without addressing them. He remarked: "It is clear you do not wish to hear me; you want me to hear you. As I have already done so I would beg your leave."

⁴ The source has "your".

94. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 18, 1947

CHI...¹

I got your two letters together. You have now taken to aeroplanes. I am not saying it by way of reproach.

How very odd that my letters should hurt you and my sweet words should seem like poison to you? Why does not such a situation seem pitiable to you? Don't you know that the word *mara* ² became Rama in the mouth of a devotee? Isn't there a similar story in Valmiki's work? I have forgotten the original Sanskrit. The proverb "a father's rebuke is nourishing like ghee" has come from that. If this does not apply to you, should I not consider myself at fault? What should I write now? Let things take their own course. I am not going to write anything to the newspapers. You relish whatever you find pleasant and start wilting when you are confronted with something unpleasant. Indeed, what a merit in a doctor !

A niece³ of Dr. Bhargava is working in the hospital here. She used to study in your college. She was junior to you by four years. She told Manu: "If. . .takes me on the Kasturba [Memorial] work I would work honorary." God alone knows how much truth there is in this.

May it not be that the apparent contradiction in my words is based on my experiences on the different occasions? Is it not possible that the same patient who may seem healthy to you today may appear unhealthy the next day?

I shall reach Delhi on the 25th. It would be nice if you could go to Simla in the meantime. Come down on the 25th.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 380-1

¹ The name is omitted in the source.

² Meaning 'dying'

³ Dr. Lajja Bhargava

95. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI ¹

PATNA,
May 18, 1947

CHI. . . .

I saw this letter among the papers I have taken up after prayers. You have asked me to send a telegram about the photographer. Your letter is dated April 25. Manu did tell me something about it. After coming here I have just taken up the pending papers. I am able to attend to your letter only today, and so, I am not sending you a telegram. I am not so enthusiastic about the photographer. But I do not wish to disappoint you, hence, I leave it to you.

People have built roads with their own labour and, if the Government does not pay them wages, I don't think there is anything wrong if as an exception we pay. For, they would have certainly expected payment in this case. But we cannot create a precedent like that.

It will do if you show this letter to . . . However, I will write a separate letter or dictate one.

Most probably I have written to you about. . . I have been a little worried about . . . after . . . 's letter. And I cannot say that I approved of . . . 's suggestion that . . . should stay only with you. But I have accepted the suggestion. I did not like it because it was contrary to what I had decided. Both of you had accepted it, too. But I consider . . . a mere child, and hence, if she cannot bear the life there, she should not be forced to live there. But you alone can decide about it. I can only say that you have my permission. And . . . ought to improve her health. How is she going to serve, if she does not improve her health?

I shall probably leave here on the 24th for Delhi. Manu has been operated upon for appendicitis. You must have known it already. She is still in the hospital. She is all right. It is terribly hot here. During these months it is bound to be hot everywhere in India except on the hills. I have so far not found the heat unbearable.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 378-9

¹ Omissions in the letter are as in the source. It is evident from the contents, however, that this was addressed to Kanu Gandhi; *vide* the following item.

96. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

PATNA,
May 18, 1947

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I think I have already replied to what Chi. Kanu writes but today I am writing¹ to him again. The letter is enclosed with this. It being in Gujarati you will not understand it. All that I have meant to convey is that those who have laboured for clearing the road, etc., should get their wages from one or the other source, either from the Government or from us. We have given our word and so somehow they must be paid. Think over it and do what is proper.

I got two copies of *Dinalipi*, one should be enough. It says that your health suffered because of your carelessness.

I hope you have my letters and given up your carelessness.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9282

97. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 18, 1947

BHAI SAHEB,

I am enclosing herewith the article from the *Janata* dealing with the complaints about the zamindars. After the abolition of the indigo planters' reign in Bihar,² any zamindar should be ashamed to have behaved in the way described in the *Janata*. I have talked to the writer. He tells me that there is no exaggeration in his article. Look into the matter and do what you consider proper.

[From Hindi]

Bihrani Komi Agman, p. 378

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² The Champaran Agrarian Bill was passed on March 4, 1918, by the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council. *Vide*

98. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

PATNA,
May 18, 1947

CHI. BRAJKRISHNA,

I have your letter full of anger. Why can't you see that Hindus and Muslims have lost their humanity? Never forget Bihar. There are other examples like this, but I do not want to go into any controversy. God will give us all good sense.

What you write about fasting is full of misunderstanding. Ask me, when we meet, if I have the time. Now I may not come on the 25th, but I must on the 31st. I shall, however, be prepared to leave on the 24th. If I get more time, so much the better. After all my presence does help one way or the other.

I hope you are all right.

You must have learnt about Manu's operation. She is all right.

Blessings form
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 2500

99. MESSAGE TO SOUTH AFRICA¹

May 18, 1947²

Field Marshal Smuts³ is a trustee for Western civilization. I still cling to the hope that he will not sustain it on the suppression of Asiatics and Africans. South Africa should present a blend of the three.

To the people of South Africa, to whom I am no stranger, I would say that they should not make the position of their representatives impossible by their unwarranted prejudice against colour. The future is surely not with the so-called white races if they keep themselves in purdah. The attitude of unreason will mean a third war which sane people should avoid. Political co-operation among all the

¹ This was sent through Dr. Y. M. Dadoo and Dr. G. M. Naicker, who met Gandhiji on May 18 and 19; *vide* also p. 495.

² *ibid*

³ Jan Christiaan Smuts (1870-1950); Prime Minister of South Africa, 1919 to 1924 and 1938 to 1948

exploited races in South Africa can only result in mutual goodwill, if it is wisely directed and based on truth and non-violence.

I have no doubt that those South African Indians who seek to create a division will do harm to themselves and to the great cause of liberty for which the movement of satyagraha has stood and must stand.

To the satyagrahis I would advise strict adherence to the fundamentals of satyagraha which literally means force of truth and this is for ever invincible. It is a good sign that they have a progressive European group solidly behind them. The satyagrahis of South Africa should know that they have India at their back in their struggle for preserving the self-respect of the Indians in South Africa.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

100. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING¹

PATNA,

May 18, 1947

It pained me that yesterday though men and women had assembled in large numbers my voice could not reach them all owing to the clumsiness, or inefficiency, of the volunteers, or because of some defect in the loud-speakers.² As a result people failed to maintain silence. It is a matter of shame for us. We ought to learn how to maintain perfect silence even when we gather in hundreds of thousands. If we fail to learn this, we shall not be able to protect our independence. Democracy requires everyone, man or woman, to realize his or her responsibility. This is what is meant by panchayat raj. A single limb of the body ceasing to function properly throws the whole body mechanism out of gear. Similarly, the whole of India is one body and we are its limbs. If we become lax, the whole country would be affected likewise. That is why I lay so much stress on the need for discipline at meetings, on trains or on railway platforms. It is on such occasions that we are tested. I go so far as to say that if we had learnt to keep order at gatherings of hundreds of thousands, riots like those in Bihar would not have occurred. Today, the smallest disturbance is given a communal colour, with the result that it provides an opportunity for a communal flare-up. Volunteers, therefore, should understand this and educate the people to keep order at

¹ As Gandhiji was observing silence, his written speech was read out.

² *Vide* "A Letter", 18-5-1947

meetings, etc. This will not be accomplished by merely attempting it when meetings are actually being held. Training in this respect must find its way into the very homes of the people. I would suggest that they tell the people that yesterday's meeting failed in its purpose because of the noise, and that in order to have me again in their midst they must learn to keep silence. I become apprehensive about our future when I see slackness around me in everything. Lethargic people can never accomplish anything, nor can they develop courage. We have to be vigilant if we desire to raise independent India to the highest position in the world.¹

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 1-6-1947

101. A LETTER²

PATNA,

May 18, 1947

CHI. . . ,

Got your letter today. I am writing the reply at night. You are unnecessarily perturbed. I have not neglected you. True, I have not pampered you. Do you know with how many people I had to argue on your account? And why should you know it too? Why do you feel upset because of . . . ? Was he not the one to discover . . . ? And he was the one who encouraged him. Instead of being grateful to him, why do you find fault with him? If you are clinging to the money . . . has left behind, why do you hope for something else? Give up your attachment to that money and everything will turn out well for you. You are miserable because you are not social. You are restless. You have gone far ahead. And now, you are your own obstruction. If I do not point out these things to you, who will?

It is good that you have started going your way. But you would go very far and shine forth if you gave up being too obstinate. Just now I am going around in the nearby areas. I shall go to Sevagram if God grants me another life. If not, I shall do or die somewhere here.

¹ According to the source, this and the following five prayer speeches are reproduced from *Bihar Samachar*.

² Omissions in the letter are as in the source.

Manu had been suffering from appendicitis. She had to be operated upon.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 380

102. FROM THE DIARY'

PATNA,
May 18, 1947

After prayers looked through the letters dictated yesterday and signed them. Bengali [lesson]. Dictated a letter to . . .about the zamindars.² Went for a walk. Madu kept me company. Madan Babu gave the massage, Dev, the bath. After bath completed the letter to . . .because it was not yet time for the meal. Listened to the letter from Brijkishan. Could not be completed. At 9 Drs. Dadoo and Naicker came. Talked to them while taking my meal. Reduced the quantity of food. Slept. Got up at 10.45 and drank coconut water. Wrote message for South Africa. 11.45 Sat down to spin. 1.10 Had mud-packs. Went through the whole of Ansari's scheme³. Dictated letter to Satis Babu. Read Brijkishan's papers. Dictated a reply. Had a talk with Mridula. 3.20 Dadoo and Naicker called again. Wrote the discourse. Prabha came. 4.15 Talked with Ansari and Mridula. 5 Went to the clinic for the dentures. From there went to Manudi. Prayer at Bankipur Maidan. Letter toWent for a walk. Santok and Mridu were with me.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 376-7

¹ Omissions in the item are as in the source.

² *Vide* "A Letter", 18-5-1947

³ On rehabilitation; *vide* "Note on Rehabilitation", "Note on Rehabilitation", 24-5-1947

103. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

PATNA,
May 19, 1947

CHI. AMRIT,

I have your long descriptive letter. It was received yesterday. It is interesting. We shall presently know what is to happen.

I am glad you are having a little change and perhaps some rest.

The weather here has been oppressive. It is cool just now as it has been raining. The [venue of] prayer meetings change [s] daily. Today we have to go a fair distance.

It was discovered that Manu had appendicitis. Much to my shame as a believer in nature cure, I had to yield to the advice of the doctors. This is the fourth day. She is doing well. No worry.

I reach D.V. Delhi on 25th inst.

Thanks to Mridula she is keeping the living-room as cool as she possibly can by using blocks of ice and *khas tattis*.

I have not yet been able to cope with *Harijan* writing. My time is occupied in overtaking arrears.

If Sushila is there, tell her I wrote to her two letters at New Delhi and give her the date of my reaching N. D.

Love to all in the house.

Blessings from
BAPU¹

From the original: C. W. 4193. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7829

104. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

PATNA,
May 19, 1947

CHI. . . .

I got your letter yesterday. Today is silence day and I am, therefore, able to reply immediately.

Why need you thank me for having sent you the shawl²? Does it mean that, when you send me something, I also should thank you?

¹ The subscription is in Hindi.

² For which the addressee had asked as a token of Gandhiji's love

That is no true love which expects formal courtesy from the person loved.

I did not understand your point regarding Karnataka¹ Write to me again about it. Did a large number of girls come under bad influence?

You seem to be doing good work in Maharashtra.²

If I do have to fast, I should certainly like you to be with me at the time. But should I fast merely for that reason? If a fast does come about, we shall think then what your and my dharma should be. We need not even think about the matter just now. It was with some hesitation that I gave even the hint you refer to. It would not have seemed right if I had not given it.

The news which Gadgil gave you is not correct. I cannot conceive of any circumstances in which I might have to fast against women. Banish from your mind all thoughts about a fast and go on with your work.

As a doctor, Dr. Gilder will only say that my point of view is clear. A man who becomes a *sthitaprajna* in the sense described in the verses which we recite every evening, from the second chapter of the *Gita* cannot but live for 125 years. The word *shatam* used in the *Ishopanishad*³ does not mean 99+1. It means 120, 125 or 130. I mentioned 125 on August [8]⁴, 1942, in Bombay,⁵ and have been mentioning the same figure since then. If, however, I cannot overcome my passion and anger, I cannot live to be 125. In the case I ought to give up such an aspiration. My desire, thus, is conditional.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: G. N. 10461. Also C. W. 6899. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

¹ At a meeting of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, the Karnataka Agent had mentioned certain lapses on the part of some women workers.

² As Agent of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust

³ Verse 2 which reads: "Doing verily works in this world one should wish to live a hundred years."

⁴ The source has "7".

⁵ Gandhiji, however, had mentioned "120". *Vide* "Speech at A. I. C. C. Meeting", 8-8-1942

105. LETTER TO DINSHAW K. MEHTA

PATNA,
May 19, 1947

CHI. DINSHAW,

Yesterday I got your letter of the 13th and I could read it only today.

I read again the note¹ I had drawn up earlier. I remembered the contents. I feel, however, that it would be better, considering the manner in which the arrangement is working, to let it remain independent. (Whatever may be the fate of the original Trust, I should like the Uruli work to go on.) Having regard also to the fact that the progress of the work depends entirely on Manibhai, it seems better to let it remain independent. We, who are the original Trustees, will remain on the new Trust also and ensure that our point of view prevails.

Jehangir had told me that there was some difference of opinion between him and you. That is bound to happen.

I won't mind if you make an independent trust for Purandar also. It may, in course of time, develop into a university. I don't cherish any such hope. Where do we have the men? There is no school for naturopathy, nor any college. Without them, how can we have a university? If you devote yourself to the work at Purandar, I don't think that will harm the Trust in any way. For, if you can take up work at one place, no matter which, pay all your attention to it and succeed in the task, I will think that you have served the Trust.

You may send me any papers or details you wish to regarding that project. I think any success you achieve in popularizing nature cure is bound to benefit the Trust.

How can you make any progress if you cannot write fast in Gujarati? How will you, in that case, be able to work in a village? I feel tempted to write in English out of pity for you, but that would not be true friendship.

I understand about Maji. I am reaching Delhi on the 25th.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 2728. Courtesy: Manibhai Desai

¹ *Vide* "Note on Gramsudhar Trust, Uruli-Kanchan", 13-4-1947

106. A LETTER¹

PATNA,
May 19, 1947

CHI. . . ,

I was under the impression that we had some money in the Bank at Calcutta. But I find that the amount was withdrawn and deposited there. So, make out a cheque for Rs. 36,000 in favour of Badshah Khan for the building² and send it to him.

You must be regaining your strength. Your itch must have gone. I shall leave here on the 24th for Delhi. I shall be there for at least seven days. I may have to stay even longer.

The above was dictated in the morning. I received the mail from there about two o'clock in the afternoon. There I found your letter. I am very happy that even in your sick-bed you are gaining useful knowledge. "A wise person should seek both wealth and knowledge as if he was never going to get old or to die."³ Even if I have quoted this maxim earlier, it deserves to be borne in mind. You would know its meaning. If not, ask He knows.

Blessings form
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 385-6

107. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 19, 1947

. . . Received your letter. I am sorry that you have taken so much pains in writing it.

I do not intend presenting my views in the manner you suggest. I am in no hurry. Nor do I have the time. I would not like them to remain as they are. But I do not think that the world or I will have lost anything thereby. I believe in rebirth. Whatever remains to be

¹ Omissions in this and the following three letters are as in the source.

² For a school in abdul Ghaffar Khan's village

³ अजरामरवत् प्राज्ञो विद्यामर्थं च चिन्तयेत्।

improved in this life will be improved in the next. I accept my dharma to do my best in this life. I consider it wrong to be slack in one's efforts under the excuse that there are going to be several births.

Your statement that you would¹ be able to put up with my conduct of which you do not approve, ought to be withdrawn. Would you not be shocked if I told a lie, or, if I committed a murder? Don't you see any error in your thinking?

The people you wish to suggest for giving a verdict on my views are not likely to undertake the task. I would never thrust that burden on them. How can one be sure that any code of conduct they lay down would not be wrong? It cannot be applied to you. And as for me, only my own code is applicable to me. So, we both remain where we were. Moreover, can we put before the world anything that is superficial? Fortunately, nothing like that is going to happen. They do present their views in their own way. True, they have not done it in this particular case; but so what?

I do not wish to close this discussion between us on my own. I see some point in . . . 's statement. But I shall gladly continue to write to you so long as you do. It would please me if I could give you some satisfaction by doing so. I do need you all—my co-workers.

Blessings form

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 383-4

108. A LETTER

PATNA,

May 19, 1947

. . . Your letter. What can I say about Greenfield²? Each man has his own reasons for writing. Some people abuse me while others shower praise. What can I say about it?

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 384

¹ The source has "would not" here.

² The source has "Greenwich", evidently a misprint. *Vide* "Letter to H. Greenfield", 6-5-1947

109. LETTER TO A MINISTER

PATNA,
May 19, 1947

. . . Got your letter today. The meeting must have been held yesterday. I hope it was a success. I know that we have taken an important step by changing the name¹. How wonderful if, by our work, we became worthy of our name!

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 385

110. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

BARH,
May 19, 1947

The day before yesterday I had gone to Dinapur. A big crowd had gathered there, as it has here, but in the absence of any proper arrangement there was too much noise and din. I don't know what went wrong but our purpose was defeated. In all that noise what could I speak and to whom could I address my words? When I speak I do so not to hear my own voice but in order that people can listen and I can explain to them their dharma. What is the point in addressing people if my voice fails to reach them? By God's grace we have today peace and order. I congratulate the volunteers as well as the organizers on their achievement. Now the role of our volunteers has changed. Formerly they were expected to teach people how to fill the jails not to create disturbances or use abusive language. While fighting with the Empire we had to have cool courage. With cool courage we were able to achieve a lot. Of course, we cannot claim that everyone had acquired that courage. Even then we used to get a kind of training. But now the Government is our own and we have to impart training of a different nature. Noise creates disorder which leads to disturbances. Even then there used to be riots, etc., but it was never like this. Today we are fighting with one another. If it continues, I have no doubt that we will lose the independence we are about to attain.

But this is not the subject I am going to talk about today. A full

¹ The name Congress Committee had been changed to Peace Committee.

report of the recent riots here should have reached me by this time. But it could not be. However, the people working here have confessed to me today that they had committed a grave error. India is undergoing incalculable sufferings as a result of the sins committed in Bihar and she might have to undergo more in future. If we want to get out of it we shall have to atone for it.

Atonement does not mean merely expressing it in words, it implies a change of heart. We should resolve not to err again. The bad people who have indulged in nasty acts and still continue to intimidate the Muslims, threatening them with physical violence, should confess their guilt and stop behaving like that.

The work of rehabilitation has been entrusted to Ansari Saheb. No doubt it is a difficult task. If the Muslims do not return, whose fault is it? When we do not deal with them in a friendly manner, do not plead with them to return, how can they come back?

They would surely return if we sincerely wished it and pleaded with them in a gentle and friendly way. If you want to atone for your sins you should confess them and bear the punishment awarded for them. This is the way of true atonement. Even if you wish to escape punishment you should confess your guilt. The court also awards a lighter punishment to a culprit if he confesses his crime and frankly admits it in the court. There is no other way but this to escape the consequences of your acts. At present people are running from place to place but how long can they evade punishment? Some day or other they are bound to be arrested. If the Government is afraid of them and does not arrest them it means it is in-efficient and corrupt. It ought not to act like that. If people justify their sins with the argument that by killing and punishing the Muslims of Bihar they had avenged the crimes committed in Noakhali, which were a sequence of the happenings in Calcutta, well, it is the law of the jungle; it is beastly behaviour. Have beasts ever attained freedom? If you have heard of it, please tell me—at least I haven't. People ask me what they should do when the Muslims indulge in such excesses; should they retaliate with two slaps in answer to one? Some persons even do it. But this is the way of the beasts. I tell you that this method of retaliation and violence would not help the world, certainly not India. You have witnessed what the world has come to by following it. Germany, Italy and Japan are all ruined. Those who commit violence and instigate riots are bound to perish. This is the way of cowards. I never preach

such cowardice—on the contrary I have always been teaching the lesson of true bravery. In [South] Africa the Indians were only a handful among the Negroes. The English could have suppressed them, and then how could we have lived there? In spite of that we courageously fought them. You have yourselves witnessed how here in Champaran too we put up a brave fight. Not a trace of the indigo-planters' reign of terror, which had lasted for hundreds of years, is to be found today. It is a different matter if some of our people have turned out to be like the indigo-planters. In Champaran we did not kill or persecute anyone; we abolished an evil system through satyagraha. The peasants told the indigo-planters that they would not work for them and they stuck to their decision. They proved no cowards. Today we have to develop the same bravery, but to a much greater extent.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 1-6-1947

111. FROM THE DIARY

May 19, 1947

I have decided to start my entire routine half an hour earlier from today. Accordingly got up at 3.30. 3.50 Prayer. Bengali lesson. Silence day. Set right the bowels. Wrote a letter to. . . Immediately posted it. 5.15 Went for a walk. Santok was with me. After washing my feet talked with Dadoo and Naicker who are leaving. At 6 o'clock went for the massage. At 8 finished my bath. 8.45 Listened to letter from Kishorelal while taking my meal. 9.20 Lay down. Wrote a letter to. . . There is a letter from Jawaharlal in the mail. Spun. While spinning listened to Sailen reading the newspapers. 11.10 Finished spinning. Went to the privy. 12.30 took off mud-packs Drank coconut [water] and wrote letters. . . . 2.15 Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya. Attended to the correspondence. Letters to. . . 3.30 Wrote letters to Rajkumari, Satya Narayan Sinha, Maharaja of Cooch Behar. 4.50 Left for the station. Viceroy's letter² acknowledging receipt of mine came through the Government of Bihar. Prayer at Barh, a village. The train came at 9.30 instead of at 8.30. From there to Manudi at 10. She was asleep. But soon woke up when I passed my

¹ Omissions in this and the following four items are as in the source.

² Dated May 11; *Vide* footnote 2, "Letter to Lord Mountbatten", 8-5-1947

hand over her head. She was very glad to see me. 10.35 Returned from the hospital. 10.50 Prepared to go to bed. Wire from Jawaharlal. Again a wire from Gopaldas. It was very late; so went to bed without eating anything.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 381

112. A LETTER

PATNA,

May 20, 1947

. . . Your letter. How can one have lasting peace? Is not this lesson meant for all of us?

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 386

113. A LETTER

PATNA,

May 20, 1947

CHI. . . .

Your letter. As for Kosambi, see the letter I have written to. . . I understand what you say about the hospital. Even so, it is your duty to discuss the matter with. . . You should not leave the Ashram while Kosambi is still there. You say that nature cure has its own limits. That is, amputating the fractured leg of a person and fixing an artificial one is beyond nature cure. Does the same thing apply to appendicitis? It is another matter if a person with a fractured leg manages without a leg and bears the pain. Should the person ailing from appendicitis go to the extent of facing death?

If there is chaos amongst the naturopaths it means that there are no two naturopaths in India who are agreed in their opinion. Each clings to his pride. They never even think of expanding their knowledge. Such a situation is chaos. You may interpret chaos as disorder. Am I clear now?

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 387-8

114. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 20, 1947

CHI. . . .

Your letter. I like it. . . If they can spare you from the Ashram responsibilities you may go to see your mother. And go also to Kaka Saheb. . . .

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 387

115. LETTER TO A VILLAGE WORKER¹

PATNA,
May 20, 1947

CHI. . . .

I have your letter after a long time. I was delighted to read it. I consider it a blessed moment that you would be completing twelve years in the same place. And so now you have done well in not turning away the fortune that came your way. Why should it add to your worry if the money came unsought? That money has not come to. . . (the worker himself) but to his work. If it was God's work, the money has come to God. You should utilize it as His servant. It should be used only for those boys and girls from Boriavi who are untouchables or considered near-untouchables. It does not matter if that money is spent slowly or is used up quickly but properly. I am devoted to Nayee Talim and I can therefore only think that all training should be along the lines of Nayee Talim.

. . . and Bhai . . . are with you. It is your duty to act as they direct. Then alone will you be able to preserve your detachment.

I appreciate your desire to meet me; but that desire would be fulfilled by controlling it. We shall certainly meet when we happen to. I can go to Sevagram again only in my next birth. By next birth I mean when I shall be free from this field of work after the problems here, at Noakhali and Calcutta are solved or I die in the process. This is my meaning of renunciation of my field of activity. It does not hurt me. I rather like it because I regard it as my dharma.

¹ Of Kaira district

Since I have put my signature along with Jinnah Saheb, my field of work might expand. I cannot then say 'No'. I think this sums up everything.

Your good health is a matter of great credit for you. I am going to Delhi on the 24th. I shall be there for a week at least.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 388-9

116. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

HILSA,

May 20, 1947

On my way I have heard all about Hilsa. Here the Hindu brethren have played havoc. It is a matter of regret and shame for us, not of joy. The greatest sinner becomes the greatest saint provided he makes genuine atonement for his sins. Hinduism, Islam and Christianity are full of such instances where great sinners turned great saints through sincere atonement and pious deeds. What is the remedy for the happenings in Bihar? I am wondering how best to act or speak to you so that it might change your hearts. Committing a wrong is as bad as being in hell. But then no one remains at peace in hell. One would like to run away from there as soon as possible. In fact, committing an evil act is even worse than being in hell. If this is the reaction on the body, what about the spirit? It would prove beneficial for the Hindus, for India and the world if we atoned for the evil deeds committed here. How can we atone for it? It has been suggested to me that I should stay and work among those who had resorted to violence and should go from house to house; it might perhaps change their hearts. But owing to the hot weather I am not able to follow this advice. No doubt the heat of agony and shame is more unbearable than that which affects the body, however severe it might be. But man cannot get over his love of life. He is afraid to work in this heat lest he should fall ill. It might be called lack of faith. But if my own faith is not firm enough what can I say to others? I quietly bear with whatever is said about me. With whatever strength and gift of speech that God has granted me, I try to speak to you to the best of my ability.

I observe that the Muslim brethren who return to their villages

go back again because their houses which had been destroyed or burnt down are yet to be rebuilt. The rains are approaching. When shall we rebuild those houses and persuade the Muslims to return? No doubt that is the responsibility of the Government. But I suggest that all of you who belong to the village should take up this responsibility and rebuild the houses. Till the houses are rebuilt you should vacate your own houses for the Muslims or accommodate them in your own houses. Thus you should persuade the Muslims to return and atone for your sins. I hear there are amongst you men who are not touched by remorse. It is a matter of great shame. You have all assembled here in large numbers to listen to me and we are having a huge meeting here. I would urge those who are able to hear me to follow my advice. In following it you will not be put to any inconvenience. We do welcome relatives coming from the Fiji Islands or from South Africa and accommodate them in our homes, don't we? In the present case we are the offenders. Let us now welcome the Muslims as our friends whom we had turned into enemies. The people of Bihar are great workers. Those who have the strength should live with the Muslims as if they were their blood-relations. Let one be an uncle, another a brother and a third one a sister, and so on. Then enmity will become a thing of the past. If you act on my advice and cleanse your minds and hearts, welcome back those who have migrated and accommodate them in your midst, it will be a wonderful achievement.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 1-6-1947

117. FROM THE DIARY

May 20, 1947

Bengali after prayers. Talked to Bisen about . . . ¹ Dictated answer to a question received for *Harijan*. Went for a walk. Was accompanied by Madu. Massage, bath. While taking bath dictated something for *Harijan*. Lay down. Mahesh has come. Woke up at 10.20 and took coconut water. Sat up to write. Talked with Mridula. Went to the privy. Spun. While spinning Sainen read out the newspapers. 10.50 Went to sleep with mud-packs. Woke up at 11.30. Examined the matter for *Harijan*. Attended to correspondence. There are letters from Surendra, Anand Hingorani. Went through the mail and dictated replies. 3.10 A deputation of zamindars called. Received

¹ The name is omitted in the source.

the Khaksars. 4.10 Went to the hospital to see Manudi. From there went direct to the station. Prayer at Hilsa. Was accompanied by Shah Nawaz. To bed after 10.30.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p.386

118. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

PATNA,
May 20/21, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your letter of the 17th. I do not remember anyone having written to me about the disposal of Kosambi's body.¹

But today I have received Sankaran's letter which deals with this subject in detail. If Kosambi leaves the final decision in this regard to us, I would advise cremation as the best form of disposal. It is now being recognized as such throughout the world. Nor is it so very expensive; at any rate it should not be. Burial, if it is performed in accordance with scriptural injunctions, would involve a great deal of expenditure. As regards the other things, which he would like to be done after his death, let him rest assured that his wishes pertaining to Pali, etc., will be duly carried out². I have now to request him to forget about such matters and fix his mind on withdrawing himself into a state of inner concentration whether the body subsists a little longer or withers away soon. Tell him also that though Lanka might be the most suitable place for studying Pali, as far as the study of Buddhism is concerned I do not think that Lanka is the place for it. One does not get at the secret of Buddhism by getting to know its externals.

Govinda Reddi's³ letter has arrived. Study it and take whatever decision you want.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Signed on the morning of the 21st.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1978

¹ However, for Gandhiji's opinion on the subject; *vide* "Letter to Balvantsinha", 12-5-1947

² Dharmananda Kosambi had expressed a wish that after his death a couple of students should be sent to Shri Lanka every year to study Pali and on their return they should propagate Buddhism in India.

³ An inmate of the Sevagram Ashram

119. LETTER TO P K. ELAYADAM

PATNA,
May 21, 1947

DEAR ELAYADAM,

Your letter. I have not received the money mentioned by you. If you give me more particulars I shall make further inquiry. You cannot live with me during my present very uncertain life. You must shed all misgivings.

Blessings from
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 10563

120. LETTER TO ANAND AND GANGI HINGORANI

PATNA,
May 21, 1947

CHI. ANAND AND GANGI,

I was glad to see your handwriting. But why have Gangi and Mahadev¹ not written? I can understand in the case of Gangi. How can she write when she is being borne down by physical pain? I had my fear that her operation would be very painful because she had allowed her disease to grow. She will forget the pain if she gets well, and the bitter experience of pain will make her happier. Isn't this what we call life? So it is with mental agony. Evil is mental agony and nobility is mental happiness. There is a saying in English to the effect that a great sinner undergoes penance and becomes a holy saint.

I like your asking Mother to come over to Poona and keeping Mahadev with you. But then decide for yourself what your dharma dictates.

I got your letter yesterday. I am dictating this reply today after the early morning prayer. So far my body is equal to the work. The heat is severe but it does not affect me much. Sometimes there are showers which make the day cool.

Manu had to be operated upon for appendicitis. She is in the hospital. She is well. My pride in nature cure has been shaken. Let us

¹ Anand Hingorani's son by his first wife, Vidya

see where God leads me.

I am reaching Delhi on the 25th. I will have to stay there for at least one week. After that I may go either to Patna or Calcutta.

Blessings to you all from

BAPU

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

121. LETTER TO ARBAB SHER AKBAR KHAN¹

May 21, 1947

In view of the draft of the agreement² you have sent me, I hardly think it worthwhile our meeting. The agreement seeks, in my opinion, to displace the Government for a particular purpose. This, I think, no government can or should do. . . .³ My views being as strong as they are, the best way for you is to settle directly with the Government.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 328

122. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

BIKRAM,

May 21, 1947

First, let me congratulate you on the perfect silence you maintained throughout the prayer, in spite of the mammoth gathering here, and on the correct beating of time. Those who beat time should learn to do it well which would show that they were praying wholeheartedly. I will request the sisters to learn it well.

I hear there was no outbreak of lawlessness in this *thana*⁴. The Congressmen and others here came together and saw to it that there was no trouble. Usually once a riot starts it spreads like an epidemic and infects all. It is good that the people here curbed the riot before it could spread. Chand Saheb, Secretary of the District Congress Committee, told me that tension did prevail and people were afraid of

¹ President, Khaksar Negotiating Committee

² Between the Government of Bihar and Khaksars regarding rehabilitation of refugees in Bihar. *Vide* "Discussion with Khaksars-I", 7-3-1947, "Discussion with Khaksars-II", 7-3-1947 and "Letter to Arbab Sher Akbar Khan", 22-5-1947

³ Omission as in the source

⁴ Police circle

the possible trouble. As a result many Muslims fled. Some of them have since returned but not all.

I advise those who have returned to persuade all the others to return. There has been no damage to property. You should clean the houses which are lying vacant. On hearing the news that their properties are being looked after they will all come back. If this is done in all places, it would be very good.

I shall tell you now what I was going to say yesterday. The Congress has come to have a tradition of its own. For years—for more than sixty years—it has fought the British Government. As Tulsidas says, “The name of Rama has become greater than Rama Himself”; similarly the name of the Congress has become greater than the Congress. But what is the condition of the Congress now? Congressmen think that now it is their Government. Formerly there were not even a hundred or two hundred rupees in the Congress fund which would need any elaborate accounts to be maintained. With great difficulty a crore of rupees were collected for the Tilak Swaraj Fund. An equal amount could never be collected again for the Congress. Now in every province crores of rupees come to their coffers and the Congress leads thousands of people. But truly speaking one can only be a servant of the people, not their leader. It would be a misfortune if the spirit of service disappears and everyone thinks only of grabbing a share out of the crores of rupees. It would be no service to the nation if devoid of the spirit of service we concern ourselves only with serving our own ends or those of our relatives and friends by seeking the favours of the Chief Minister or by capturing the Congress office to further our own interest. Everywhere Congressmen are thus scrambling for power and favours. This is true not only of Bihar but of all provinces. If this continues, I am afraid, we shall not be able to hold the reins of the Congress firmly, nor will those who are in the Government be able to run it efficiently. A government seems to have only military power behind it, but it cannot run on the strength of that power alone. What is the real power of the Government? The real power is in your hands. Their power is only what you delegate to them. Therefore once you have your own government you become your own master. It is a different matter if you fail to recognize your own strength and remain in darkness. But if we realize that real power is now in the hands of India, i. e., in our own hands, we should use it judiciously. No doubt, there had been riots all over the country, not

only in Bihar. But if we do not hold firmly to the power that has come to the hands of the Congress, if we do not have harmonious relations among ourselves and refuse to fulfil our duties, I am afraid our whole purpose would be defeated. And I too shall not be able to do what I have come here for. It might be suggested that I should finish the work of establishing good relations among the Hindus and the Muslims, for which I have come here, and should not take up any other task; that first the Hindu-Muslim conflict should be settled and any other problem should be tackled only after that. But it is not like this, all these problems are inter-related. In tackling one problem others too have to be tackled.

A rot has set in the Congress. It means that Congressmen are no more honest. If those who are selfish capture the Congress it cannot function well. Now there are various groups in the Congress and all of them have the one thought of capturing the Congress. But in this way none of the groups will be able to hold the organization. The Congress would slip from their hold and pass into the hands of unscrupulous men. And they are white-[clad] goondas who appear respectable but are goondas at heart. How can our purpose be served, if the reins of the Congress pass into their hands? We will all perish if we ourselves disintegrate into groups such as the Forward Bloc, the Socialists, and so on. We all belong to the Congress. The Congress aims at serving the whole nation, not any particular party or group.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 1-6-1947

123. FROM THE DIARY

May 21, 1947

No *bhajan* could be sung at the prayer-meeting. Signed the letter that I had dictated. Letter to . . .¹ 5.10 Went for a walk, Madu accompanying. Had the letters from . . .² read to me while I had my meal. Talked with Shah Nawaz at 9 o' clock. Got news from Rawalpindi that the Hindus have surrendered. Went to sleep at 10.30. Took coconut water. Attempted to read Arunanshu's letter in Bengali. Letter from Bal has arrived. Span. Listened to [the reading of] newspapers. 12.10 Mud-pack. Talk with Doctor Saheb. Wrote letters.

¹ The names are omitted in the source.

² *Ibid*

Wrote out reply to the Khaksars. 2.15 Krishnavallabh Babu¹ called. 3.45 Gen. Stable and his A. D. C. called. Two policemen who were released on bail called at 4 o'clock. 4.15 Took some jaggery. Anugraha Babu (Home Minister) called. Sarju Prasad also called. 4.35 Went to the hospital to see Manu. From there proceeded to Vikram in a car. After the prayers returned at 8.40 Members of the Cabinet—Shri Babu, Krishnavallabh Sahai, Anugraha Babu, Binodanand Jha², Ansari—came. Did not take milk. Ate some grapes. Looked through the discourse written by Dev. Went to sleep at 10 o'clock.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 389

124. LETTER TO ARBAB SHER AKBAR KHAN³

May 22, 1947

I see that we do not see eye to eye on things. I have never accused the Bihar Government of “shameful and disgraceful conduct”. I would like you to send me the paper from which you have quoted me. I cannot suggest another draft agreement. There can be none. It is open to you to place any blame you like on me for things done or not done by the Bihar Government. I can see nothing wrong or offensive in the Government letter of which you have sent me a copy.⁴

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, pp. 328-9

¹ Minister for Revenue and Forest in Bihar

² The source, however, has “Vivekanand Jha”.

³ This was in reply to the addressee's letter which read: “We have read the agreement drafted by us . . . and I fail to see how the agreement ‘seeks to displace the Government for a particular purpose’. I assure you that there is no purpose (behind it) except quick, smooth and efficient work of rehabilitating the unfortunate lakhs who are now groaning under what you yourself called ‘shameful and disgraceful conduct of Bihar Ministry’. . . . If you don't say anything nothing will happen. . . . The blame for nothing having been done so far, I fear, rests on you. . . . I shall agree to the draft you propose. Please keep it ready when we meet you tomorrow.”

⁴ To this the addressee replied, “There is no question of ‘our not seeing eye to eye on things’. We. . . can accommodate ourselves in spite of difficulties. You have already expressed yourself on the matter of rehabilitation and you can mend matters if others cannot. . . . you may point out our shortcomings in the proposed draft.” For Gandhiji's draft, *vide* “Draft Proposals for Khaksars”, 23-5-1947

125. LETTER TO DR. M. D. D. GILDER

PATNA,
May 22, 1947

BHAI. GILDER,

Chi. Samyukta is my grand-daughter. She is Chi. Manu's sister and daughter of my nephew, Jaisukhlal Gandhi. She has been suffering for a long time. Her father, therefore, has wired to me to write a letter of introduction to you, requesting Dr. Jivraj Mehta and you to examine her and suggest some treatment for her.¹

I think you have once examined her. I do not know if Dr. Mehta is there. I am, therefore, writing to you. Please do your best. Chi. Samyukta's husband can afford to pay your fees. You may, therefore, charge whatever fees you wish. They want a letter of introduction only because they are not sure whether you will now be able to spare time from your public work. If I write a letter of introduction to you, they hope to be able to see you.

Hope you all are happy.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

126. LETTER TO SAMYUKTA H. SHAH

PATNA,
May 22, 1947

CHI. YUKTI,

I had a wire from Jaisukhlal. I have also discussed the matter with Manu. Your passing so much blood in the sputum has worried Jaisukhlal. He, therefore, has asked me to write letters of introduction to Dr. Gilder and Dr. Jivraj.

I am sending the original letter to Dr. Gilder himself. A copy of it is enclosed. You two should seek an appointment with Dr. Gilder and see him. Whether you will benefit or not God alone knows. It may be one's duty, however, to try to seek hope from whatever source one is likely to get it. There is only one unfailing remedy in

¹ *Vide* also the following item.

the world, and that is Ramanama, together with the observance of such rules as may be necessary to make oneself fit to use that remedy. But this is a remedy which all of us are not able to try. I could not have patience in Manu's case. Besides, how will my being patient help? I cannot kill the girl who has been entrusted to my charge. How can I judge the depth of her faith in Rama, how indeed? In my impatience, therefore, I consulted the doctors here and they advised an operation. She was operated upon on the very same day. She is in the hospital just now and is better. She will accompany me to Delhi on the 24th. We shall stay for a few days in Delhi—how many, God alone knows.

I got your wire. I did not send a wire in reply, since you must have received Manu's letter by now and I also hope that your husband will be patient.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

127. ADVICE TO NURSES¹

May 22, 1947

Your work is such that you serve others even while serving your own interests. It is only as a result of accumulated merit that one acquires such training leading to unselfish service. Therefore bring credit to this profession of serving others which God has blessed you with and give up the desire for money.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 398

128. A LETTER

PATNA,
May 22, 1947

Somebody had told me that you had been ill. Yesterday I suddenly remembered it. One falls ill owing to one's own fault. What

¹ The two nurses attending on Manu Gandhi had asked for Gandhiji's autograph, not knowing that he charged Rs. 5 for it. But Gandhiji remarked that he was giving it free for Manu's sake.

was your fault? Why did you commit it? Does not service suffer on account of illness? Where is...¹?

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Hindi]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 397

129. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

FATEHPUR,

May 22, 1947

It was my good fortune that last evening I could congratulate the people at the prayer meeting on maintaining proper silence and correctly beating time to *Ramdhun*. Today I am again fortunate to congratulate you here. I would also like to congratulate the volunteers because, while I was coming in the car, in spite of quite a few persons having gathered along the route, there was no noise or shouting. As a result I could carry on my work as I wanted. The purpose behind holding prayer meetings at different places every day is that all people can attend them and I can tell them what I want to say. To walk four five miles is nothing for the young, even for little boys and women it is nothing much. I would suggest that you define a circle with the venue of the prayer meeting as its centre. It would be nice if people living within a radius of five miles from the point come to attend the meeting. This would be a sort of training for setting up panchayat raj. It is a good idea.

If the work being done in Bihar continues to progress well, it would be a great thing for the whole country. I have been told that a peace committee has been formed here and it has both Hindus and Muslims on it. In Bihar the Muslims form only 13 or 14 per cent of the population. But we ought to cover them all through the committee. Then alone will a peace committee in the true sense be formed. The work of the peace committee is easy enough. It has to compensate for the damage caused by us and repair the houses which have been burnt. If it succeeds in doing this much, the rest would be easy to accomplish.

A sister has asked me how women could help in this work. The

¹ The name is omitted in the source.

sisters who are sitting here do not observe purdah. They can work in these areas. True purdah should be of the heart. What is the value of the outer veil? I go so far as to say that even the Koran Sharif does not mention outward purdah. How rapidly the times we are in are moving. Today we are here, tomorrow we will have moved far ahead. In such times what is the point in continuing the worthless custom of purdah? If the Hindu women here have sincere love for their Muslim counterparts, I would ask them to go to them and try to relieve their suffering. For this one need not be a B.A. or an M.A. It is enough to be true and sincere.

Today I heard from a sister about an incident at Masaurhi, where Maj. Gen. Shah Nawaz is doing [rehabilitation] work. At the milk distributing centre there a Muslim sisters did not allow her child to take milk as she thought it should not drink milk from the container used by Hindu children. I would only say that although this is not good we should not take offence at it. It is we Hindus who observe untouchability; Islam does not know it. It does not admit of untouchability in any form. It rather preaches the lesson of peaceful co-existence. We were the first to observe untouchability. Later on it spread to the Muslims and now it is being taught to the children as well. Those sisters who sincere and have realized that we have plundered and massacred the Muslims and ostracized them should go among the victims. They should visit the women of the neighbouring Muslim families. Our greatest dharma is to go and work at places where atrocities were committed. We should also go to places where no untoward incident happened and bring about unity of hearts between the Hindus and the Muslims. They have to make the Muslim women their true sisters and teach the lesson of true love to the children.

My grand-daughter who had been in the hospital recently related to me an incident that occurred there. The people at the hospital have come to believe that Congressmen have grown very arrogant. They now seem to think that everything belongs to them, even the hospital is their private property. To think like this is not wrong. But it is misinterpreted and misused that is certainly wrong. It is not as if donning a white cap or khadi alone entitles one to rule over others or makes one a saheb. My grand-daughter told me that since she had fever the gate-keeper at the hospital had orders not to allow anyone to visit her. But when a khadi-clad gentlemen came to visit her and was stopped he created trouble for the gate-keeper protesting that

he could not be stopped. He was an M.L.A., and no one could stop him. How arrogant we have grown! I would say, let alone an M.L.A., even if Dr. Mahmud had been there he should have been stopped. It is the doctors and the nurses who are the authorities of the hospital. Their word should prevail there. Even Shri Babu cannot interfere in such matters. In a way Congressmen have a right in all matters, but regarding the internal affairs of an institution the officer in charge there should be the sole authority. Without discrimination all patients should be accommodated in rooms which are vacant. Even for a minister no one should be asked to vacate his room. My granddaughter is sharp enough. She asked me if nothing could be done about this. I wish that the rights we have acquired should not be abused. It would be well if my message reached the educated too.

I would like to say one thing more. I hear black-marketing is rampant in Bihar. It is difficult to say whether it is more widespread or in the U.P., or in the States like Orissa, Gujarat and Maharashtra. Since I am now here, I take it that black-marketing flourishes on a large scale in Bihar. Rajendra Babu was saying the other day that there would be great scarcity of food-grains in July-August and we would be able to manage only if we got some from outside. I feel very unhappy when I hear this. India is not a country which should face scarcity of food-grains. We had always fed other Our granaries used to be full and everyone had his fill, such used to be the food position. And if it is no more so we can still bring about that state. People should be told that they must put in hard labour to produce and store more food-grains. It is essential to work hard. Hard work alone would keep them in good health. All this can be done in Bihar. I grant that there is scarcity of foodgrains and cloth in the country. But the fact is that a thing not available in the open market is available in the black-market, though at a higher price. In other words, what cannot be obtained honestly in the open market can be had through dishonest means in the black-market. This is a complicated problem. It is a problem for the Ministry, the Congressmen and for everyone. But things would be all right if everyone resolved not to buy anything in the black-market. Matters would improve if the traders decided against black-marketing. But people succumb easily to corruption. Trades are to be carried on to serve the people, not only to fill the coffers of the traders. Money can be earned through honest means as well. What shall we do if we did not get foodgrains from outside? When we made a request to the Australians for wheat they asked for

linseed in return. They have a right to ask for it and we would also give it to them if we had it in surplus. But in case we do not have linseed in surplus, they should accept money instead. But such are the conditions nowadays that we have to accept the terms they lay down. If we do not, they become aggressive. If we hit them they hit back with double force. I would, therefore, say that if all the traders carried on their trades in an honest way; it would also facilitate their business. Bihar is the land of King Janaka and Lord Buddha. It would be a great misfortune if the people here turn dishonest and resort to corrupt practices. I earnestly appeal to the black-marketeers to run their trades honestly so that they may word off the difficult times looming large before us.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 1-6-1947

130. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

[May 22, 1947]¹

I know, if I had refused to get you operated upon and you had died as a result, your father would not have minded in the least. On the contrary, he would have welcomed it (as a sacrifice in a noble cause). But I had not the courage to let a girl entrusted to me die like that. . . . Call it attachment, weakness, or what you will, but there it is.

During the last eight days, since I sent you to the hospital, I have been constantly thinking where I stand, what God demands of me, where He will ultimately lead me. . . . Though I have no longer the desire to live for 125 years, as I have said again and again of late, my striving to meet death unafraid with Ramanama on my lips continues. I know my striving is incomplete; your operation is a proof. But if I should die of lingering illness, it would be your duty to proclaim to the whole world that I was not a man of God but an impostor and a fraud. If you fail in that duty I shall feel unhappy wherever I am. But if I die taking God's name with my last breath, it will be a sign that I was what I strove for and claimed to be.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 195

¹ According to *Biharni Komi Agman*. Gandhiji spoke while taking his grapes; *vide* the following item.

131. FROM THE DIARY

May 22, 1947

4.45 Manudi returned. The doctors also came. Had Chi. Manu's cot arranged in my own room facing my seat. Sat by Manudi's side for a while. . . .¹ Returned at 8.30. Sat by Manudi's side on her cot to eat my grapes.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, p. 395

132. DRAFT PROPOSALS FOR KHAKSARS²

May 23, 1947

Where houses are not already rebuilt and the refugees themselves choose to rebuild, the Government will grant not more than Rs. 1,000 against proof of actual and necessary expense to that extent. Special cases requiring greater expense will be considered on merit.

Rehabilitation grant not exceeding Rs. 500 per family of five members will be granted when required.

Artisans and agriculturists will get interest-free loans to be repayable in five years in five instalments for the purchase of seeds or implements such as looms, etc.

Free education will be provided for children and work will be given to those who may need it. Rations against work during the recuperation period will also be provided.

Provision for orphanages and widows' homes will also be made.

From a photostat: G. N. 5121. Also *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 329

¹ Omission as in the source

² *Vide* footnote 3, "Letter to Arbab Sher Akbar Khan", 22-5-1947

133. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

MANER,

May 23, 1947

About eight hundred years ago Saint Makhdum Maneri lived in Maner. Though communal tension did prevail here, with the efforts of the Congressmen Maner was spared the devastation that follows a riot. As I had said¹ [the day before] yesterday, since most of our social problems are inter-related I cannot help mentioning other problems along with my present task of rehabilitating the people who had fled to other places. Take for instance the question of the zamindars. You all know that the century-old reign of the white indigo-planters was brought to an end by the will and concerted action of all the people and their leaders, prominent among whom were the late Brijkishore Babu and Rajendra Babu. But I have been told that the tyranny of the white rulers is being continued even today by the Indian zamindars. They exploit their ryots economically, terrorize them through their officials and escape due punishment through collusion with the authorities. If it is true, the zamindars are digging their own graves. They can survive only if they become trustees of their ryots.

But as a devotee of truth and justice I must discuss the other side of the problem as presented to me by the zamindars. Because of my friendship with all, the zamindars also regard me as a friend, although they know my identification with the masses. They tell me that with the Congress coming into power and drawing its sanction from the masses the ryots feel that they can commit all sorts of excesses, dispossess the zamindars of their entire property, destroy their crops and terrorize them by other acts of violence. Similarly, under the influence of false propaganda, labourers in the mills think that they can become the masters of the mills by damaging them.

As one of the masses I can only say to the peasants and labourers that they are only harming their own cause by following this senseless policy. They constitute the real masses and they should realize their own strength. In a mad fury, the millions can easily destroy the handful of zamindars but ultimately their madness would bring about their own ruin.

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 21-5-1947

I have heard destructive criticism of the Government by the people who can neither wield the power that has come to the nation nor let others who deserve wield it. The ministers on the other hand should be true servants of the people from whom they derive their power. They should not show any partiality while allocating jobs to the candidates, should be free from the evil of bribery and mete out equal justice to all.

If all the three—the zamindars, the ryots and the Government in Bihar—do their duty, Bihar would set a noble example for the whole nation.

[From Hindi]

Harijan Sevak, 1-6-1947

134. NOTE ON REHABILITATION¹

[Before May 24, 1947]²

If I were Minister in charge of rehabilitation work, the first thing I would do would be to have my duty clearly defined. The Ministers would have to put me in charge of the magistracy and the police, in so far as I need them, to enable me to clothe the refugees with full protection against loot, arson and murder and give me control over the movement and prices of foodstuffs, clothing and building material for the refugees. Having thus secured my position, I would proceed immediately to find out the number of those who have returned, where they are and how they are faring. I would do this personally and deal with their complaints there and then.

As to those who have not yet returned, I would issue notices in the Press and distribute leaflets in the language of the province, stating precisely the terms under which they may return. I would not worry about those that do not return. . . .³ The Government's duty . . .⁴ commences only when they return. I would promptly deal with the communications from or on behalf of those who wish to return and even get private persons to help the needy to return. The lands and buildings of the absentees, I would hold in trust for them but would

¹ Gandhiji discussed the scheme of rehabilitation formulated by Abdul Qayum Ansari for quick disposal of work and later put down his ideas in the form of a note for his guidance.

² The note was written before Gandhiji left Bihar on May 24, 1947.

³ Omissions are as in the source.

⁴ *ibid*

give notice that, after the lapse of the period stipulated in the notice to be issued, the buildings and the land would vest in the State for it to make such use as it deems fit for the benefit of the absentee's next of kin or failing them the Muslims of the province or a portion thereof.

I would invite the co-operation of the local League and give their recommendations every legitimate consideration.

I would not give doles to the refugees but expect them to do some work which they are capable of doing against rations or other aid given to them. I would make them feel in every way that they are fully worthy of all the aid the State can give them in this manner.

I would bring to trial without delay all those who are detained as suspects and arrest those who are still evading justice. No stone should be left unturned in order to trace culprits and bring them to justice.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Bk. II, p. 338

135. LETTER TO ARBAB SHER AKBAR KHAN

PATNA,
May 24, 1947

DEAR NAWAB SAHEB,

With reference to the draft proposals¹ a copy of which was sent you last evening by Shrimati Mridulabehn and which I would be prepared to recommend for adoption by the Bihar Government, I hope your organization will be able to work under the Government and its instructions. Of course, the Ministry will be at liberty to vary the proposals from time to time as may be required by circumstances. I would advise you to see Ansari Saheb, the Minister in charge and settle details of work.²

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

NAWAB ARBAB SHER AKBAR KHAN
PRESIDENT, NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE
SHAMSUL ULEMA MOHIBUL HAQ
BANK ROAD, PATNA

From a copy : G. N. 5121

¹ *Vide* "Draft Proposals for

² But before the Khaksars could get in touch with Ansari they came in conflict with the police and many of them were arrested. The Government released them later when they offered to leave the province.

136. LETTER TO SARAT CHANDRA BOSE

PATNA,
May 24, 1947

MY DEAR SARAT,

I have your note.¹ There is nothing in the draft stipulating that nothing will be done by mere majority. Every act of Government must carry with it the co-operation of at least two thirds of the Hindu members in the executive and the legislature. There should be an admission that Bengal has a common culture and a common mother tongue—Bengali.

Make sure that Central Muslim League approves of the proposal notwithstanding reports to the contrary.² If your presence is necessary in Delhi I shall telephone or telegraph. I propose to discuss the draft with the Working Committee.³

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat : G. N. 10534

137. TALK WITH KHAKSARS

May 24, 1947

We may attain complete independence in the coming few days. However precious political independence may be, we should not rest quiet till something tangible is done in terms of national welfare. We must now have such a social system from which exploitation will be completely eliminated and in which all work will be carried out in a democratic manner. Whatever may be the desire of the British or any other nation, it is not possible now to delay our independence which is

¹ Enclosing a copy of the draft proposal for United Sovereign Bengal the addressee had sought Gandhiji's "help and guidance" in securing an agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League; *vide* also pp. 442-4 and 464-5.

² On May 20 the Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League adopted a resolution to the effect that it had nothing "to do with the proposal that had been published in newspapers for the settlement of a constitution for Bengal" and that it "stood firmly with the Muslim League demand for Pakistan."

³ The A. I. C. C. however passed a resolution on June 15, accepting the partition plan.

just round the corner. If we are not vigilant in the intervening period, our condition will be like that of a typhoid patient. We nurse the typhoid patient while he is running temperature. But he needs to be really looked after only after the fever has come down. If the patient does not have proper care after his fever has come down he suffers a relapse and faces the danger of death. Such is going to be the period immediately after independence. If we want to qualify ourselves for independence we shall have to learn to put up with some hardships. We shall have to be large-hearted. We should be as accommodating as the ocean. The waters of many rivers and a lot of dirt from the banks go into it; many creatures live in it and a number of steamers sail on it and still it is considered sacred and we believe that we can wash away our sins by bathing in it. Even so, if we can be generous and ignore the harsh words of some people and even assaults by them, regarding them as our brethren, we shall become as sacred as the ocean. We have won freedom through non-violence and truth. I am going around right now with the idea of creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and a feeling of equality. But I need your help in that work. Peace established with the help of the army and police is no peace at all, it conceals a smouldering fire of revolution. I have no doubt that if the police are away even for a little while this fire would burst into flames. Forced peace is no peace at all. The only way of removing fear is that every member of legislature and every minister should, along with his family, mix with the common people. The Hindu members should mix with the Muslim population and the Muslim members should mix with the Hindu population. Women should mix with other women and children should laugh, play and study with other children while the menfolk should, in the light of their own understanding, exchange views as to how best independent India can be served. If this is done, I have no doubt that the standard of our society would rise high. No minister will then think of himself as a ruler. No minister's wife would think of her husband as the boss of a particular department. And his children too would not think of themselves as minister's children. If even half a dozen ministers and their families in each State create such an atmosphere of mixing with the common people, I have no doubt that we would not be facing times like these. It is my personal knowledge that Shri Babu was more sociable before he became a

minister. Today, when he has become a minister, his position is the same as mine was when I was in the grand mansion of the Aga Khan Palace.¹ I am not singling out Shri Babu. What I say applies to every minister. When they became ministers, they at once started having police guards at their gates. Now that they have become ministers, they have to get their guards ready in advance. How can they go about without body-guards? They have got themselves entangled now. While before they became ministers, if they wanted to go anywhere in the middle of the night they could jump out of their beds and start off. Frankly speaking, I pity the ministers and, if I should speak my own language, their condition is worse than that of prisoners.

[From Gujarati]

Biharni Komi Agman, pp. 398-400

138. *QUESTION BOX*²

HOW TO COMBAT HIMSA

The leaders and followers of the League do not believe in attaining their object through non-violence. In such circumstances, how is it possible to melt their hearts or to convince them of the evil of violent action ?

Violence can be effectively met only by non-violence. This is an old established truth. The questioner does not really understand the working of non-violence. If he did, he would have known that the weapon of violence, even if it was the atom bomb, became useless when matched against true non-violence. That very few understand how to wield this mighty weapon is true. It requires a lot of understanding and strength of mind. It is unlike what is needed in military schools and colleges. What is required is purity of the mind. The difficulty one experiences in meeting *himsa* with *ahimsa* arises from weakness of the mind. Moreover, let us not forget that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah has, in his interview to the delegation from the Frontier Province, stated explicitly that it was not proper to resort to violence for attaining their rights, i.e., Pakistan.

¹ From August 9, 1942 to May 6, 1944

² The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak* of the same date.

Today many people are beginning to feel that a clash, possibly of a violent character, with the supporters of the League is inevitable. The nationalists feel that until the League agrees to the partition of Bengal and the Punjab, its demand for Pakistan is unjust. What means should they adopt to meet the situation?

If the answer to the first question is held valid, the second question does not arise. However, the question may be discussed for a clearer understanding. If the majority of the Muslims obey Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, a violent conflict should be out of the question, or if the majority of the Hindus take their stand on non-violence, no matter how much violence the Muslims use, it is bound to fail. One thing, however, should be perfectly understood. The votaries of non-violence cannot harbour violence even in thought, let alone doing it. If Pakistan is wrong, partition of Bengal and the Punjab will not make it right. Two wrongs will not make one right.

The majority of the Socialists claim that if there was a socialist revolution the economic question would come to the forefront throwing the communal conflict in the background. Do you agree? If such a revolution takes place, will it promote the establishment of the Kingdom of God which you call *Ramarajya*?

The socialist revolution you envisage is likely to make the Hindu-Muslim tension less acute. It is common knowledge that there are quite a few things at the root of our troubles. Even the end of the Hindu-Muslim conflict will not end all our troubles. It might be said that the Hindu-Muslim conflict has assumed a formidable form and the end of other petty conflicts would undoubtedly reduce the danger. What is happening is this. With the end of slavery and the dawn of freedom, all the weaknesses of society are bound to come to the surface. I see no reason to be unnecessarily upset about it. If we keep our balance at such a time, every tangle will be solved. As far as the economic question is concerned it has to be solved in any case. Today there is gross economic inequality. The basis of socialism is economic equality. There can be no *Ramarajya* in the present state of iniquitous inequalities in which a few roll in riches and the masses do not get even enough to eat. I accepted the theory of socialism even while I was in South Africa. My difference with the Socialists and others consists in advocating non-violence and truth as the most effective means for any reform.

You say that a raja, a zamindar or a capitalist should be a trustee for the poor. Do you think that any such exists today? Or do you expect them to be so transformed?

I think that some very few exist even today, though not in the full sense of the term. They are certainly moving in that direction. It can, however, be asked whether the present rajas and others can be expected to become trustees of the poor. I think it is worth while entertaining such a hope. If they do not become trustees of their own accord, force of circumstances will compel the reform unless they court utter destruction. When Panchayat Raj is established, public opinion will do what violence can never do. The present power of the zamindars, the capitalists and the rajas can hold sway only so long as the common people do not realize their own strength. If the people non-co-operate, what can a raja, a zamindar or a capitalist do? In a Panchayat Raj only the Panchayat will be obeyed and a Panchayat can work only through the law of its making. If the Panchayat follows non-violence in conducting its business, all the three would become trustees by law and if it resorts to violence it would mean the end of their power.

NEW DELHI, May 25, 1947

Harijan, 1-6-1947

139. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI,

May, 25, 1947

CHI. MIRA,

I have your precious letter just received, i.e., 5 o'clock. I am dictating this whilst spinning. The whole day has been spent in seeing people with a little break for rest. You need not wait to see the Vicereine. But you should proceed to Uttarkashi or Mussoorie as the case may be. Your solitude, the bracing air that you get in Mussoorie and Uttarkashi and consequent clear thinking are more precious to me than your seeing high personages or even coming to see me because I appear to be so near. That is only an appearance. I am near enough wherever you are and wherever I am physically. The rest of your letter it is unnecessary for me to touch. I approve all your programme. I am quite well, though in boiling heat. I must not think of Mussoori or any other similar climate. My work today lies in the affected parts. If God

wishes me to do His work, He would keep me well in spite of adverse climate.

Love.

BAPU

SHRIMATI MIRABEHN¹

P. O. RISHIKESH

DEHRA DUN DISTRICT

From the original : C. W. 6527. Courtesy : Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9922

140. LETTER TO JULIAN HUXLEY²

May 25, 1947

DEAR DR. JULIAN HUXLEY,

As I am constantly on the move, I never get my post in time. But for your letter to Pandit Nehru in which you referred to your letter to me, I might have missed your letter. But I see that you have given your addressees ample time to enable them to give their replies. I am writing this in a moving train. It will be posted tomorrow when I reach Delhi.

I am afraid I can't give you anything approaching your minimum. That I have no time for the effort is true enough. But what is truer is that I am a poor reader of literature past or present, much as I should like to read some of its gems. Living a stormy life since my early youth, I had no leisure to do the necessary reading.

I learnt from my illiterate but wise mother that all rights to be deserved and preserved came from duty well done. Thus the very right to live accrues to us only when we do the duty of citizenship of the world. From this one fundamental statement, perhaps it is easy enough to define the duties of man and woman and correlate every right to some corresponding duty to be first performed. Every other right can be shown to be usurpation hardly worth fighting for. I wonder if it is too late to revise the idea of defining the rights of man apart from his duty.

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

¹ The address is reproduced from *Bapu's Letters to Mira*.

² The portion in the last paragraph of this letter relating to rights and duties has been reproduced in "Walls of Protection", and "Letter to Julian Huxley", 17-10-1947

141. TALK WITH C. RAJAGOPALACHARI¹

May 25, 1947

I am not likely to be lured by your logic. After all I am a Bania, am I not?

However, I came here precisely because I was confident of carrying on from here my work for Noakhali and Bihar. And it is being done. I am not lucky enough to enjoy a change of climate. Before I proceed anywhere for a rest the Hindus and Muslims of Noakhali and Bihar must assure me that they no longer require my services. The Government also should help me in this. Then alone will I think of going somewhere for rest. In any case God will certainly grant me the final rest some day or the other. I see no place for myself in what is happening around us today. You know I have given up the hope of living for 125 years. I might last a year or two more. Of course, my health continues to be fairly good. And in spite of all the hard work God continues to grant me new strength. But I have no wish to live if India is to be submerged in a deluge of violence, as is now threatened.

Again, besides communal unity I had recommended to the nation only one thing, viz., handspun yarn with which alone we could bring swaraj nearer.

The spinning-wheel has almost been forgotten. There is all this talk of militarization and industrialization. But it is my conviction that a day will come when they will all see for themselves that for India there is no way other than that of village industries and non-violence. We shall not find a way out unless we develop these. But I am still optimistic.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 4-5

142. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI

May 25, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You know that we should maintain silence during the prayer. You gave me the taste of peace here and your example is followed by

¹ Minister in the Interim Government for Industries and Supplies

people everywhere. You will be glad to know that in Bengal this time even huge prayer meetings were peaceful. Usually when I am travelling crowds gather and people, out of affection, raise loud slogans. I do appreciate this affection but now my health cannot stand the din. I am grateful to you that in spite of the disturbances you maintained silence at the previous prayer meetings and set a good example to others. Prayer meetings in Bihar were also as peaceful as in Bengal. In Bihar people gathered in much larger numbers. I am not now physically strong enough to travel far in this terrible heat. Hence in Bihar I travelled for an hour or an hour and a half by train or car, and went to different places where we used to have prayers. In one place by a river bank more than a lakh of people had gathered. Every little while fresh crowds arrived and raised cries of '*jai*'. There was so much noise that I could not hold the prayer. But barring this one place, I could hold regular prayers at every place in Bihar. The gatherings in Bihar tended to be larger than those in Bengal. The people of Bihar knew me but still came round to have a look at me. We are 400 million people and how long can we remember an individual by seeing and hearing him only for a while? People are always eager to see me. They wonder what Gandhi looks like. They want to see if he is a creature with a tail and horns. Thus people used to gather in huge numbers. The Muslims were so few there that the Hindus could well have clamoured that they would not hear any prayer in Arabic. But not a single person in such large gatherings said any such thing. Why should anyone have said so? Why may not one recite from the Koran?

You too are maintaining silence here. But peaceful though you are, you also create disquiet. As here, so in Bengal too, a young man had the audacity to obstruct the prayer. I thought that in the name of non-violence it was leading to violence. I did not pay any attention to him. He realized the situation and kept quiet. Fortunately the police did not intervene. We held the prayers at the Khadi Pratishthan and, in spite of the large numbers, the gatherings were always peaceful.

Obstructing the prayer has become a regular feature here. Now women have started writing letters to me. Today I have received a letter from a lady in Marathi. She says in her letter that she is not in favour of the recitation from the Koran in a temple. In other words she means to say that all of you are against it because the Muslims

who recite the Koran have perpetrated atrocities on thousands of innocent women and children.

But now I am not going to give up the prayer because of these obstructions. Non-violence should not be allowed to prevent something [good] from being accomplished. I cannot be a witness to the commission of violence in the name of non-violence. Hence, even if this lady creates a disturbance my prayer will go on. I would like to tell the lady and her husband, if he is here, that such impudence does not behove us. For the sake of a single individual we cannot offend thousands. If they are not in favour of this prayer they should not come here. In spite of this if the lady creates trouble no one will do her any harm. She need have no fear. Let not even the police, if they are around, arrest her. I shall continue with the prayer even if I hear her voice or those of her supporters. All of you have also put up with enough. I do hope that there are no supporters of this lady's view among you. But, in case all of you subscribe to her views, I would say that all these young men with me would not offer the prayer. I would do it all by myself and you can all get round together and kill me. I would die smiling with the name of Rama on my lips. When you are so many I cannot kill you all by myself. Nor can the police stop you from killing me. But I hope that except for this lady there is none other among you who is opposed to the Koran. I would request you not to heed the lady's shrieks and shouts. Let no one even touch her. Let the prayer be carried on peacefully.

After this the prayer was held. At the end of the prayer Gandhiji said :

I compliment the lady for being satisfied with my reading out her letter to you. The same pattern will be repeated tomorrow. Whatever the opponents may have to say will be conveyed to you but the prayer will go on. But I do hope there will be none tomorrow wanting to obstruct the prayer.

I wish to tell you that the Hindus in Bihar have not lagged behind in committing atrocities. Not only were the atrocities of Noakhali avenged, but much more was done. And then the chain reaction reached as far as Dera-Ismail Khan. In the light of the atrocities suffered at the hands of the Hindus of Bihar, if the Muslims started saying that they would not allow the recitation of Tulsi's *Ramayana*, the *Gita* and the Upanishads and the Vedas, would it be right? If there are any Muslims who talk like that I would ask them what harm the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata* had done them, and

what crime the Vedas, the most ancient treatises, had committed. What harm had Ramachandraji done them? But the same argument would apply to the Koran and Mohammed Saheb. What harm have they done us? You will therefore realize that because I wish to read the *Ramayana* and the *Gita*, I also think it necessary to read the Koran.

Now you will want to know what I did at Calcutta and Patna. I cannot tell you now about everything I did in Calcutta. There I met Suhrawardy Saheb and had talks with him. Now we shall have to await the outcome of those talks. Whatever it is, people felt a little reassured by my going there. Sarat Babu is doing his best there. But violence has not yet completely ended there.

In Bihar too there is not much improvement. Refugees are returning to their homes, but the Hindus and the Muslims are not yet free from anger against each other. They are still not in a position to say that they are no more scared or that they will not now indulge in any excesses. But the atmosphere is clearing and there is no doubt about it.

Now the question is, why I came here. Frankly, I do not know why I have come. But one thing is certain. I have served the Congress for many years and people remember me as their servant. They want to know my views though they may or may not accept them.

But I wish to tell you that the tendency to look up to London is not desirable. We are not going to have our freedom sent over from London. The Kohinoor of India's freedom is not going to come to us from the hands of others. We can have it from our own hands.

I am not referring to the Kohinoor which is kept in the Tower of London. I am referring to the Kohinoor of our freedom. This Kohinoor is coming to us. We may throw it away if we wish or keep it with us if we so desire. Whatever we decide to do is up to us, not others.

Why then should we look up to Lord Mountbatten? Should we wait to see what he brings for us from England?¹ Our newspapers are all filled with predictions about what Lord Mountbatten is likely to bring from London. But why should we not look to our own strength?

What would happen to the other minorities? Granted that the Hindus, the Sikhs and others are not looking up to the English. But the Muslims are looking only in that direction. Should then the

¹ The Viceroy had left for London on May 17 for consultations.

Hindus and the Sikhs too start looking towards them? If they do start looking towards them and Lord Mountbatten heeds them to some extent, what would happen to the rest of the Indians? Would Lord Mountbatten care to listen to the Parsis who are a very small minority? And there are many other people in India for whom neither the Viceroy nor anyone else cares.

Under these circumstances I have to do my duty. In other words, India has to fulfil her own duty and thus attain independence.

Some people among us have lost their senses. We all come to these prayer meetings purely to become truthful. In order to be truthful we should be slaves to none but God. Then independence is just within our reach. Should we also lose our senses? And do you wish that so long as those few fanatics do not come to their senses Lord Mountbatten should keep them under his control and stay on here?

I do not approve of this. I have taught you something else. Ever since I returned to India in 1915¹. I have been saying that each one of us should look after himself. If we do it, not only England or America or Russia but all the three together cannot destroy us. Nobody can deprive us of what belongs to us as a birthright. It is our freedom and, if our intentions are honest, it has got to come.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 82-6

143. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

DELHI

May 25, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI,

It is nearing 10 now. I finished the Hindi in Patna, the English on the train, and have just finished the Gujarati. They will go by air-mail tomorrow and you should, therefore, get them on Monday. That is what you wanted.

Blessings from

BAPU

¹ The source, however, has '1916', which is a slip. Gandhiji had returned from South Africa on January 9, 1915.

[PS.]

I have not revised the Gujarati. I have revised one English item. Please revise the rest there.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 9977. Also C. W. 6951. Courtesy : Jivanji D. Desai

144. A LETTER

May 26, 1947

I shall be staying here up to June at least. Afterwards God alone knows. It is extremely hot here. But we are in no position to congratulate ourselves at each other's expense. I hope cool breezes have started there. It is not yet time for that here. You must be gaining strength.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

After writing the above I opened the letters which I have brought with me on the train and the first one I read was yours. I am writing to...¹ and suggesting to him that if he cannot do the work assigned to him he should leave. I cannot keep him with me here. Even now there are too many with me. I have no wish to train anybody. I suppose...is away from the Ashram? Write to him and tell him not to come. Send on to him the letter which I am addressing to him. It would be proper to fix a regular salary for...However, all of you there may think over this and do what seems right to you. Do not eat *mosambis* or anything else that does not agree with you. I feel that it is always the individual concerned who knows best in these matters. This, of course, does not refer to one who cannot think for himself at all.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pacchi Dilhi, pp. 8-9

¹ Omissions as in the source

145. LETTER TO AN ASHRAM INMATE

May 26, 1947

I have your letter. . .¹ bhai has written to me about you. I am sending with this the original letter. If what he says is true, how can [you]² stay on in the Ashram? I am sure you will not treat the exemption which you have enjoyed as a permanent feature of Ashram life. If a person cannot observe *brahmacharya*, he certainly cannot be forced to do so. Of course, some inmates of the Ashram must observe the rule. But don't you think it proper that anybody who does not like the Ashram life should be permitted to leave it? You should also remember that you do not know the art of working in co-operation with others. It is not at all certain whether I shall be able to go there. In fact I see no such possibility at present. I have no wish to keep anybody with me. Maybe I lack the necessary art or do not know how to adjust myself to others. I do not know which of the two is the correct reason. I would not mind it even if those who are with me decided to leave. The task which I have undertaken requires a great deal of time and I am inclined to take from every worker I have found whatever service he can give. All of you, therefore, should arrange your lives as if I was no longer in your midst. I think this last suggestion sums up all that I have to say on the subject. Meet...and make whatever arrangements you think necessary. Show this letter to...

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 9

146. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

NEW DELHI

May 26, 1947

I saw your letter on the train. But I had a good deal of writing work to do then and, therefore, did not read it. Your zeal is sincere but you wish to take up a task that is beyond you. "Better one's own

¹ Omissions as in the source

² The verb is in the third person in the source.

duty bereft of merit, another's duty is fraught with danger.'''¹ What you have been doing is your real dharma. How will you succeed in bringing about unity between Hindus and Muslims? This, of course, you can do. You may treat the few Muslims who still remain there as your blood-brothers. This should be enough for you to understand things.

Why is it that Truth is not seen to possess the power of a magnet? Tell me if you have seen perfect truth anywhere, and then ask me that question. Truth is not a common pebble but a jewel rarer even than a diamond. Much harder labour is needed to discover it than to dig a mine.

How can anybody occupy Durgabehn's² quarters? That may be considered only if she gets totally tired of them and gives them up. You must, therefore, for the present remain where you are. It will be time to consider the matter after Kanchan's³ confinement is over and the baby is a few months old. Or we may have to think about it if Kanchan or you relax in your resolution about *brahmacharya*. One should learn to live as God ordains. I hope Kanchan is fine.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G. N. 8411. Also C. W. 5621. Courtesy : Munnalal G. Shah

147. LETTER TO AN ASHRAM INMATE

May 26, 1947

You will not be able to stand the Ashram life. He himself keeps indifferent health, and wants only as much burden as cannot be avoided. I would therefore advise you to give up your craving for Ashram life. You may stay anywhere else you like. It does not seem likely that I shall go to Wardha or anywhere near it. If I cannot survive in these parts I have decided to face death. Anyway I have been praying to God to help me fulfil my resolve. All of you too must wish for the same.

I hope you are both keeping well.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 10

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, iii. 35

² Durga Desai, wife of Mahadev Desai

³ Addressee's wife

148. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

Monday, May 26, 1947

I had written out the speech for today. Then after 5 p.m. or so I received a letter from the lady who had objected yesterday saying that I had broken my promise by holding the prayers. This was farthest from my thoughts. I appealed to you and called upon you to hold yourselves in restraint in order to protect the objectors and you agreed to have the prayer. It will be discourtesy on my part if I do not hold the prayers because of such obstruction. Generosity in that case would amount to avarice. That is not how ahimsa works. The lady, therefore, should forgive me, for the prayer will go on.

I must repeat what I told you yesterday. Public prayer is a precious duty. It cannot be lightly thrown away. One who objects to it commits a crime, but it is good to pray silently if there is a possibility of the objector being molested. You responded to my entreaty by maintaining complete peace and order and did not molest the objectors but when I felt that this restraint was being abused I decided to follow the other course. I was glad that the lady who had objected remained calm. Whatever be her own opinion. I hope she will maintain her composure. One must at least observe a minimum of decorum. I would like you to continue the prayers in future in spite of the objectors but at the same time you should be generous with them instead of being angry.

I had told you yesterday that it was unbecoming on our part to keep looking towards London. The British cannot give us our freedom. They can only get off our backs. This they have already promised to do. But it is for us to safeguard our freedom and give it a concrete shape. How should we bring this about? In my opinion we are unable to think coherently whilst the British rule continues in India. It is not for the British Government to change the map of India. All it has to do is to withdraw from India, if possible in an orderly manner, maybe even in chaos, but withdraw in any case on or before the date it has itself fixed.

There is an additional reason why no vital change in the map of India is possible in the present state of the country. A joint statement¹ has been issued by the Qaid-e-Azam and me that violence should not

¹ *Vide* "A Joint Appeal", 12-4-1947

be used for achieving political ends. If, in spite of that appeal, people continue the mad course of large-scale violence and if the British Power yields before it in the vain hope that everything will be all right after this fit of madness is over, it will have left a bloody legacy for which not only India but the whole world will hold it guilty. I would therefore urge every patriot and certainly the British Power, irrespective of the worst kind of violence, to leave India under the Cabinet Mission's document¹ of the 16th May of last year. In the presence of the British Power today we are only demoralized by the orgy of bloodshed, wanton killings, arson and worse. After it is withdrawn, I hope, we shall have the wisdom to think coherently and keep India one or split it into two or more parts. But even if we keep on fighting after that, I am convinced that we will not be so demoralized as we are today, though all violence is bound to cause a certain amount of demoralization. I still hope against hope that a free India will not again offer an example of violence which has already made her so miserable.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 86-8

149. LETTER TO AN ASHRAM INMATE

May 27, 1947

I am in the midst of a raging fire. Is it God's mercy or irony of fate that the flames do not consume me?

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 14

150. TALK WITH SOCIALISTS²

May 27, 1947

The very idea of partitioning the country is frightening. Our concern today should be to bring about an agreement in a peaceful manner to ensure that the country is not partitioned and still the British leave. Even partition may be tolerated, but I cannot bear the thought that it should be imposed by the British. Why should a third

¹ *Vide* "Statement of Cabinet Delegation and Viceroy", 16-5-1946

² Jayaprakash Narayan and his co-workers, about a dozen men and women, were with Gandhiji from 2 to 4-30 p.m.

party intervene in a dispute between us brothers? Are we not strong enough even to solve our own problems? It is this which makes me feel that our ahimsa was not the ahimsa of the strong but something else. But God has opened my eyes today. If we invite the British to act as intermediaries in the dispute between us brothers, it will be a great blot on our glorious history. That is why I declared in a prayer speech that, if we could not live together, we could certainly separate through mutual agreement, but that third-party intervention should not be tolerated. This is what I am going to tell the Viceroy today. This Viceroy is a very intelligent man. He will displease no party and still have his own way. This is, therefore, going to be a test for us all. Don't forget that Lord Mountbatten is taking measure of our courage and intelligence. As the saying is, a known enemy is better than an unknown friend. Lord Linlithgow or Lord Wavell were not dangerous to us, for we knew what their policy was. I appreciate your desire to bring about equality of living standards in society. I want the same thing. But our first concern should be to come together, think what is in the best interest of the country and set the people to constructive work. Our people have lived in slavery for 150 years and need to be trained for a different way of life now. I do not fully agree with the idea that it will happen when we have power in our hands or that we can do a great deal through power. No doubt transfer of power will remove many obstacles. But we shall have to do solid work among the people. Since you look upon me as an adviser and seek my advice of your own free will, I have only one advice to give, and that is that, if you wish to establish socialism, there is only one way in which it can be done : go and live among the poor in the villages, live as they live, be one with the village people, work for eight hours daily, use only village-made goods and articles even in your personal lives, remove illiteracy among the village people, eradicate untouchability and uplift the women. I will even go so far as to suggest that you should establish such a living bond with the village people that, if anyone amongst you is unmarried and wishes to marry, he or she should choose a partner from among the village girls or boys. If anybody else seeks your advice on this subject, give him or her, too, the same advice. Make your life an ideal one in this way; when the people see your transparent lives every minute of the day as clearly as we see pictures on a screen, their influence will be felt throughout the country and reform its life. The Congress will soon have power in its hands, but the Congress is not wedded to an exclusive doctrine and

does not belong to any one party. Tolerance for all points of view still remains its principle. It is true that the principle is occasionally violated in practice, but even while making this admission I can assure you that if you workers can draw up a programme for village uplift and if the programme does not remain merely on paper but is actively implemented, then the Congress may be in power but the Congress Ministers will assuredly help you in your real solid work. Jawaharlal will even congratulate you with all his heart. I am, however, pained to say that, instead of doing such constructive work, what you are doing today is to incite the people and call for strikes. And at the same time there is communal fighting going on. All of you are men of intellect and learning. Why can't you see who is being harmed by what you are doing? Such a struggle was all right against the British, for we wanted them to go. But whom do you wish to drive out now? What will you gain by fighting against our own countrymen? You should be large-hearted and offer your co-operation for the great work of national uplift. If those in power commit mistakes, oppose them through your work, not by mere criticism or speeches or agitations. Take the village people and slum-dwellers in your hands and give them the benefit of your knowledge, skill, insight, constructive work and patriotic spirit. Give the people this true education through the example of your own lives. Let all your activities be directed to the welfare of the people. If that is not done and if the people lose patience, our plight will be much worse than the present slavery. Before the people take to the path of destruction, see that they are given constructive, life-giving training. I make this suggestion not to you alone. I have opened out my heart to you because you have come to seek my advice. But what I have said applies to Congressmen, too. Let, therefore, all public workers and all officers of the Government forget their quarrels and disputes over ideologies and start learning and teaching spinning, khadi work and village industries. If the British leave and at the same time the people are given a new life through such education, I am confident that in five years India will be a leading country in Asia.

Q. Why do you oppose the growth of industries in our country through machinery?

A. You can use machines to manufacture cars, engines, aeroplanes and things of that kind. But I am strongly opposed to the use of machines for grinding corn, manufacturing cloth and ploughing the land. The consumption of mill-ground flour has deprived us

of all vitality, for machine-grinding destroys all the vitamins. In the old days in Kathiawar we didn't have even water-taps. The women used to fetch water from the river, with shining pots resting on supports studded with bright beads; it would be early morning and the women thus had a sun-bath daily and that kept them healthy. They used to grind the corn in the early dawn, singing *bhajans* the while, including prayers to God. These simple innocent songs containing useful moral wisdom taught them some music and [the grinding] provided them exercise. Afterwards the whole family would go to work in the fields, so that hardly anybody knew what illness was or even the names of the diseases of lungs so widespread these days. In such a vast country, or say, rather, a family, containing a variety of communities and races, there is no need for machinery at all. Machinery does the work in very little time and that is harmful in every way, physically and economically. With so much leisure on hand, the people get busy in mischief, for, as the saying is, an idle mind is the devil's workshop. Or they waste their time in cinemas and theatres. Many people argue with me and try to convince me that the cinema has an educative value. But the argument doesn't appeal to me at all. For one thing, sitting in a closed theatre one feels suffocated. I had been to such a theatre only once, when I was a small child. If I had my way, I would see to it that all the cinemas and theatres in India were converted into spinning halls and factories for handicrafts of all kinds. And what obscene photographs of actors and actresses are displayed in the newspapers by way of advertisement! Moreover, who are these actors and actresses if not our own brothers and sisters. We waste our money and ruin our culture at the same time. If I was made Prime Minister of the country, these would be the first things I would do : I would stop all machine-driven flour-mills and restrict the number of oil-pressing factories but install the indigenous mills all over the country. I might not destroy the existing textile mills, but certainly would not help them in any way and, in any case, would not permit new ones to be set up. I would close all the cinemas and theatres, though I might, as an exception, permit exhibition of pictures of educational value or showing scenes of natural beauty. But singing and dancing I would stop completely. I have great regard for dancing and music. I love music indeed. I may even claim that I understand what is good music and what is not. But I would surely prohibit music and dancing which tend to pervert the minds of young men and women. I would stop the sale of gramophone records. That is, I would suggest to the Government that

it should impose heavy taxes on all such life-killing activities. Similarly, harmful drinks and drugs like liquors, tobacco and tea also should be heavily taxed so that their consumption would automatically decrease. Moreover, ideal villages which are self-reliant in regard to food, which have not a single flour-mill and in which the residents grow all the cotton they need and manufacture their own cloth, right up to the stage of stitching garments in their own homes, should be awarded prizes and exempted from all taxes. In such an ideal village, every resident will be his own policeman, his own doctor and his own watchman, and the people will have no time then to quarrel and fight among themselves.

See, I have given you so much time. What I have described is only my dream of a free India, and idle dream like Sheikhchalli's¹. My heart was full and I, therefore, poured it out to you. At present, however, I see no sign of any of the things I have suggested being implemented. I know this and still I cannot keep back my thoughts, and so when people like you come I pour them out.

Q. But, Bapu, who would oppose the suggestion to make you Prime Minister? If you agree to accept the responsibility, I don't think anybody would oppose the proposal.

A. You are the chief opponents. You will ask me why. Well, if you but act as I have advised, my dream would no longer remain a dream but become a reality. You will have economic equality in the country only along the road I have pointed out. Perhaps you will not understand this today; but note my words and remember them when I am dead and you will say that what this old man of seventy-five said was true. This is not a prophecy I am making; I am saying this on the basis of my lifelong experience. A time will surely come when nobody will listen to your long speeches; nobody will even attend your meetings, for preaching sermons to the people without following those principles in your own lives does not work long in society. The people will ask you for an account of your own work, will ask you what you yourselves are doing, before they listen to you. Similarly, in regard to the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity you will succeed only to the extent that you practise it in your own conduct and put your heart in it. Till now we acted like blind men and let ourselves be led by the hand by the British. But now we have to use our own eyes and

¹ Character in a folk tale; one who indulges in idle dreams.

find our own path. If you don't watch your step and walk straight ahead, you are bound to stumble and fall into pits.

Now be off. I have to go and see the Viceroy.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 14-9

151. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 27, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today also I have received a long letter from the Maharashtrian lady. She has complained in her letter that the volunteers did not act properly in stopping her. She has also said that the Koran ordains the killing of non-Muslims and hence there should be no recitation from the Koran. I have read the Koran and I found nothing of the kind in it. On the contrary the Koran lays down that one should have love for non-Muslims as well. If those who read the Koran do not obey its teachings, how can we blame the Koran? Even on our side, who follows in practice what is written in Tulsi's *Ramayana*, the *Gita* and the Vedas?

I do not intend following irreligion in the name of religion. I utter every word with the fear of God in my heart. I am pained to find the lady insists on writing something about which she has no knowledge. Why does she believe that such and such a thing is written in the Koran because somebody says so? But you must be firm in your mind. You must concentrate on the prayer even if she protests. But even if all of you start talking like her, I will continue the prayer till my last breath.

Her second complaint is that the male volunteers touched her while removing her. In my view there is nothing objectionable about it. It is the function of the volunteers to stop trouble-makers from creating disturbance, whether they be men or women. Of course, they should not raise their hands against women or beat them. They must persuade them gently. When there are no carnal thoughts in the mind, there is nothing sinful if one happens to touch a woman. I too rest my hands on the shoulders of girls while walking. Am I committing any crime? They are all like my daughters. If I have evil thoughts in my mind, it would be definitely sinful. Volunteers also

should treat the women who come to attend the pra-yers as their mothers or sisters while looking after the arrangements of the meeting. A volunteer may touch a woman as she would his mother. That is his duty.¹

It is quite late today. Hence, I shall be brief.

You all know that I am working in Bihar. There are very few Muslims in Bihar. They would be hardly 14 per cent of the population. Similarly, the Hindu population in Noakhali is also small. I went to Bihar in connection with my work in Noakhali.

I have received a phone call from the friend working in Bihar that people there have started thinking about June². In the same way they were in panic about the 9th when the Constituent Assembly was to meet. I used to receive letters from all corners asking me what should be done. People in Noakhali were being threatened that although during the November riots some Hindus were allowed to survive, this time all the Hindus would be converted. I had then told them that I would return there if they so desired. But there was nothing much I could do there except lay down my own life. But they did not send for me. They prepared themselves to face any eventuality. As a matter of fact, I do not think that the plan of converting all Hindus to Islam can ever succeed.

Similarly, the Muslims need have no fear in Bihar. Why should we have any fear of the 2nd of June? Granting that the Viceroy is bringing *laddos*, why should we be so eager? As I have already said, they are of no use to us. Only the thing we have produced ourselves would be of use to us.

I am asking you, why should the Bihari Muslims panic? Would not the Hindus who recite the name of Rama think of their Rama?

Similarly, why should the Hindus in Sind be afraid? Why should they panic? I have a letter from there saying that the Hindus are overcome with fear. But instead of being frightened, why do they not take the name of Rama? The people of Sind want me to go to them. I have not been to Sind for many years but I have maintained such close relations with the people of Sind that at one time I used to call

¹ Then the prayer was conducted. Despite shouts from the lady to stop the prayer, Gandhiji insisted that it should continue. What follows is the speech after the prayer.

² Lord Mountbatten was to return from Dondon on May 31 and make an announcement on June 2 about the country's future.

myself a Sindhi. I used to have Sindhi companions also in South Africa. Sindhis, Marwaris, Punjabis, all have co-operated with me. Some of them even drank and ate non-vegetarian food. In spite of their inability to give up these things they called themselves Hindus. I was friends with all of them. One of them asks me in a letter if I have forgotten him and Sind. But how can I forget?

People everywhere are filled with fear about the announcement to come on June 2. It is being said that the Muslims are making massive preparations. But what preparations? Are they preparing to turn themselves into brutes? Do they not pray in their mosque that God may make them all good human beings? The Hindus also are not writing to me to say that they would pray to God in silence that He should grant the British the good sense to quit India and wisdom to all those among the Muslims who have been possessed by a frenzy.

They are apprehensive also in the Punjab because they are in a minority. There the Hindus have the Sikhs also with them. Why should the Sikhs be afraid? Why is there fear on both sides as to who would be the first to raise the sword?

If the Hindus of Bihar slaughter the Muslims, they would be killing me. I say the Muslims of Bihar are like my blood-brothers. They are glad to see me. They are convinced that at least this one man belongs to them. Anyone who kills them kills me. If they insult their sisters and daughters, it is insulting me. From this platform I want to convey this to all the Hindus of Bihar.

Why should the Muslims of Bihar be afraid? Two excellent Muslim workers are serving them. Then, Shrikrishna Sinha runs the Bihar Ministry and he is very much on the alert.

It is being rumoured these days that Gandhi wants to go to Bihar and get the Hindus slaughtered. But I would like to proclaim at the top of my voice that even if all the Muslims lose their heads not a single Hindu should follow suit.

As for the Sikhs they claim that a single Sikh is equal to one and a quarter lakh [of others] and five Sikhs are equal to six lakhs. I like them for talking thus. The *Granth Saheb* and the Guru are as much mine as theirs. If I can call myself a Muslim, what is there to be ashamed of in my calling myself a Sikh? And the Sikhs have done brave deeds in a spirit of satyagraha at Nankana Saheb. But today they are thinking of the sword.

They do not realize that the age of the sword is past. They do

not realize that no one can be saved by the strength of the sword. This is the age of the atom bomb.

Guru Govind Singh preached the use of the sword. But that cannot be applied today. Of course his teaching that a single Sikh is equal to one and a quarter lakh is useful even today. But it would become true when the Sikh dies for his fellowmen and the whole country.

There have been equally gallant women. In one place when all their menfolk were killed and there was no hope of any help, instead of quietly surrendering they chose to die. This really happened. Some seventy-five women died in this manner; they first killed their children with their own hands, because they did not want their children to be ill-treated by others.

I would say that only when people have behaved like this has their religion remained alive whether they were Hindus or Muslims. I would say the same thing to the Sikhs, namely, that if each one of them is equal to one and a quarter lakh they should all concentrate on God and die with the cry of '*Sat Sri Akal*' on their lips. What greater act of bravery can there be?

I don't mind if anybody calls me a coward. God alone knows whether or not I am a coward. We should accept a lesson in bravery even if it is offered by a coward. I do not want to make a coward of anyone. I have not made anyone a coward, nor am I one myself.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 88-92

152. LETTER TO KAREL AND HARRIET HUIJER¹

NEW DELHI,
May 28, 1947

DEAR KAREL & HARRIET,

I have your touching letter and I write this only to tell you that I am still in the land of the living and read your letter with much joy.

¹ An extract from this is reproduced in "Letter to Karel Huijer", 28-5-1947

I am the same as when you saw me except that my faith burns if possible brighter than before.

MR. KAREL HUJER

UNIVERSITY OF CHATTANOOGA

CHATTANOOGA, TENN., USA

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

153. LETTER TO A FOREIGN NATUROPATH¹

[May 28, 1947]²

You will be pleased to know that I became a confirmed convert to nature cure when I read Kuhne's *New Science of Healing* and Just's *Return to Nature* over forty years ago. I must confess that I have not been able fully to follow the meaning of 'return to nature' not because of want of will but because of my ignorance. I am now trying to evolve a system of nature cure suited to the millions of India's poor. I try to confine myself to the propagation of such cure as is derivable from the use of earth, water, light, air and the great void. This naturally leads man to know that the sovereign cure of all ills is the recitation from the heart of the name of God whom some millions here know by the name of Rama and the other millions by the name of Allah. Such recitation from the heart carries with it the obligation to recognize and follow the laws which nature has ordained for man. This train of reasoning leads one to the conclusion that prevention is better than cure. Therefore, one is irresistibly driven to inculcating the laws of hygiene, i.e., of cleanliness of the mind, of the body and of one's surroundings.

Harijan, 15-6-1947

154. LETTER TO A NATUROPATH

May 28, 1947

I appreciate your enthusiasm. But the Indian nature-cure system cannot subsist on enthusiasm alone, nor will my identification with it help to keep it alive, as I regard myself an ignoramus in the science.

¹ Extracted from Sushila Nayyar's "Medicine for the Masses"

² From *Bihar Pachhi Dilhi*

There would be some hope if you transmuted your enthusiasm into knowledge.

If you admit the shortcomings of your system, why don't you try to overcome them by a systematic study of anatomy and physiology? If you had equipped yourself with the knowledge which the allopaths have gained after years of laborious research, you would not have committed the mistake you did.¹ Do not deceive yourself with the belief that allopathy today holds the field by virtue of the backing and patronage that it receives from the Government. In my opinion it holds its present position in the world because, though it is a false science, its votaries have faith in it and have made great sacrifices to advance it. But the modern naturopaths have made no sacrifices. They are easily satisfied. No wonder they feel they have earned the right to fleece the poor and gullible and grow rich.

I am not writing this in praise of allopathy. I have a fundamental difference with the allopaths. They are too easily satisfied with half-baked knowledge and exploit their diplomas to fill their pockets. There is a craze today for rushing to the West for specialization as if it were the sole repository of knowledge. I would entreat all doctors and would-be doctors of medicine to think in terms of the seven hundred thousand villages of India. They would then see how great the need is in India of a medical cadre trained not in the Western style but in the system of rural medicine. They would then adopt many indigenous practices and prescriptions that have proved successful in India, and not become mere dispensers of foreign imported drugs when our fields are teeming with natural, medicinal herbs. The true function of the medical profession, as I conceive it, is not to prescribe cures, whether foreign or indigenous, but to prevent illness by teaching the people observe the rules of health.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 24-5

¹ The addressee had failed to diagnose Manu Gandhi's appendicitis.

155. LETTER TO DINSHAW K. MEHTA

May 28, 1947

CHI...¹,

You are right in what you have written to...² It is the failure of the nature cure doctor, not of nature cure itself. Chakrayya³ is in doctors' hands. Chances of his surviving are small. I am keeping in touch.

I got your letter. I have not misunderstood you in the least, let alone my being displeased with you. I am glad that you state your views frankly. I had only explained how my mind was working, how nature cure was becoming an increasingly simple thing in my eyes.

I don't wish to have you come here for my sake, for as far as possible I hope to keep up my health purely with the help of Ramanama. It is a difficult job, but I should like to try. I think, moreover, that your place is there. If, nevertheless, you cannot control your desire, there is certainly no ban on your coming. I do not know how long I shall be here.

And now about...⁴ house. I have no doubt that we cannot purchase it in the name of the Trust. Before we purchase a building, we must have the men [to work in it]. But how can I object to your accepting it if it is offered to you for 'missionary' work?

As regards Uruli-Kanchan, I will have no objection to your proposal if you believe that its conversion into a separate institution would harm the original Trust. From a purely legal point of view, however, I believe that in that case it cannot be used to further other aims.

Consult Bhai Pakvasa⁵. I am sure that its being made into a

¹ Although the source does not mention the addressee, it would appear from the contents that it was Dinshaw Mehta.

² The name is omitted in the source.

³ The source has omitted the name; *vide*, however, the following item. Chakrayya was from Andhra and had joined Sevagram Ashram in 1935. He died on May 28, 1947, during an operation for brain tumour in a Bombay hospital. *Vide* also "Speech at Prayer Meeting", "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 31-5-1947

⁴ The name is omitted in the source.

⁵ Mangaldas Pakvasa, solicitor; President, Bombay Legislative Council, 1937-47; became Governor of Central Provinces and Berar in 1947; helped in drawing up the Trust Deed for the original Nature Cure Trust in 1945. *vide* "Letter to Balkrishna Mavalankar", 14-5-1945

separate institution cannot affect the original Trust. I was glad to learn that Mother was keeping well.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 25

156. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

BHANGI NIWAS, NEW DELHI,

May 28, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your letter. I had a telephonic message that everything possible was being done for Chakrayya; hence it was not necessary to send anyone to be by his side. Even so I don't forbid anybody from going to him. If anyone feels that he must go, he may do so. Moreover, one of you has already been there. We need not worry over the girls at the hospital. After all Vijayabehn is there already. Chand, Zohra and the others are nice girls. But ultimately whatever is destined will happen.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1979

157. INTERVIEW TO DR. LO CHI LUEN¹

May 28, 1947

[DR. LO CHI LUEN:] How do you think things will shape themselves? How do you predict the future?

[GANDHIJI:] I am an irrepressible optimist. We have not lived and toiled in vain all these years that we should become barbarians as we appear to be becoming, looking at all the senseless bloodshed in Bengal, Bihar and the Punjab. But I feel it is just an indication that as we are throwing off the foreign yoke all the dirt and froth is coming to the surface. When the Ganges is in flood, the water is turbid. The dirt comes to the surface. When the flood subsides, you see the clear blue water which soothes the eye. That is what I hope for and live for. I do not wish to live to see Indian humanity becoming barbarian.

And who can predict the future? Years ago I read Butler's

¹ Chinese Ambassador in India. The interview is extracted from Sushila Nayyar's "In Delhi". Jawaharlal Nehru accompanied the Ambassador.

Analogy. Therein I read that the ‘future is the result somewhat of our past’. This thought has persisted with me because it coincides with the Indian belief. We are the makers of our own destiny. We can mend or mar the present and on that will depend the future.

History sometimes repeats itself, because we do not learn the lesson of history.

It is only a half-truth. History may seem to be repeating itself today. I believe that nothing remains static. Human nature either goes up or goes down. Let us hope, in India, it is going up. Otherwise, there is nothing but deluge for India and probably for the whole world.

They talked of the havoc wrought by the war in China. Would the war-weary Asiatic countries follow in the footsteps of Japan and turn to militarization?

The answer depended, Gandhiji replied, on which side India threw her weight.¹

Let us hope that India will rise to the occasion, not only for its own sake but for the sake of the world. . .² The world is today tottering on the brink of self-destruction. Flames of hatred and violence threaten to engulf us. It is my faith and hope that independent India will provide an object-lesson to the world in the way of peace, non-violence and brotherhood.

The learned Ambassador conveyed to Gandhiji the deepest respect and affection of the Chinese people. Gandhiji valued their affection and said he would love to visit China which had so much in common with India. The Ambassador began to talk of Chinese philosophy and quoted Lao-tse’s maxim: “Production without possession, action without self-assertion, creation without domination”.

You are talking the language of the Upanishads. The same thought is to be found in the *Ishopanishad*.

Harijan, 8-6-1947, and *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, pp. 202-3

158. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 28, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am happy that no one created trouble or raised any protest today, I am sure frenzy cannot last forever. The same applies to Hindu-Muslim clashes. I continue to get letters, a few of them nice.

¹ This sentence and the following paragraph are from *Mahatma Gandhi The Last Phase*.

² Omission as in the source

Some good Muslims write to me that it does not matter if Hindus and Muslims follow different religions. They should not feel separate at heart on that account. Some Hindus even threaten me with dire consequences if I do not stop the recitation from the Koran. They say that they would come here with black flags.¹ And what will they do after coming here? The atmosphere is such that people do not bother to see or hear anything, they just create rows. They too will come and disturb the prayer. But even if such a thing happens, our prayer will continue to be held so long as you give me your peaceful co-operation. But if all of you should come with black flags, I would have my prayer by myself. I would continue to recite Ramanama even if you assaulted me. Even if I have the police to protect me from you or I wield a sword or a gun I have to die ultimately. Then what is the harm if I die with the name of Rama on my lips? When I die in such a manner, you would feel remorse. You would tell yourselves that you did a terrible thing and gained nothing by killing me. But if I have police protection or if I beat you up, you would remark after killing me that it was just as well that I was killed. But I hope you will remain as peaceful as you were when you came.

Today I would like to answer some of your questions. Of course, I cannot answer all the questions today. Yesterday somebody asked what we should do with a mad dog, whether we should not kill it. This is an odd question. He should have actually asked what should be done when a man went mad. But the fact is that if we have God in our hearts even a dog cannot behave madly with us. Once a friend of mine came to ask me what should be done with a mad dog that was biting everyone. I told him that the dog should be killed and the responsibility would be mine. But it was a matter concerning a dog. It cannot apply to human beings. I remember when I was about ten, a brother of mine had gone mad. Afterwards he was cured. He is no more. But remember him well. In a fit of madness he would rush out and strike everyone. But what could I do to him? Could I beat him? Or could my mother or father beat him? Nobody in the family beat him. A *vaidya* was called in and he was asked to treat my brother in every possible manner except by beating him. He was my blood-brother. But now I make no such distinctions. Now all of you are like

¹ The reference is to the warning given by the members of the Anti-Pakistan Front of Gujarat.

my blood-brothers. If all of you lose your sanity and I happen to have an army at my disposal, do you think I should have you shot? Even an enemy may not be shot if he goes crazy. Anyone who goes mad should be sent to a lunatic asylum. You ought to know that there are a number of such asylums in India. I have actually seen such mad persons who really deserve to be shot. But we leave them to the care of the doctors.

I used to have an intimate friend who was almost like a brother to me. His son became mad and when seized by madness would rush out to kill people. I did not suggest to my friend that his son should be shot. I could have had him shot if I wished, because I was called a Mahatma. And, in our country, a mahatma enjoys the right to do anything. He may commit murder, indulge in acts of debauchery or whatever else he chooses; he is always pardoned. Who is there to question him? But I feared God. I thought that I was answerable to God, if to no one else. As a matter of fact there is no mahatma in our midst these days. All are *alpatmas*¹.

Anyway, I had the boy sent to a doctor. He ran away from him too. He is still not restored. He has children, and all the members of the family are with him. We must try to find out a way of dealing with this madness, as in the case of my friend's son.

Today our blood is boiling. We hear from all sides speculations about June 2. At first there were clashes at three or four places. Now there is talk of killing all the Hindus. And the Hindus would ask why, if the Muslims kill us, we should not kill them in turn. They too would want to spill blood. If this is not madness, what else is it? I trust that you, who are seated here so peacefully, would not give in to such frenzy. If the people who are caught in the frenzy are bent upon killing us, we would let them do so. Would they be cured of their madness if we let ourselves be killed? The prevailing madness is not such as would blind us to all reason. Even when a really mad person rushes towards us with a knife in his hand, we should face the danger. We do not panic. Similarly, if the Muslims come with raised swords screaming for Pakistan, I would tell them that they cannot have Pakistan at the point of the sword. They must first cut me to pieces before they vivisect the country. If everybody talks to them in the same vein, God would cleave their sword asunder. I am a poor helpless fellow. But you will see my courage when the occasion arises. I will

¹ Little souls

not then wield lathi against a lathi. I wish we would not meet madness with madness. If we remain sensible the madness on the opposite side will disappear. Their [craze for] Pakistan will die down too. If theirs is a true Pakistan, it would have to be the entire Hindustan.

If you got into a frenzy the British would ask if non-violence was meant only for them. They would accuse us of indulging in mutual violence, and ask us whatever had happened to our non-violence. They would describe themselves as superior to us, as paragons of non-violence and say that even if they resorted to force, they at least maintained order. They have to rule after all; and they may quite justifiably argue thus. But I would tell them that they should not do so. They have got to go and they will go because of our non-violent struggle. Here millions of people have shown the courage of non-violence. You did not bow down to the Union Jack. You courted imprisonment and allowed yourselves to be ruined. It is as a result of all this that we are about to be independent. But now we are not talking about gaining independence on the strength of that courage. Today we are behaving in a manner that must invite the world's contempt.

But we must never do such a thing. You will attain true freedom when, instead of killing others, you die yourselves.

Lord Mountbatten is coming. All are apprehensive about what he might bring. If he offers something to the Hindus, why should the Muslims get into a state? And, if he offers something to the Muslims, why should the Hindus get frightened? Let us not look up to him, nor watch for June 2; let us look at ourselves.

If he does not give us anything, shall we all become so mad as to massacre old people, children and women?

The second question is why the members of the Interim Government are dancing to the tune of the British. Are there only three communities in India, namely, the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs? Why are Parsis not consulted? Is it because they possess no arms? And if the Parsis were to be invited, for what fault are the Christians to be left out? And then, why not the Jews? The question is quite pertinent. I am also pained by this situation. The Congress is for all. All people support it. Then why is it wanting in courage? It does not belong exclusively to the Hindus. True, the majority of Congressmen are Hindus but there are others too. If the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs come to an agreement among themselves, would

they crush the Parsis? Would the Jews and the others have to perish? And, after coming to a settlement with them, what shall we do with the rest? Shall we discard them? They would ask if that was their reward for supporting the Congress in its first stages. They would want to know why the Viceroy should talk only to certain members of the Interim Government. Is it because Jawaharlal is a very big man? Or because the Sardar is the hero of Bardoli? Or because Rajendra Babu is a great scholar and Rajaji has a great intellect?

I wish to tell you that these are not the only persons in the Congress. All of you belong to it. All those who have stood by the Congress and worked for it belong to it. Those who do not go on deputations and are not vocal are as much members of the Congress as anyone else. If these three communities come to some settlement in utter disregard of the others, it would be a very unhappy situation and their curse would fall on us. Hence, let us realize that whatever we do should be equally in the interests of all the communities.

When the Muslims also realize this, things will proceed very well. Then the document signed by Jinnah Saheb and me, that we should not resort to violence for the attainment of political objectives, will be accepted by all as reasonable.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 93-7

159. A NOTE¹

[After May 28, 1947]²

I may add that the one that was stolen³ had radium disc as yours has and had also a contrivance for alarm. It was a gift to me. But the cost then was over 40/-. It was a zenith watch.

From a microfilm: M.M.U./XXIII

¹ The note is written on a letter dated May 28, 1947.

² *ibid*

³ The reference is to Gandhiji's watch, a present from Indira Nehru, which he had been using for about 20 years, and which was stolen at Kanpur station on May 25.

160. LETTER TO J. B. KRIPALANI

NEW DELHI
[May]¹ 29. 1947

MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

Your letter.

Your letter to the *Chronicle* requires close thinking. If you think that the Congress should accept the two-nation theory, it is a very serious matter. You should show the letter to the chief members of the Working Committee and send it after their approval.

I have read your Kashmir speech you left with me and defended it before critics. I see nothing wrong in it though I may not deliver it. Do come on Tuesday and we shall talk further about it.

Giridhari² told Brijkrishna yesterday that you felt in me a touch of coldness towards you. I expressed surprise at the idea, for I have been trying to do the reverse.

I know that you had not come latterly to me merely to spare me as you had nothing particular to say to me.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

161. TALK WITH A CO WORKER

NEW DELHI,
May 29, 1947

CO-WORKER: You have declared you won't mind if the whole of India is turned into Pakistan by appeal to reason but not an inch would be yielded to force. You have stood firm by your declaration. But is the Working Committee acting on this principle? They are yielding to force. You gave us the battle-cry of Quit India; you fought our battles; but in the hour of decision, I find you are not in the picture. You and your ideals have been given the go-by.

GANDHIJI: Who listens to me today?

¹ The source has June, obviously a slip, for the Congress had finally accepted the "two-nation theory" on June 14. They were giving serious consideration to it in May.

² Son of addressee's brother

Leaders may not, but the people are behind you.

Even they are not. I am being told to retire to the Himalayas. Everybody is eager to garland my photos and statues. Nobody really wants to follow my advice.

They may not today, but they will have to before long.

What is the good? Who knows whether I shall then be alive? The question is: What can we do today? On the eve of independence we are as divided as we were united when we were engaged in freedom's battle. The prospect of power has demoralized us.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 209

162. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

May 29, 1947

When we do not get enough food in spite of very hard work, what should we do?

It is an eternal law that anybody who does useful work must get enough to eat. But when that does not happen, it may be assumed that there is something wrong in the working of the Government. But in the changed times now we cannot meet this [situation] by looting Government shops or starting riots, for we ourselves will have to suffer because of the resulting loss. Instead, the people may peacefully sit down in front of the shops and, as a last resort, fast indefinitely. But this weapon should be employed only after careful thinking, for these days people have made this sacred weapon very cheap. In any case it should never be employed to gain a personal end.

Probably you know that your statues are being set up and your photographs unveiled at many places. What do you think about this?

How can I say I do not know that my statues are being erected and my photographs are being unveiled everywhere in the country, that they are garlanded and lights are waved before them? But I attach no importance to these things, for I dislike such things intensely. They are a sheer waste of money. And I strongly feel that these activities do me no honour but, on the contrary, are an affront to me. If the people wish to honour me, let them honour the charkha, that is, spin daily by way of *yajna*. That will be as good as honouring me. Let them also read the *Gita* and meditate over its teaching. And if they cannot do even that, let them just repeat Ramanama. To understand a man's virtues and follow his principles in one's own life is as good as honouring the man himself. I know full well what labour

it costs to set up statues of a living man or unveil his photographs, to distribute sweets after the ceremony and to make the function a success at great expense. I, therefore, believe that we degrade our religion through such activities. No man can be described as perfectly good or wise or as a mahatma before he is dead. Nobody but God knows a man's heart. I would rather wish that instead of setting up my statues or unveiling my photographs, people opened spinning and weaving schools or did something else which would benefit the country socially, spiritually, economically or politically.

You advise non-vegetarians to eat more meat and save as much grains as possible. Is not this advice of yours contrary to the principle of non-violence?

You have perhaps not understood, or I have not been able to explain, my argument properly. Those who are non-vegetarians do eat meat in any case, but they also eat vegetarian food at the same time and are thus doubly guilty. If they became completely vegetarian, of course nothing would be better than that. But they are not likely to do that, or, if they try, they change might harm their health. Looking at the matter from another point of view, vegetarians also commit violence. In fact we continually commit violence from the moment we are born. These are the conditions in which we have to observe non-violence. Forcing a non-vegetarian to become a vegetarian is a form of coercion and, therefore, violence. Violence consists in people fighting against one another, in amassing wealth at the cost of the poor, casting lustful glances at women and forcing draught animals to carry excessively heavy loads; persons who do these things are the really violent people. I believe that, compared to such persons, non-vegetarians who save cereals and otherwise lead decent lives, live happily themselves and let others be happy, are better human beings.

It is only with God's grace that we are able to endure the sufferings which fall to our lot in life. In this transient world, things are always happening and passing. But that fact does not absolve us from our moral responsibility. To the man in distress, his misfortune is a stark reality. Many learned men describe this world as *maya*. Be that as it may, so long as we live in this world and remain caught in the cycle of birth and death we have some duties to discharge and must discharge them; there can be no doubt about that. To face courageously the misfortunes that befall one is the best use one can make of life in this human body.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 30-2

163. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 29, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Please remain silent till the prayer is over and I finish saying whatever I have to say. I wish that so long as I am here and alive, those of you who come here out of devotion—let us not talk of those who come only to watch the spectacle—would join me in reciting the name of God. Then please listen to what I say in silence. I am going to talk to you about something very important today.¹

There are only a few days now before June 2. In the coming days I shall deal each day with some aspect of the problem which is uppermost in your minds. You have drawn me to you by remaining peaceful and by exercising restraint, and thereby compelled me to open my heart to you. How nice it would be if the people who consider themselves the children of this country would think calmly and be courageous. It is indeed a difficult thing to do while the Press continues to give publicity to frightful stories of arson and loot and killings.

I am not at all worried about what June 2 will bring, or what Lord Mountbatten will say on his return. I am not in the habit of worrying over what the Government might say. It has been my way ever since I came here in 1915.

I was born in India. I left the country at the age of 22. It was like being in exile. After spending twenty years, i. e., the best years of my youth in South Africa I returned home. I did not accumulate any wealth in the intervening period. Right from the beginning I had realized that God had so shaped me that I should not run after money, but serve Him. God made me feel that I would not succeed in doing anything else. I learnt the way of service from the *Gita* which says that whatever we possess is not ours but belongs to God. Then came the question how God could be realized. I learnt that God resides in every human being in the world and he who serves mankind serves God.

Then we come to the *mantra* from the *Ishopanishad*² which says: “Gods pervades everything in the world.” I used to explain the

¹ The prayer was then conducted. What follows is the speech after prayer.

² Verse 1

meaning of this *mantra* every day when I was in Travancore. The *mantra* further says: "Leave everything do your work and do not covet wealth that belongs to another."

This is a simple thing which even a child can understand. But its deeper meaning is something not easily understood. We are however all grown-ups and we must understand this meaning. That is why I spoke to you about his great thing. If we understand this meaning, what have we to quarrel about?

This is a big thing I have talked about. Let me now come to the main point which I want to touch upon today. I have taken some trouble today. Do I have the time to write out my speech in English every day? Our English newspapers must publish my speeches. But how can our journalists render my speeches into English? Are they able to understand English perfectly? They possess B. A. and M. A. degrees of course. But they do not have adequate knowledge of the English language to convey my Hindi statements correctly in English. For English is not their own language. It is a foreign language for them. Here, however, I shall speak in Hindustani because it is almost a mother tongue for me and entirely so for all of you. Hence you are able to understand correctly whatever I say in this language. This lady here (Dr. Sushila Nayyar) translates my speeches into English because she knows English fairly well. Still there are some defect in her rendering. That is why today I spent some time and wrote my speech in English. Today I shall talk to you bearing this thing in mind. But newspapers will publish only my written speech.¹

So, I would like to begin by mentioning the letter in which I have been cursed for continuing the prayer. It says that I am a liar and do not answer questions properly. Those who write such things are childish. They may be adults in age, but they are still children in terms of mental growth.

What pricks them most is the fact that I keep calling upon them to lay down their lives instead of rousing them to kill. They want me to call upon the Hindus to avenge violence by violence, arson by arson. But I cannot deny my whole life and be guilty of advocating the rule of the jungle instead of the law of humanity. If someone comes to kill me I would die imploring God to have mercy on him. Instead, these people insist that I should first ask you to kill and then

¹ The written speech is not traceable.

die if need be. They tell me that if I am not prepared to say such a thing, I should keep my courage to myself and retire to the forest. But why do they say that to me? Because the Muslims are killing people? On that account, should the Hindus also stoop to kill? And should both sides thus give themselves up to frenzy? If the Muslims go wrong, should we also go wrong? They maintain that all Muslims are sinister; that they are wicked at heart. They also claim that all Hindus are angels. But I cannot accept such a claim.

I have received a letter from a Muslim woman. She asks me why I do not recite the “*‘auz abillah*” in urdu verse. I would like to say in reply that if I started reading it in Urdu verse the Muslims would be enraged and ask me what authority I had to translate it from the Arabic. What would I tell them when they threatened to beat me up?

The fact is that a thing sounds sweet in its original language or in a version over which many people have laboured. Bishops have laboured hard and seen to it that the English of the Bible is very sweet. Somehow, that English has turned out sweeter than the original Latin. Students of English must definitely study the Bible. I do not hate the English language. Rather I admire it. But it becomes clumsy in a wrong place. Hence I am not prepared to sacrifice the sweetness of the language of “*‘auz abillah*”. We do not have poets who can translate it into something equally sweet.

Today I shall not speak about the eternal law of non-violence much as I believe in it very firmly. If the whole of India adopted this law after due deliberation she would become the unquestioned leader of the whole world. Here, however, all that I wish to stress is that no man should ever yield except to reason.

But today we seem to have given up reason altogether. Reason can hold sway only when we have courage. There is nothing brave about what is going on today. It is a sheer negation of humanity. We have well-nigh turned into beasts. Our papers scream at us every day that the Hindus have played havoc in one place and the Muslims in another. Both the Hindus and the Muslims are indulging in wickedness. I am prepared to accept that the Muslims have played greater havoc. But while both are playing havoc, it is futile to find out who surpasses whom. Both are equally guilty.

News has come that many villages of the neighbouring district of Gurgaon have been burnt down. I am trying to find out which of the two communities is guilty of this arson. But it is difficult to have

correct information. People might ask when so much is happening in my vicinity how I can sit idle and wax eloquent. But when you people have come here and when so much is unfortunately happening in Gurgaon, I shall definitely tell you what is in my heart. All I have to say is that even if there is fire burning all around us we must keep calm—why, we should even let ourselves be consumed without being perturbed. Why should we, out of fear, go about saying that such and such a thing is going to happen on June 2? For those who will keep up their courage, nothing is going to happen on that day. Be absolutely sure about it. Each one of us has to die one day. No one is born immortal. Why then should we not resolve that we will die with courage but never do wrong till the very last breath, that we shall not deliberately kill anyone? Once you resolve to do this you will be able to maintain your mental balance, and will not need to look up to anyone. You would make it clear to those who want to have Pakistan under threat and intimidation that they would not get even an inch of Pakistan that way. If they will be guided by justice, convince us with reasoning and persuade the world, they can have the whole of India for themselves. But we shall never grant it under coercion.

And what can I say to the British? It will be an act of betrayal if they do not stand by the proposals of the Cabinet Mission. We shall not betray nor shall we allow them to betray us. We are both concerned with the proclamation of May 16. The Constituent Assembly is sitting in terms of the May 16 paper.¹ It is for the British to hand over power and quit. The government of free Indians formed under the constitution worked out by the Constituent Assembly can do anything afterwards—keep India one or divide it into two or more parts. We shall go ahead on that basis. We know nothing more than that if we face reality in terms of the welfare of our own country, we should first agree to establish peace in the country, telling the turbulent elements in the country firmly and boldly that there can be no departure from the document of May 16 until they stop the sanguinary strife.² But we shall not be cowed down.

We shall achieve everything if we learn this lesson during these four days. Let them try out all the arms they have accumulated. When we stood firm against such a mighty empire and were not afraid of all their arms, when we did not bow down to their flag, why should we

¹ The following two sentences are reproduced from Harijan.

² This sentence is from *Harijan*.

falter now? Let us not make the mistake, on the eve of our hard-won freedom, of thinking that we are likely to lose it if we do not yield, even though it be to brute force. That way lies perdition.

I do not take the cables from London seriously. I must cling to the hope that Britain will not depart by a hair's breadth from the letter and the spirit of the Cabinet Mission's statement of May 16, unless the parties, of their own free will, come to an agreement on any variation. For that purpose they have to meet and hammer out an acceptable solution. That statement has been accepted by the Congress and the British Government. If either of them go back on it, it will be a breach of faith.

The British officials should know what the people are whispering.¹ It is said that the British officers in India are dishonest. It is said that they have a hand in these riots and that they are even inciting both the communities to fight. But we must refuse to believe the serious charge unless it is established beyond doubt. In fact, I would say, how can fighting break out unless we want it? If I do not wish to quarrel with my daughter here, who can force me to do so?

And Lord Mountbatten's task is not easy. He is a great commander, he is brave, but he cannot show his bravery here. He has not come here with his soldiers. He has not come here in his military uniform. He has come here as civilian and says that he has come to grant India freedom from British rule. Now we have to see how and in what manner they leave. Lord Mountbatten has to lend dignity to the office of Governor-General that he is occupying. He has to prove his intelligence and true statesmanship. It would not be fitting if he commits a slip or loses time. Hence let us all pray together that God may grant him good sense. And let him understand that he cannot force any change in the statement of May 16. If he does anything, it will be betrayal and betrayal helps none. Betrayal can never bring about a good result.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 97-103; and *Harijan*, 8-6-1947

¹ This and the last two sentences of the preceding paragraph are from *Harijan*.

164. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 30, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Please do not look up to London. Do not look up to the Viceroy. Not that all Englishmen in Britain are dishonest. A large number of them are noble. Lord Mountbatten is also a noble person. But they are all good in their own places. When they come here and interfere in our affairs they all turn wicked. Now the old idea that our future depends on the protection of the British no longer holds good. We are not in duty bound to retain the Englishmen in our civil services. The civilians may stay on if they wish. Similarly, the businessmen may stay on too, if they desire. But no English soldier will be kept here to protect them. They can stay on here only on the strength of their service and the affection of the Indian people. We shall not be responsible if in a frenzy anybody harms them. It may be some time before the British finally quit India. They have fixed June 30, 1948, as the target date. It will be exactly one year from today [*sic*]. They must leave before that date if they can. But they cannot stay on even for a single day after that date. It is like honouring a promissory note. It the money on the promissory note is to be paid on Sunday, the payment cannot be postponed to Monday. Similarly, the British cannot stay on after June 30, 1948. They have to abide by the command of the British people. After all, the Viceroy is the servant of the British people. On the 2nd or 3rd June he will reveal what he intends doing and in what manner he will leave. It is his duty and he as to fulfil it. We have to look to our own duty.

And then I wonder who I am. Whom do I represent? I left the Congress many years ago.¹ I am not even a four-anna member of the Congress. But I am a servant of the Congress. I have served it for many years and I continue to do so. Similarly, I am a servant of the Muslim League and also of the Princes. I serve everyone but represent no one. Of course I do represent one person. I represent the Qaid-e-Azam, because I have signed the peace appeal along with him. Both of us have together said that no political objective may be attained by

¹ In 1934

violence. This is a very big thing. The appeal deserved to be signed by other people too. But Jinnah Saheb insisted on having Gandhi's signature. And so I became Jinnah Saheb's representative. Apart from him I represent no one else.

But I did not sign the appeal in my capacity as a Hindu. I was born a Hindu, no doubt. No one can undo the fact. But I am also a Muslim because I am a good Hindu. In the same way I am also a Parsi and a Christian too. At the basis of all religions there is the name of only one God. All the scriptures say the same thing.

I have read the Koran and I do not share that lady's belief that the Koran ordains the killing of the infidels. I consulted Badshah Khan and Abdus Samad Khan who recited the Koranic passages so beautifully today and they also confirmed that the Koran did not ordain the killing of non-Muslims. No Bihari Muslim told me that since I was a non-believer they would kill me. Nor did the Maulvis in Noakhali say any such thing. On the contrary, they allowed the *Ramdhun* to the accompaniment of the *dholak*. All that the Koran says is that an infidel would be answerable to God. But God would demand an explanation from everyone, even from a Muslim. And He would not question you about your words but your deeds. But then those who are keen on seeing dirt can find it everywhere. There is nothing in which good and bad are not mixed up. Why, our *Manusmriti* talks of pouring molten lead into the ears of the untouchables¹! But I would say that that is not the true teaching of our scriptures. Tulsidas gives the essence of all Shastras in his statement that compassion is the root of all religions. No religion ever teaches us to kill anyone. We must act in accordance with the following couplet of Tulsidas:

Sentient and insentient, good and bad, are all creations of God. The man of God takes the good and leaves the bad even as the swan which drinks the milk and leaves the water.

We shall have to tell the Muslims that that is not the way to achieve Pakistan. They cannot have Pakistan so long as the arson and killings do not stop. In the same way Hindus also cannot force the Muslims to stop harping on the theme of Pakistan. But my question is: Why should you needlessly quarrel in the name of Pakistan? After all, Pakistan is not a spectre? True Pakistan is that which guarantees the safety of every child. Whether it is Pakistan or Hindustan, people

¹ As punishment for hearing Vedic verses being recited

with different religions and ways of life ought to be able to live in safety there, no matter whether they are Brahmins or Banias or Pandits or belong to any of the other creeds. Hence, I would like to invite Jinnah Saheb to join me on a tour of the whole country and work to end these acts of violence.

I would like to tell my colleague Jinnah Saheb and the whole world that we are not prepared to hear anything about Pakistan so long as these excesses continue. Once they stop, we shall sit down and decide whether there should be Pakistan or Hindustan. When we sit together like brothers, we shall distribute sweets and have illuminations. It is through friendly relations that Pakistan can come into being and through friendly relations alone can Hindustan survive. If we keep on fighting, Hindustan will be destroyed.

The Statement of May 16 of last year is the basis for the settlement. Not a comma can be removed from it. The British have no right to do anything which falls outside the purview of this Statement. Nor are we demanding anything more than what is contained in the Statement. We must make it clear that even if we all have to die or the whole country is reduced to ashes, Pakistan will not be conceded under duress.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 103-6

165. TALK WITH ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

May 31, 1947

GHAFFAR KHAN: So, Mahatmaji, you will now regard us as Pakistanis? . . . A terrible situation faces the Frontier Province and Baluchistan. We do not know what to do.

GANDHIJI: Have you read what I have been saying during the past two or three days? One who has faith in non-violence should not yield to despair in this manner. You and your Khudai Khidmatgars¹ are going to be tested now. You can say that you do not accept Pakistan and then submit to whatever is inflicted on you. We have, as you know, adopted the motto of 'do or die'. It does not befit one who professes such a motto to give way to despair. And whatever happens I

¹ Meaning 'Servants of God'; popularly known as 'Red Shirts', it was an organization of the Khan brothers pledged to non-violence and had been following nationalist policy.

am going to visit the Frontier Province, for I don't believe in these divisions of the country. I am not going to ask anybody's permission. If they kill me for my defiance, I will embrace death with a smiling face. That is, if Pakistan comes into existence, I intend to tour it, live there and see what they do to me. This girls¹ will of course be with me, so that we two old men and this girl will tour together. Will that be all right?

I understand. I won't take any more of your time.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 45-6

166. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
May 31, 1947

As Gandhiji came on the platform he asked the people to be quiet, telling them that during the prayer one's eyes should be closed and one's ears open.

That man² wearing a hat like an Englishman is demanding that Jinnah should be arrested. Does he really want to arrest Jinnah? You may have the power to do so. I too possess such power. But my way of acting is different. Ever since I came from South Africa I have been training you in my way. I am not such a great teacher at that. But then, even a mad person can speak out his mind. For the past fifty-four years I have been regularly saying that we must hold our enemy. For you Jinnah is an enemy, but I regard none as enemy. I have said it and it is the perfect truth that I have become his representative. How can I then regard him as my enemy? Even the British had become my enemies. But I did not become their enemy. I became their friend, their representative, and I told them things that were in their own interest.

There are two ways of 'holding' one's enemies. One way is the way of coercion, the other is the way of love. I have 'held' you by love. When I ask you to be silent, you remain silent. You must have realized that I have used the term 'holding' as a joke but you must

¹ Manu J. Gandhi

² According to the source, he had protested against the recitation from the Koran, but the prayer was carried on peacefully.

have taken it in the right sense. What I mean is that at times we shall no doubt succeed in holding Jinnah Saheb. Do you think the police would arrest him? The police cannot do so. The police cannot arrest me, nor Khan Saheb. Of course the British authorities can arrest him at will. But even Jinnah Saheb would not be quite imprisoned. He would be truly held if I could bring him here and make him stand before you.

There was a man called Mir Alam. He belonged to the Frontier, Badshah Khan's land. He was even taller than Badshah Khan, who is himself a mountain of a man. He was my friend at one time. But the Pathans are very simple-hearted. That is why they are Badshah—noblemen. Somebody told this man, Mir. Alam, that Gandhi had taken £15,000 from General Smuts and had betrayed the Indian community. That was enough. One day Mir Alam confronted me as an enemy. He carried with him a heavy-headed stick. He hit me with it right on my neck. I fell down on the pavement and broke my teeth. I survived because God willed it. Mir Alam was caught by a few Englishmen who were passing. But I had him released. I told the Englishmen that he had been misled by a rumour that I had succumbed to money and it was no wonder that the honest Pathan's blood had boiled and he had rushed out to hit me. Thus it was that I held Mir Alam. He became a close friend.¹

God willing, Jinnah Saheb too will come and sit here one day and say that he is not, and never has been, our enemy. He will say that he is asking for Pakistan, but his Pakistan will be a great thing and will be in the interest of everybody. Then we would all gather and have illuminations and distribute sweets.

I am not saying this from cowardice or by way of flattery. I am talking only of being brave. We have to be brave like the Sikhs, one of whom is equal to one and a quarter lakh of others. I have already explained to you how one Sikh becomes equal to one and a quarter lakh. That is not because of the *kirpan* which he always keeps to show that he would never be afraid of it. Whether one and a quarter lakh together or a single one of them come to attack him, he would never raise his hand. Who can say that a person who can die in this manner is a coward? Everyone would call him a truly courageous person.

¹ For details of the incident, *vide*

I said yesterday that we would not let Pakistan be formed by threat of force even if the whole of India were burnt down; but if they influenced our hearts with reason and persuaded us and if we were convinced that they had no evil intentions at heart, we would accede to the demand for Pakistan. But then you will have to inspire confidence in us that no one need fear the Muslims in Pakistan. When you have declared, with God as you witness, that there would be no violence for the attainment of political objectives, how can you adopt violent action for attaining Pakistan?

We want neither Birla's nor the Nawab of Bhopal's raj in India. Birla says he is not keen to rule. In the same way, the Nawab of Bhopal also calls himself a friend of his people. He too is unwilling to accept power by going against his subjects. Who then would hold the reins of power? They would come into your hands. Not only into your hands, but into the hands of the poor.

There are many Birlas in the country. What is their power? They have to get their work done by labourers and they can get it done only when they pay for it. When the workers refuse to work, the millions would remain stuck with the rich. If these rich people own land, they are not going to till it themselves. If they do not find anyone to plough their land their vast stretches of land would lie useless. Similarly, all the swords and spears and horsemen of the Nawab of Bhopal are going to be rendered useless. After all, how many people can they kill? Over whom would he rule after killing his own subjects? He would be able to rule over his subjects only by becoming their trustee.

Instead of this, if anyone says that because the Nawab of Bhopal is a Muslim, Bhopal would be a Muslim territory and that in Kashmir a handful of Brahmin would wield power, this will not be conceded at all.

Take the case of the Nizam of Hyderabad. It is said that the moment he has an opportunity, he will try to bring the whole of India under his rule. But who precisely is going to do it? His subjects are Hindus.

The British would be betraying us if they thought that they would find a place for themselves in Hyderabad, Bhopal, Rajkot or some other place after they quit India. But I have not gathered any such impression. I believe that the British intentions of leaving India are perfectly honest. Now that they are leaving India, their sovereignty

also ends. How are some footholds here and there going to be of any help? And, when the British are gone, the Princes are going to have their place in the midst of their subjects.

Once when Malaviyaji wen to Bombay, I accompanied him. Both of us went and met some Maharajas there. They made us sit on elevated seats, and themselves sat at our feet. Those were the days when the British power was at its peak. Now when the Imperialist power is withdrawing, they will at once realize that they can retain their position only when they listen to the people. The only way of responding to the people is by coming into the Constituent Assembly. If they take an obstinate stand and refuse to joint the Constituent Assembly, they cannot remain rulers.

No Muslim Prince in India can say that he will kill all the Hindus. If anyone says such a thing, I would ask him why he was their protector all this time, why he lived by their food. Similarly, any Prince, just because he is a Muslim, would not be entitled to say that he would join Pakistan. Nor can a Hindu ruler, because he is a Hindu, say that he would be with the Congress. Either would have to follow the wishes of the people.

In the end Gandhiji announced the death of the Chakrayya, a young Harijan from Andhra.

He was an inmate of the Sevagram Ashram. He was trained under Nayee Talim. He was a hard-working craftsman. He was not given to weaknesses like falsehood, fraud and anger. By some misfortune he developed some brain trouble. He was a believer in nature cure but his friends insisted that he should be operated upon by surgeons. The disease had affected his eyes. Yet with great effort he wrote me a letter before he was taken to the operation table. He said in this that although he liked nature cure he was willing to undergo the surgery and if he had to die in the process, he would do so reciting the name of Rama. Eventually he passed away on the operation table in a hospital in Bombay.

I feel like crying over his death; but I cannot cry. For whom should I cry and for whom should I refrain from crying? If Mother India should have any children, they should be, as Tulsidas has said, either generous or brave. Chakrayya was generous because he was a selfless worker, always contented. He was also brave because he welcomed death. He was a Harijan but knew no distinctions of Harijan and *savarna* and of Hindu and Muslim. He regarded all as human

beings and was himself a true human being.

Today I have talked in one breathe about the Nawab of Bhopal and Chakrayya. In India there is room for both. Let the Nawab of Bhopal be a trustee of his people. And let us have millions of young men like Chakrayya. Then alone will India be able to live in peace and happiness.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan I, pp. 106-11

167. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS¹

June 1, 1947

Do you feel that India will ultimately be united under one central government regardless of what the immediate settlement may be?

The future will depend on what we do in the present.

Do you foresee the possibility of the world being united under one central governing body composed of representatives of the component parts?

That is the only condition on which the world can live.

Do you think there is any possibility of armed conflict between Russia and the United States?

Anything is possible but it is highly improbable.

What do you feel is the most acceptable solution to the Palestine problem?

The abandonment wholly by the Jews of terrorism and other forms of violence.

Do you believe that Egypt and the Sudan should unite under one government when the British leave?

I have no doubt that they ought to.

As a result of your experiment during the past five months do you feel that the principle of non-violence can yet be triumphant in the solution of the world's problems?

My five months in Noakhali have only confirmed my previous experience that non-violence can cure all our ills.

The Bombay Chronicle, 2-6-1947

¹ The questions were conveyed by Gerald J. Rock, staff correspondent, of the United Press of America.

168. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

June 1, 1947

CHI. . .

I was glad to have Dr. Jivraj Mehta's report about you. And now [Dilip] has advanced so far that he is able to maintain a fine car. You can have a daily ride in it to the Hanging Garden. If the experiment has no adverse effect on your health, we may assume that the crisis is over. Do you have Nathuram Sharma's collection of 108 Upanishads? Or any other collection which includes the *Allopanishad*? It is there in Nathuram Sharma's collection. If you have it, get a copy made and send it to me. I don't want the whole book. The *Allopanishad* is the shortest one. My impression is that it consists of about five lines.

I hope . . . is keeping quite well. I can't say how long I shall be here.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 52

169. LETTER TO MANIBHAI B. DESAI

NEW DELHI,

June 1, 1947

CHI. MANILAL,

I have already written to them to send you the money. Even if Dhirubhai is frequently occupied with his own work and Paramanand has not become steady as his wife keeps indifferent health, I suppose you will stick to the place and hope to manage somehow. Ask Balkrishna¹ also to think over the matter.

1. You may give whatever name you wish to the Trust. Respect Dinshawji's wishes in the matter.

2. The main activities will remain the same.

3. There is no need to think about the future.

The budget seems to be all right. I do not have the time to go deeper into the matter. It is with great difficulty that I have been able to write this.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 10439. Courtesy: Manibhai B. Desai

¹ Balkrishna Bhavé

170. LETTER TO BALWANTRAI K. THAKORE

June 1, 1947

BHAI BALWANTRAI¹,

I have your letter. Probably you do not know that I am but a villager. Mine is a voice in the wilderness. Give up your delusion.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 52

171. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI²

June 1, 1947

The purity of my *yajna* will be put to the test only now. Today I find myself all alone. [Even the Sardar and Jawaharlal]³ think that my reading of the situation is wrong and peace is sure to return if partition is agreed upon. The Viceroy is a nice and intelligent man. They did not like my telling the Viceroy that even if there was to be partition, it should not be through British intervention or under the British rule. They wonder if I have not deteriorated with age. But if I did not show myself as I am, I would prove a hypocrite. And I must speak as I feel, if I am to prove a true and loyal friend to the Congress. Never mind if I am not a four-anna member of the Congress. But they all come and consult me, seek my advice. Similarly I am also a friend of the British. I must therefore tell the British what is good for them. Else, of what use is my being their friend? If I were to prove my true and loyal friendship to them it becomes my bounden duty to lay bare the facts before them and show them the right way, regardless of whether my advice is appreciated or resented. I see clearly that we are setting about this business the wrong way. We may not feel the full effect immediately, but I can see clearly that the future of independence gained at this price is going to be dark. I pray

¹ Gujarati poet and man of letters

² In *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, “Memorial to Secretary of State for the Colonies”, 15-3-1897, Pyarelal explains that in the morning, “mistaking the hands of his watch, Gandhiji woke up earlier than usual. . . . he remained lying in bed and began to muse in a low voice.”

³ *Vide* The source has “people”.

that God may not keep me alive to witness it. And I have left you in this vast field to fend for yourself. I have done it with full deliberation because you share my burden in this sacrifice although you are a little girl with no experience of life. In order that God may give me the strength and wisdom to remain firm in the midst of universal opposition and to utter the full truth, I need all the strength of purity that you will have in your sincere work, whether in thought or act, while waking or asleep or even when you are not conscious of yourself. In the matter of devotion or purity, or in treading the path of truth years hardly count; what is needed is spiritual strength. Wasn't Prahlad very young? Had little Dhruva attained a mature age? But they had the strength to tread the path of truth. Moreover, a man may grow old and yet be a fraud. But somehow in spite of my being all alone, in my thoughts, I am experiencing an ineffable inner joy and freshness of mind. I feel as if God himself was lighting my path before me. And it is perhaps the reason why I am able to fight on single-handed. People now ask me to retire to Kashi or go to the Himalayas. I laugh and tell them that the Himalayas of my penance are where there is misery to be alleviated, oppression to be relieved. There can be no rest for me so long as there is a single person in India whether man or woman, young or old, lacking the necessities of life, by which I mean a sense of security, a life style worthy of human beings, i.e., clothing, education, food and shelter of a decent standard. I said the same thing to Sarat Babu yesterday. I cannot bear to see Badshah Khan's grief. His inner agony wrings my heart, but if I gave way to tears, it would be cowardly and, stalwart Pathan as he is, he would break down. And I don't want him to break down. But maybe all of them are right and I alone am floundering in darkness. The more you remain vigilant and cheerful by maintaining good health the more you will influence all that I do.

I shall perhaps not be alive to witness it, but should the evil I apprehend overtake India and her independence be imperilled, let posterity know what agony this old man went through thinking of it. Let not the coming generation curse Gandhi for being a party to India's vivisection. But everybody is today impatient for independence. Therefore there is no alternative. This is like eating wooden *laddoos*, if they eat it they die of colic; if they don't they starve.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 50-2

172. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 1, 1947

Today also a Brahmin objected to the recitation from the Koran, but the prayer continued. Two young men from the audience took him by the arms, made him sit down and tried to silence him. This created some disturbance in the meeting. When the police came in to take him away Gandhiji said :

Please, constable, don't take him away. Let him sit where he is. Please only see that he does not create any more trouble. The recitation from the Koran is already over. Now we shall have some *bhajans* provided this gentleman allows it. If he does not, we shall have no *bhajans* for the day.

At this that Brahmin gentleman smilingly raised his elbow and said: "Just look, in this scuffle, I sustained these bruises. Is this your non-violence?"

Well, forget about your bleeding. You just tell me whether I should continue the prayer. We shall have *bhajans* if you say 'yes'. If you do not agree, we shall have no *bhajans* today.

The gentleman cheerfully agreed to listen to *bhajans*.

Hinduism does not belong only to you. I am a Hindu too, and a perfect *sanatani*. Now, why should we read only the *Gita*? Why should we not read the Koran too? We must gather pearls wherever we find them. Power is now about to come to us. The Viceroy is impatient to hand it over to us. Would you, at this moment, quarrel like this and show your folly? You must learn to be courteous. You can learn courtesy from Badshah Khan. Today when Manu went to bring him to the prayer he said he would rather keep away as some Hindu might be hurt by his presence. I then sent him a message saying that he was huge as a mountain and I was a mere Bania, and if I was not scared, why should he be? And now, having come here, there he sits more gentle than a lamb. We too should be well-behaved like him. Granted that there are some uncharitable things in the Koran. But is there any work which does not contain such things? I have lived in the midst of hundreds of Muslim friends. No one has ever told me that I was an undesirable person because I was not a Muslim. A Muslim friend¹ who is no longer alive, and who, a jeweller that he was,

¹ Umar Jhaveri, a businessman of South Africa

possessed also the qualities of a jewel, had warned me to beware of Muslims since all of them were not angels. But I told him I need not look at the darker side of things. I was happy to have found such a good friend. And he was not the only one. I can give you quite a few such names. I had even accepted one of them¹ as my own son. He was always ready to serve people. But God took him away. When such wonderful persons can be found among the Muslims, I say the Hindus should not lose their heads because of what a few Muslims do. The British kept us under control by the force of arms. Shall we start fighting when they are leaving? This is certainly not worthy of us.

After the *bhajans* and the *Ramdhun* had been gone through in an orderly manner, Gandhiji complimented the people as well as the Brahmin gentleman for remaining peaceful and said:

If people would act with a little understanding, independence is almost in their hands, because Jawaharlal is the Vice-President in our Government. True, the Government is headed by the Viceroy; but he has to keep silent now. Your real king is Jawaharlal. He is a king who wants to serve not only India, but through it the whole world. He has acquainted himself with the peoples of all lands and is adept at dealing with diplomats from all countries. But how long can he go on doing it all by himself?

This uncrowned king is at your service. Should he put down your disturbances with bullets? If today he suppresses one person, he will have tomorrow to act similarly in another case. And that would not be swaraj, not Panchayat raj either. Only when you remain disciplined will Jawaharlal be able to lead us and our freedom be safe.

Here is an example of the discipline to which Jawaharlal submits himself. Last year when he had gone to Kashmir Lord Wavell wanted to meet him. Maulana Saheb wanted to send for him. When I persuaded him he abided by the order of the Congress President and came here leaving the problem unresolved over there.²

Today also Jawaharlal's mind is in Kashmir, where Sheikh Abdullah³, the leader of the people, is locked behind the bars. I told Jawaharlal that he was needed more here. I told him that if it was necessary I would go to Kashmir and do his work, and that he should

¹ Hussain Main

² *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 22-6-1946

³ Leader of Kashmir National Conference—a nationalist organization fighting for a democratic set-up in the State, to which the Maharaja was opposed.

stay here. I also told him that although I was bound by my word to do or die only in Bihar or Noakhali, I could still go to Kashmir because there too the problem of the Muslims was involved. I would go there and befriend the Maharaja of Kashmir and work for the good of the Muslims. But Jawaharlal has not yet agreed to this.

In short, now that we have attained swaraj, each one of us should act with discipline, humility and understanding. Then alone would India deserve her independence.

Yesterday I talked to you about the Princes. Similarly today I want to talk about the trading community. Yesterday I said that India would not be ruled by a Birla, nor by the Nawab of Bhopal, nor the Nizam nor the Maharaja of Kashmir. The Princes would be only servants of the people.

It cannot be that the people of India should become free in one place and be under subjugation in another place. When freedom comes, it shall be for all.

Now freedom is definitely coming. Because if the British are honest, and it is my impression that they are, they have to quit. The Viceroy Lord Mountbatten says that he wants to leave as early as possible. And he will stick to his word.

When the British go will we become the rulers of the country? And shall we quarrel among ourselves when we become the rulers of India? Will the Princes then ride over us? No, they will all become the trustees of the people. In other words, they will be servants of society like Chakrayya. Only then can they continue as our rulers.

In the same way, we should not be ruled by the business community either. We want the rule of the *Bhangis*. The *Bhangis* are the highest of all because their service is the greatest. That is why I have volunteered to be a *Bhangi* myself. By the rule of the *Bhangis* I mean that once you make a scavenger you minister, you must respect his word as much as the British respected the word of the seventeen-year-old Queen Victoria, and everyone, big and small, did his duty. I have seen with my eyes the manner in which the British perform their duties.

I have been to London several times. On one occasion I stayed there for three years. But I was then a mere boy. I have gone to London twice or thrice subsequently. There the people are so reasonable and law-abiding that the police are never obliged to wield firearms. They have in their hand only a baton. People know that the police are their servants. Hence they follow the instructions of the

police. The police also try to help the people to the maximum. Things are not done there through bribery. The police do not accept bribes even if offered.

Our Indian police to should follow this example now. They should not accept any bribe at all. If they are not getting enough to subsist upon they can ask the Sardar for higher wages. Let them approach Baldev Singh¹. Let them go to Nehruji. When big officers and ministers get thousands, why should the policemen receive meagre salaries? These people would do something about it. But the policemen must give up taking bribes.

I also want to say something about businessmen. They must all come together and proclaim with one voice that they all want to become true Banias and true Marwaris. A true Bania is one who weighs things correctly. All the Banias and all the Marwaris and all traders must get together and resolve not to indulge in black-marketing and not to give or take bribes.

If they can do this much Rajendra Babu's² helplessness in providing food for the people would be removed. I have received a letter which says that even though I had the salt tax repealed, salt is now costlier than before. How is that? I say after the repeal of the salt tax we should get salt almost free. For such a thing to happen the traders will have to do business for the sake of India instead of for their own sake. They should forget black-marketing altogether. When that happens, the ministers of the Interim Government would be able to carry out their respective tasks, and Rajaji, Rajendra Babu, Jawaharlalji, Matthai³, Bhabha⁴ and all the four League Ministers⁵ would be able to serve you in every way. Even after that, if India cannot have enough food and clothing and there is no progress in the country, you can remove them from office.

But how would you remove them? Would you have them ousted by the Viceroy's action? No. You would ask the Viceroy not to

¹ Defence Member in the Interim Government.

² Rajendra Prasad was Minister of Food and Agriculture.

³ John Matthai, Member for Railways and Transport in the Interim Government

⁴ C. H. Bhabha, Member for Works, Mines and Power in the Interim Government

⁵ They were: Liaquat Ali Khan for Finance, I. I. Chundrigar for Commerce, Abdur Rab Nishtar for Communications (Posts and Air) And Ghazanfar Ali Khan for Health

bother. You would 'hold' the Ministers yourselves in the manner in which I said yesterday I would 'hold' Jinnah. Then you would be able to make them do as you wish.

I have learnt from Jawaharlal that people are starving in London. I was sorry to hear that. However guilty the British might have been in our case, they must certainly get enough to eat.

Ours is a very vast country. If our traders behave properly and if they are sensible we can say that so long as India is alive, the world cannot go hungry. We would provide food for the world. I am a Bania and I know something about trade. If all the Banias and traders co-operate with me and also co-operate with the Interim Government, and if all the Muslims co-operate, I can provide food for everyone. I am not at all prepared to accept that we do not produce enough in our country. If we work hard enough and act with reason and if by the grace of God there is sufficient rain, we can have plenty to eat. But it is not possible to clap with one hand. This can happen only if I can have co-operation from all, and then it would be such a thunderous clap that all of you would be happy and the whole world would be happy.

I tell you in no uncertain terms that if everybody in independent India does his duty well, the whole country will be happy.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 111-6

173. DISCUSSION WITH A CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY

[On or after *June 1, 1947*¹]

You will wish to know what are the marks of a man who wants to realize Truth which is God. He must be completely free from anger and lust, greed and attachment, pride and fear. He must reduce himself to zero and have perfect control over all his senses beginning with the palate or tongue. Tongue is the organ of speech as well as taste. It is with the tongue that we indulge in exaggeration, untruth and speech that hurts. The craving for taste makes us slaves to the plate so that like animals we live to eat. But with proper discipline, we can make ourselves into beings only a "little below the angels". He who has mastered his senses is first and foremost among them. All virtues

¹ Pyarelal says that the missionary had "a ten-minute talk" with Gandhiji "in the first week of June".

reside in him. God manifests Himself through them. Such is the power of self-discipline or self-purification.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 233

174. HOW DID I BEGIN IT?¹

Readers must have notice that last week I started writing for the *Harijan*. How long I shall be able to continue it, I do not know. God's will be done in this as in other things.

When I think of it, the circumstances under which I stopped writing for the *Harijan* have not altered. Pyarelalji is far away from me and in my opinion is doing very important work in Noakhali. He is taking part in what I have called a *mahayajna*. Parasuram, the English typist, who had become used to the work, has gone to Ahmedabad of his own choice to help Jivanji. Kanu Gandhi was of much help, but he is also engaged in the *mahayajna* of Noakhali. Most of the other helpers are also unable to do any writing for lack of time and other reasons. To resume writing for the *Harijan* under these adverse conditions would ordinarily be considered madness. But what appears unpractical from the ordinary standpoint is feasible under Divine guidance. I believe I dance to His tune. If this be delusion I cling to it.

Who is this Divinity? I would love to dwell upon it but not today.

The question that is foremost with us all, I discuss every evening after the prayer. This writing will come before the readers after seven days. This interval would be considered too long in the context of the pressing problems. Therefore, in these columns for the moment, I must confine myself to things of eternal value. One such is *brahmacharya*. The world seems to be running after things of transitory value. It has no time for the other. And yet when one thinks a little deeper it becomes clear it is the things eternal that count in the end.

What is *brahmacharya*? It is the way of life which leads us to the Brahman. It includes full control over the process of reproduction. The control must be in thought, word and deed. If the thought is not under control, the other two have no value. There is a saying in

¹ The Gujarati original appeared in *Harijanbandhu* which was published simultaneously with the source. The translation has been edited.

Hindustani: “He whose heart is pure has all the purifying waters of the Ganga in his house.” For one whose thought is under perfect control, control over speech and action is easy. The *brahmachari* of my conception will be naturally healthy, will not even suffer from a headache and will enjoy a long life. His mind will be brilliant. He will never be slothful. Mental and physical work will not cause him fatigue. His outward tidiness will be a reflection of his inner being. He will exhibit all the attributes of the man of steadfast intellect described in the Gita.¹

If there is not even one person who answers the description we should not worry in the least. There is nothing to wonder at if one who is an *urdhvareta* should the above characteristics. Who can measure the creative strength of such sublimation, one drop of which has the potentiality of bringing into being a human life?

Patanjali has described five disciplines². It is not possible to isolate any one of these and practise it. It may be possible in the case of truth, because it really includes the other four. And for this age the five have been expanded into eleven. Vinoba has put them in the form of a Marathi verse: They are non-violence, truth, non-stealing, *brahmacharya*, non-possession, bread labour, control of the palate, fearlessness, equal regard for all religions, swadeshi and removal of untouchability.

All these can be derive from truth. But life is not so simple. It is no possible to enunciate on grand principle and leave the rest to follow of itself. Even when we know a proposition, its corollaries have to be worked out.

It is well to bear in mind that all the disciplines are of equal importance. If one is broken all are broken. There seems to be a popular belief amongst us that breach of truth or non-violence is pardonable. Non-stealing and non-possession are rarely mentioned. We hardly recognize the necessity of observing them. But a fancied breach of *brahmacharya* excites wrath and worse. There must be something seriously wrong with a society in which values are exaggerated and underestimated. Moreover, to use the word *brahmacharya* in a narrow sense is to detract from its value. Such detraction increases the difficulty of proper observance. When it is isolated even an

¹ II. 55 to 68

² In his *Yogasutras*; they are: non-violence, truth, non-stealing, *brahmacharya* and non-possession.

elementary observance becomes difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, it is essential that all the disciplines should be taken as one. This enables one to realize the full meaning and significance of *brahmacharya*. In practice he alone is a true *brahmachari*, who observes, in thought, word and deed, the eleven-fold vow in its entirety.

NEW DELHI, June 2, 1947

Harijan, 8-6-1947

175. NOTE TO MANU GANDHI

June 2, 1947

When a person does not know the prayer by heart, the result is always an awkward situation. That is what happened today as also three or four days ago. . .¹ could not begin the prayer. I then led with the first verse. The same thing happened today. I do not like all this. He must learn the prayer by heart. I may not tell him this, but he himself ought to have realized it. That he did not do so, what does it indicate? If even the three or four persons nearest to me have no heart in the prayer, must not the fault be mine? We seem to be going through the prayer as if it were a forced task. It means cheating God. We may not like praying or may feel it is a burden, but we must not cheat God.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 56

176. SILENCE-DAY NOTE TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN²

June 2, 1947

I am sorry I can't speak; when I took the decision about the Monday silence I did reserve two exceptions, i.e., about speaking to

¹ The name is omitted in the source.

² The interview took place at 12.30 p.m. In his note marked 'Secret' Lord Mountbatten said: "I saw Mr. Gandhi immediately after the first session of the meeting with the seven Indian Leaders. As this was a Monday, he was observing his day of silence; and he apparently did not consider the occasion of sufficient importance for him to break this rule, so he satisfied himself by handing me the attached note. The original of this is in my possession; it is written on the back of five separate old envelopes and will be, I feel, a document of some historic importance." (C.W. 11026, Lord Mountbatten Papers, Broadlands Archives Trust, Broadlands, Romsey, Hampshire).

high functionaries on urgent matters or attending upon sick people. But I know you do not want me to break my silence.

Have I said one word against you during my speeches? If you admit that I have not, your warning is superfluous.

There are one or two things I must talk about, but not today. If we meet each other again I shall speak.

Badshah Khan is with me in the Bhangi Colony. He said “Do ask the Viceroy to remove the Governor¹. We won’t have peace till he is gone.” I don’t know whether he is right or wrong. He is truthful. If it can be done decorously, You should do it.

From a photostat: G.N. 10835

177. SPEECH AT CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 2, 1947

Mahatmaji gave his reactions to the statement² of His Majesty’s Government and to the draft letter.³ He said that though he did not agree with the decisions of the Working Committee regarding the division of India, he did not want to take any step which would stand in the way of the Working Committee in implementing its previous decision. He however pointed out that there was still some scope for further clarification, and he suggested that Clause 20 relating to the right of the parts to decide to remain or not within the British Commonwealth should be clarified and the Government should be informed that the Congress does not want that any differential treatment should be meted out to any seceding part of India. He also wanted that a written and categorical assurance should be forthcoming from the Muslim League that it accepts the statement as a final settlement and will not make any further claims beyond what is conceded in this statement.

A. I. C. C. File No. 1499-P, 1946-48. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

¹ Sir Olaf Caroe of North-West Frontier Province

² The statement was officially announced on June 3, but copies of it were given to the Congress, Muslim League and Sikh leaders, viz. Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, J.B. Kripalani, M.A. Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, Abdul Rab Nishtar and Sardar Baldev Sing, during their conference with the Viceroy in the morning. For the text of the statement and the letter to the Viceroy, drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru in consultation with J.B. Kripalani, Vallabhbhai Patel and Govind Ballabh Pant, which was earlier read out but subsequently redrafted to incorporate Gandhiji’s suggestions, *vide* “British Government Statement”, 3-6-1947 and “Jawaharlal Nehru’s Letter to viceroy”, 2-6-1947

³ *ibid*

178. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

DELHI,

Monday, June 2, 1947

I am unable to tell you what has happened or is happening on the political plane. But I would like to repeat what I have been saying these last three or four days, namely, that the common man should not concern himself with what the Viceroy has brought from England. We should concern ourselves with what our duty should be in any situation that may arise. The one thing the country should make clear is that it will accept nothing through force.

Continuing, therefore, the thought that I have been developing these last few days, I should like to ask what our doctors and scientists are doing for the sake of the country. One finds them readily going to foreign countries to learn new ideas and the latest treatments for curing diseases. I would suggest that they should turn their attention to the seven lakhs of villages of India. They will then find that all medical men and women can find work to do there. Not in the Western fashion, of course, but in our own fashion in the villages. They will then also know many indigenous remedies which they will be able to make use of. There are so many herbs in India that we have no need to import drugs at all. But more than through drugs they will help the people by teaching them the right mode of living.

What shall I say to the scientists? Are they giving their attention to growing more food? And this not with the aid of artificial fertilizers but through proper methods of tillage and by use of organic manure? In Noakhali I saw people using even the water hyacinth which grows wild and blocks the flow of river water. This our scientists will do when they learn to live for the country rather than for themselves.

I spoke yesterday of the invaluable work that Jawaharlal is doing. I had described him as the uncrowned king of India. He cannot be replaced today when the Englishmen are withdrawing their authority from India. He, who was educated at Harrow and Cambridge and became a barrister, is greatly needed to carry on the negotiations with the Englishmen. But the time is fast approaching when India will have to elect the first president of the Republic. I would have proposed the name of Chakraborty, had he been alive. I would wish with all my heart to have a brave, selfless and pure-hearted scavenger girl to

be our first President. It is no vain dream. We can certainly come across such Harijan girls if only we make an effort to find them. Had I not selected little Gulnar, the late Maulana Mahomed Ali's daughter? But the silly girl went and married Shuaib Qureshi. At one time she led the life of a fakir and had met me when the Ali Brothers were in jail. Gulnar is now the proud mother of many bright children, but she cannot now be my successor.

Our future President will have no need to know English. Of course he will be assisted by men who are proficient in political matters and who also know foreign languages. These dreams, however, can be realized only if we devote all our attention to our villages instead of killing each other.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 116-8

179. A LETTER ¹

[On or after *June 2, 1947*]²

Probably no one is more distressed than I am over the impending division of India. But I have no desire to launch a struggle against what promises to be an accomplished fact. I have considered such a division to be wrong and therefore I could never be party to it. But when the Congress accepts such a division, even though reluctantly, I would not carry on any agitation against that institution. Such a step is not inconceivable under all circumstances. The Congress association with the proposed division is no circumstance warranting a struggle against it of the kind you have in mind. Nor can I endorse your attack upon the British. They have not in any way promoted or encouraged this step.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 244

¹ The addressee, in his letter, had said: "The British are quitting India but leaving it divided. . . In case you launch a struggle against the division of India on communal or Indian States basis . . . I respectfully offer about one lakh . . . disciplined volunteers loyally to carry out your orders."

² From the reference to the Congress Working Committee decision to accept the British Government's proposal, which was on June 2.

180. A LETTER ¹

[On or after *June 2, 1947*]

I feel helpless. I do not know that a parallel between Ireland and India can be drawn. The Congress and the League have come to terms, the former, no doubt, unwillingly. That being the case, one has to do the best that is possible under the circumstances. This I am trying to do according to my lights.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 244

181. LETTER TO NARMADA GANDHI

BHANGI NIWAS, NEW DELHI,

*June 3,*² 1947

I have your letter.³ I have many sons, some of whom bear the name Gandhi and some bear other names. A man who has risen above caste or community, who holds Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Jews in equal regard and who delights in calling himself a Bhangi—if you can count how many crores of sons, and therefore daughters-in-law, such a man is likely to have, please do the total yourself. Your letter was not in your handwriting. Perhaps you don't even know how to sign. The letter, therefore, deserves little attention. Be that as it may, a wise man should use his ancestral well to swim in, not to drown in or to commit suicide. That would be lack of understanding. A man who swims in it is a *janni*. You must give up that place. Be satisfied with what they give as compensation. I shall understand your demanding another house in exchange. To insist on having this very house is the limit of ignorant attachment. I don't care for a memorial. I have seen a good

¹ This was in reply to an Indian in Dublin who had written: "The Indians in Ireland strongly protest against the present talk of partition in India. . . . Ireland had the same fate when the British Government was leaving the country and now the result is that the people of the North and the South Ireland . . . are trying . . . to abolish this partition. . . . India will have to do the same thing. We Hindus and Muslims in this country have firm faith that India can't commit suicide by accepting division under your able leadership and guidance."

² From *Bihar Pachhi Dilhi*, "Question Box"

³ The addressee, a member of the Gandhi family, had sought Gandhiji's help to resist the proposal to acquire for the nation their ancestral home at Porbandar.

many memorials turn into ruins. That may happen in the course of time to this one. too. If, however, it is proposed to use our ancestral house for a good purpose, you or your advisers should not stand in the way.

I have spared this time for you under very heavy pressure of work, thinking that in your heart you would understand. If I am right in my belief, do not allow yourself to be misled by anybody but go on doing your dharma. You can show this letter to your relations and well-wishers.

Blessing from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Otabapano Vadalo, p. 9

182. A LETTER

June 3, 1947

I do not get a moment free. After the prayer I give some letters to Manu or Bisen to read out to me and then dictate replies to them. I think I have done all I could to win you over. But it seems I have failed . . .¹ When we fail to satisfy somebody, we should assume that there must be something wrong with us. Dharma requires that we should not find fault with others but should always be willing to see our own. I should, therefore, advise you to go forward by yielding the way to others.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 62

183. SPEECH AT CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING²

NEW DELHI,

June 3, 1947

I ask the Socialists if they want to capture the Congress or to

¹ Omission as in the source.

² J. B. Kripalani, who had been holding discussions with the leaders of the Socialist Party with a view to minimizing the differences existing within the Congress, had placed before the Committee a memorandum submitted by them. The Committee were of opinion that the President should continue the discussions and place before the Committee any agreed proposal. Gandhiji was requested to express his opinion on the question.

serve it. If they want to capture it, it is better that they should remain out. The Congress is a great organization, but no organization can live only on its past. It must always keep abreast of times and attract new blood and justify itself. If the Socialists come into the Congress as *khidmatgars*, and I hope they do want to come as such, they are welcome, for they cannot always remain a party which always complains and refuses to assume responsibility. When I use the Congress platform to advocate any view, I do not try to utilize it to damage the institution. Whether I remain in the Congress or outside I cannot imagine being ever disloyal to it.

A. I. C. C. File No. 1499-P, 1946-48. Courtesy : Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

184. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 3, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

If in our view the League has not acted in a praiseworthy manner, let us say that the League has not acted in a praiseworthy manner. Similarly, if the Congress has not acted rightly let us tell the Congressmen too that their action is not right. Only then will democratic rule be established. One group functioning according to its own will does not constitute democratic rule.

Democracy is where even the man in the street is heard. When we are out to establish a democratic order, the Viceroy's House, or even Jawaharlal's house, is not the seat of the Government. I have described Jawaharlal as the uncrowned king. And we are a poor nation. We are so poor that we shall walk rather than ride in a car. Even if somebody offers us a lift in his car, we shall decline his offer saying that he can keep his car, we would rather walk. If we are over-hungry, we shall eat a little more. Thus democracy means the rule of the man in the street. One who always goes about in a car is spoilt. One who lives in a palace cannot rule the Government. That is why I say that we are not going to benefit by what the British, who have ruled over a world empire, might propose for us. Even if the rulers of India think something which does not appear proper to us, we ought to say so.

I said yesterday that the Banias were to blame for the black

market. The difference between an ordinary trader and me is that I work for the good of the whole country while other traders fill their own coffers. Like Rajendra Babu I am also worrying about providing food for the whole country.

I am told that these days not much trade is left in the hands of the Banias. There are very few traders who can indulge in black market practices and the whole confusion is due to the Government Departments since the whole thing is managed by the Government. It is up to Rajendra Babu, who is the king of Bihar, to provide food. And it is in the hands of Rajaji, who has been a popular minister in Madras, to provide clothing. Still these things do not reach the people because corruption is rampant among the civil servants. If Rajendra Babu and Rajaji are surrounded by wicked persons whom they are not able to control, then they too should be considered responsible for the rot.

I do not know how far it is right to present the Government servants in this light. But I would certainly say that none from amongst us should resort to black-marketing. If there are some Government officers who give to their favourites twice or thrice the number of ration cards that their families are entitled to, those who receive these cards and those who give them are both guilty. It is possible that hitherto things could go on because of the awe of the British. But if this state of affairs continues even now, God alone can save India. But such things should not continue now. Today it is not necessary to act according to the order of the boss, regardless of whether it is fair or unfair. We are not under foreign bosses any more. Rajendra Babu cannot issue orders in this way. He does not have under him the police that would force people to accept orders. Even Rajaji or Nehruji or the Sardar cannot compel people to obey their orders through force. Sardar Baldev Singh does have the army under him but even he cannot threaten to have the entire military force cracking down on the people to subdue them. You could not remove the British officers, but you can remove these people. They can rule over you only by pleasing you. I wish to inform you that your *Panchayat Raj* has begun from today. It will be twelve months before we acquire full power. In the meantime, God alone knows what may or may not happen. But you must accept the method of democratic rule right from now. Let no one among us fill his stomach by harming the country.

To all those who are in the Civil Service—be they white or Black,

Hindu or Muslim, in the Secretariat or in the higher echelons of the police, to all whom my voice can reach I would say that their duties have now become ten times heavier. you must all now become clean and straight. Then alone will the whole task of our independence become easy and each one of us experience freedom.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I pp. 118–20

185. LETTER TO JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

NEW DELHI,
June 4, 1947

DEAR DR. HOLMES¹,

This will be presented to you by Dr. B. C. Roy, one of our foremost physicians. Any country would be proud of him. I am sure that he needs no introduction from me. But he insisted. Hence this note. I know you will do all you can to bring him before America.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 10968. Courtesy: Prof. Roger W. Holmes and Frances L. Brown

186. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI,
June 4, 1947

MY DEAR KU.,

Your letter. I have sent Shoorjibhai² the following wire: “You can take Kumarappa if he can leave work to proper substitute.”

If you can conveniently spare yourself without damage to village work entrusted to you, you can go.³ Of this you are the sole and fittest judge.

¹ 1879-1964; American clergyman, author of *My Gandhi*; Chairman, American Civil Liberties Union; visited India as the Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Visiting Professor from October 1947 to January 1948

² Shoorji Vallabhdas; one of the founder-members of the All-India Village Industries Association

³ To London, with a delegation of Indian businessmen; *vide* also “Letter to J. C. Kumarappa”, 11-6-1947

You have also to judge how far Shoorjibhai will really need your services. I have grave doubts about it. In this matter again, you can judge much better than I can.

You can share this with Shoorjibhai as I am not writing to him.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 10193

187. LETTER TO SURENDRA¹

June 4, 1947

I have your letter. I like what you say. It was my belief till now that you had adopted Nathji² as your guru. I am like a father to you all, and I am happy about it. If what I say appeals to your head and heart then alone should you accept it. You are free to pick and choose. But that cannot be said in regard to one whom we regard as our guru. There is no pick-and-choose there. Whatever the guru says should go straight home without the aid of reason...³ In the absence of such a guru one should listen to everybody and then act as one feels prompted. There is a proverb which says that our own intuition (such as it is) is a better guide than all the learning and intellect of another. As you know, I have searched in vain for a guru of the type which I fancied you had found. I have mentioned this more than once either in *Harijan* or *Navajivan* and I have envied those who have claimed that they had found one. These friends in their turn recommended to me the names of Ramana Maharshi, Aurobindo Ghosh, Sahebji Maharaj of Agra, Upasani Baba, Mehar Baba and another name in Karnataka which I have forgotten. But I could adopt none of them and in the end came to the conclusion that perhaps, as with ideals, the quest is more than the attainment. An ideal ceases to be an ideal if it is realized. One can contemplate it, come ever closer to it, but never reach it. So much about the guru.

You should also ponder whether my conception of *brahm-acharya*, on which I have tried to base my life, may not after all be the result of a delusion on my part, since I cannot make others see what to

¹ A senior member of the Ashram

² Kedarnath Kulkarni, Kishorelal Mashruwala's guru

³ Omission as in the source

me is clear as daylight. The ultimate criterion of the soundness and purity of my theories and conduct must be whether my life., taken as a whole, has moved in the direction of greater self-control and renunciation or of self-indulgence. I shall regard it as your victory if they restore their earlier relationship, because I do not consider them lesser votaries of truth, in speech or action, than I. The question here is not one of absolute Truth. None has perceived it. I am talking about relative truth. . . . Today I shall stop here. Lilavati who is here, has seen your letter. Manu has seen it. Sushila Nayyar has seen it and if more people desire it I shall let them see it.

I shall remain in this furnace of a place for some more time.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 67-8

188. LETTER TO PRABHAKAR

NEW DELHI,
June 4, 1947

CHI. PRABHAKAR,

I have your letter. It is your duty to make Anasuya a genuine worker. It will be good to send Rs. 10 a moth to Chakrayya's mother. From his belongings whatever belongs to the Ashram may be retained but the Ashram is bound to return the rest to his mother. Besides his mother, whom did Chakrayya leave behind? What do they do? Where do they live? Do they have any of Chakrayya's qualities? We should do for them, in however small a measure, what Chakrayya would have done if he had lived longer. It becomes our duty to fully understand it.

Now that Kishorelalbhai is not there, Chimanlal, Balvantsinha, Chhaganlal and the others should decide things among themselves. There is no need to consult me.

By all means write about Chakrayya whatever you think proper. But it will be good to send it to me before sending it over to *Harijan*. I have already written about my impressions, you must have read it. I have written what I believe.

If what Lilavatibehn¹ says is true—and I think it is—then he certainly deserves to be the first President of independent India. He who is devoted to God and is a brave servant of the people can

¹ Lilavati Asar

become President. I have no doubt about it. Perhaps I had said something to this effect in Godhra in the year 1917 or 1918 as President of the Political Conference. I had said that I would have no peace until and unless a Chamar or some such [untouchable] became President of India.

Vijayabehn told me everything about her sister. I have given her the right advice.

Write to Chakrayya's close relatives on my behalf that they should all become *sevaks* or *sevikas* as Chakrayya was. It will be good if they resist all temptations.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 9038. Also C. W. 9162. Courtesy: Prabhakar

189. DISCUSSION WITH RAJENDRA PRASAD

[June 4, 1947]¹

He told Dr. Rajendra Prasad that the first thing for them should be to lighten the burden of taxation and implement in full the constructive programme to which Congress had pledged itself. The politics of the country should be based on it. That did not require much cleverness but determination and honesty of purpose. For instance, universalization of khadi was simplicity itself, but if they yielded even by a jot in the matter of creating new mills, their khadi scheme would come to naught. They must not succumb to filling the exchequer like the previous Government.

I am also of the opinion that we should introduce fresh blood into the Congress organization. Because Congressmen have gone to prison, it does not mean that they should now hold all administrative jobs as a reward for their past sacrifices. On the contrary, shedding all prepossessions and party prejudices we should freely make use of administrative talent and experience wherever it is to be found even outside the Congress ranks.

This particularly applied to the Indian States. There was a vast fund of experience, knowledge, administrative talent and statesmanship in the States, which could be put to use with greatest advantage to the country.

I am sure they will be able to give us much that we lack and need. Congressmen know how to give fight, fill jails, but they lack the

¹ From *Bihar Pachhi Dilhi*

art of government, never having had any experience of administration. The States can provide us with all that if we know how to tap and utilize it.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 229-30

190. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 4, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You know that I am coming straight after meeting the Viceroy. Not that I had gone to get anything out of him. Nor had he called me in order to give me anything. Actually the talk between us was not even finished. But I excused myself saying to the Viceroy that I would not like to miss the prayer time so long as it was humanly possible. He appreciated my point and said that our talk could be resumed later.¹

I told you that we would not give even an inch of land as Pakistan under coercion. In other words, we would not accept Pakistan under the threat of violence. Only if they can convince us by peaceful, argument and if their proposal appeals to our reason would we concede Pakistan.

I cannot say that this whole question has been treated rationally. The Congress Working Committee insists that they have not granted anything under duress. They are not scared because so many people are dying and property is being destroyed. It is not at all true that they have accepted defeat in the face of violence. I should not take them to be a timid lot. They have taken this course because they realized that it was not possible to get round the Muslim League in any other way. For, once the Muslim League agrees to at least some points, our task becomes easy. In short, the Working Committee claims that they have accepted the vivisection of the country into Pakistan and Hindustan not out of fear but after realizing the prevailing situation.

We do not wish to force anyone. We tried hard. We tried to reason with them, but they refused to come into the Constituent Assembly. The League supporters kept on arguing that they were

¹ For the Viceroy's note on the interview, *vide* "Lord Mountbatten's Note on Interview with Gandhiji", 4-6-1947

afraid of the Hindu majority in the event of their joining the Constituent Assembly.

What can the Viceroy do under these circumstances? He says that whatever happens, he wants to quit by June, 1948. He would not like to stay beyond that date even if you wanted him to.... He says they must grant full independence to India. Why he insists on this is another matter. You might say that the British have now become helpless because they are no longer the mighty power they used to be. We would want them to be a first-class power even now. It is true that they have tyrannized over us for 150 years. I also know that we have been fighting against their might for the last 32 years. But I never make an enemy of my opponent. I would still appeal to God and pray that He should be good to them. And whatever God does would be just.

I shall speak no more now about God's infallible power. Let us realize this much that every human being is prone to commit mistakes. Hindus. Muslims and Sikhs all can say that the Muslims have committed a great blunder. But on what ground can we absolve ourselves of the blame? Let us leave it to God to pass judgment.

I would say this much, that it was wrong on their part to demand Pakistan. But they can think of nothing else. They say that they can never live where the Hindus have a majority. They are harming themselves by making this demand and I pray to God to save them in time from any harm coming to them. When my own brother, whether he follows my religion or some other religion, wants to harm me I cannot aid him. Even though he may not be aware that he is harming me. If I do it I am sure to be crushed between the two stones of a quern. Why should I not keep my own millstone apart?

And now I want to reassure you about the British. I want to tell you, not in the light of the Viceroy's speech¹ but in the light of my own talks with him, that the Viceroy has had no hand in this decision. The decision has been taken jointly by all the leaders in consultation.

¹ In his broadcast of June 3, 1947, the Viceroy had stated: "I am of course just as much opposed to the partition of Provinces as I am to the partition of India herself and for the same basic reasons. For just as I feel there is an Indian consciousness which should transcend communal differences, so I feel there is a Punjabi and a Bengali consciousness which has evoked a loyalty to their provinces. And so I felt it was essential that the people of India themselves should decide this question of partition."

The leaders say that for seven years they insisted on the unity of India. The Cabinet Mission also gave a reasonable award. But the League went back on its assurance and now this course has had to be adopted. They (the Muslims) have got to come back to India. Even if Pakistan is formed, there will have to be mutual exchange of populations and movements to and fro. Let us hope that co-operation endures.

But now that this decision has been taken, should I say that we should all rebel against the Congress? Or, should I ask the Viceroy to intervene? The Viceroy says that he never wanted partition. Jawaharlal says on behalf of the Congress that he too does not approve of it. But they have all been obliged to accept it, not for fear of violence, but because of the circumstances. For the Hindus, the Sikhs, all say that would live in their own homelands, not in the Muslims'. The Hindus are willing to be under Sikh rule because they say the Sikhs never compel them at the point of the sword to bow before the *Granth Saheb*.

Master Tara Singh came to see me today. I told him that he should not remain a lone soldier, but become equal to one and a quarter lakh. The Sikhs should learn to die without killing and then the history of the Punjab would be completely changed. With it the history of India would change too. The Sikhs are few in number, but they are brave. That is why the British are afraid of them. If the Sikhs became truly brave, rule of the Khalsa would spread throughout the world.

I told you these things to relieve you of your pain. You should not feel sorry at heart that India is to be divided into two. The demand has been granted because you asked for it. The Congress never asked for it. I was not even present here. But the Congress can feel the pulse of the people. It realized that the Khalsa as also the Hindus desired it. You have lost nothing, nor have the Sikhs, nor the Muslims. The Viceroy has already stated in his speech and he has also assured me that when we approach him united this decision would be revoked. Only our united decision would be accepted. The Viceroy says that his task is merely to see that the British carry on their task honestly till power is transferred and then quit in peace.¹ The British people do not

¹ In his speech the Viceroy had said: "Whichever way the decision of the Indian people may go, I feel sure any British official who may be asked to remain for a while will do everything in his power to help implement that decision."

wish that chaos should reign after they quit this country.

I had already said that they should not worry about anarchy. I am, after all, a gambler. But who would listen to me? You do not listen to me. The Muslims have given me up. Nor can I fully convince the Congress of my point of view. Actually I am a slave of the Congress, because I belong to India. I tried my best to bring the Congress round to accept the proposal of May 16. But now we must accept what is an accomplished fact. The wonderful thing about it is that we can undo it any time we want.

In the end, I would only say that you had better forget the Viceroy. It pains me that instead of having direct talks we should negotiate through the Viceroy as mediator. It does us no credit that the League should convey its point to the Viceroy who in turn conveys it to the Congress and the Congress again conveys its own view to the Viceroy. But what can be done when the Muslim League does not agree to anything at all? The Congress agrees to something and the Sikhs have joined the Congress. And the Viceroy then had to request Jinnah Saheb day and night to climb down a little. Thus he found this solution. Even while doing all this the Viceroy says that he is wondering what the League would say and what the Congress would say. But he goes on doing his work in the name of God. Let us therefore have trust in his honesty so long as we have no experience to the contrary.

But I would like to request Jinnah Saheb, implore him, to have direct talks with us at least now. Whatever has happened is all right, but now let us sit together and decide about the future. Let him forget all about the Viceroy now, and let him invite us to come to any understanding he wishes to have, so that it is in the interest of all of us.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 120–4

191. A LETTER

June 5, 1947

It is very difficult—practically impossible—to achieve real freedom without self-denial. Nobody had ever dreamt in those days that our sacrifices would be materially rewarded. But today we are engaged in a race for positions of power. What a misfortune! Shall I describe it as my own tragedy, the tragedy of our soldiers of truth and ahimsa? You may take it either way you like. That, however, is the state of affairs today.

[Form Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p.73

192. TALK WITH COLLEGE STUDENTS¹

June 5, 1947

GANDHIJI: We do not know the real meaning of freedom at all. I am not unaware of the fact that while the day of freedom is nearing licence also is increasing. Don't we see frequent strikes and students in schools and colleges insulting their teachers and paying no attention to their studies?

STUDENTS : Yes, that is true indeed. But what should we do when injustice is done to us?

G. You may, while observing perfect self-restraint, investigate whether or not injustice has been done in fact. But you said that you felt no freedom in the air and I have replied to that statement. Aren't you, for example, exercising your freedom when you attack school or college buildings, force the authorities to give you a holiday or insult your teachers? I want your reply to that. We shall have the fragrance of real freedom only when we learn to observe perfect self-control. I ask these girls, if they have ever looked after their homes, whether they are or are not free to throw out left-overs and dirty water on the street.

As long as every child in the country does not realize that he

¹ The students who came from Bombay and Poona wanted to know about partition and said that they did not feel the glow of independence anywhere.

must not spit or throw rubbish anywhere it likes, for that makes his own country unclean and harms the people's health, till then this is the kind of education that we most need. A country whose inhabitants are narrow-minded and undisciplined can make no progress. Now every man or woman is both subject and king, and it should, therefore, be everybody's aim to see that the country prospers. If that were so, the mutual slaughter that has started with the [proposal for] partition and which bodes ill for the future of the country would not have occurred. If only I could convince the Hindus of this and if we could learn to face death courageously, I have no doubt that our country would rise to the greatest height among the nations of the world. Until we learn forgiveness, there is no hope of real progress for man. All of you have come to Delhi. This is a historical city and has been the capital of India for centuries. From the time of Shri Krishna down to the coming of the Pathans, the Moguls, the Rajputs, the Marathas and lastly the British and now our own Government, there has been a succession of rulers, But don't jump to the conclusion that, having got power in Delhi, we have won the blessings of freedom. As long as prosperity and education do not reach the hundreds of thousands of villages in the country and make them happy, I will not believe that we have swaraj. All of you are college students, receive higher education in your colleges and follow the Western way in every detail of your daily lives, from your mode of dressing to the food you eat. It is not your fault that you do so; it is only the result of the fascination the British Government exercises on us. But I will continue to believe ourselves slaves as long as all these things do not disappear completely. For example, every Indian, whether educated or uneducated, has learnt to have tea and biscuits the first thing in the morning. It is little wonder to me that you have not felt the glow of freedom when I see you hugging to yourselves the symbols of your cultural slavery.¹ You are wearing socks in this intolerable heat. (Laughter.) I can go on citing such instances without end. My Point, in brief, is that till we have eschewed, even in small matters, all Western things and ways which harm the country, the society and our family life, we shall remain slaves. Some features of their civilization are admirable indeed. But we hardly see anybody emulating those.

In the circumstances in which we are placed today, it will be inviting a calamity on us to resort to violence, for it will be extremely

¹ This sentence is from *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*.

difficult for us to exercise any restraint in the use of violence. Don't think that it is only here that political parties are fighting with one another and that there are no such disputes in Europe and America. But the people in those countries are so well educated that they do not lose their sense of proportion but always keep in mind the interest of the country as a whole in everything they do.

They do not make a mountain out of a molehill as we do. They never lose their sense of proportion. They have learnt to subordinate everything to what they regard as national interest.¹

Therefore, for India, non-violence was an absolute necessity. And the need would be even greater, he emphasized, after independence when the external control, which prevented various parts and parties from flying apart or at each other, would be removed.

We have fallen so low that there is rivalry even between Banias and Brahmins, that we never think who our real enemies are but only consider to which community the other person belongs. Instead of working in co-operation with our own countrymen and living happily with them, we try to seek the co-operation of foreigners. We had the most telling example of this the day before yesterday when with the Viceroy's help we partitioned the country. I know, and I suppose you also do, since you hail from Bombay and Poona, that even our religious observances and calendars differ. There is no uniformity even in the incidence of the *ekadashi* or other days of fasting! On the days on which the *Vaishnavas* fast, the *Shaivas* do not. And people have made their God exclusively their own. There is but one God, only He is known by different names. This is made plain in every scripture beyond any shadow of doubt. The time has now come to banish all ignorance about such matters. If we do not get rid of it, we shall pay dearly for the mistake in future.

You are students. The future of the country depends on you. When you asked me for time, I immediately agreed in spite of the heavy pressure of work on me, for I look upon myself as a real friend of students. Whenever I get an opportunity of meeting students, I look upon it as my good fortune. And I am now seventy-eight and can, therefore, say from my long experience that the more deeply you

¹ This and the following paragraph are from *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*.

think, while you are students, over the best way of making progress in life and follow it, the more you will be able to advance your own welfare and that of the society and the country. Student life is the best time when you can learn to lead such a fruitful life.¹

It is time we shed our inertia and girded up our loin, to grapple with the challenge of independence.

What the situation demanded, he continued, was work, solid work; not recriminational or verbal pyrotechnics. Nobody had the right to waste a single moment in idleness, self-seeking or disgruntled brooding. They had to be “like a mother to whom no joy is greater than rearing and nourishing her child without a thought of reward for her pains. . .² Striving is everything. But if we strive with an eye to fruit, it hinders our progress.” For instance, India had adopted the method of truth and non-violence not as an end but only as a means to the attainment of independence. Therefore, the moment that goal was reached, they fell away from it.

In the result we are where we are today. If we do not wake up in time and replenish our depleted reservoir of non-violence by engaging in constructive work as before, our last state will be worse than the first.

If he had his way, Gandhiji went on to say, he would begin with a radical reform of the military and the police. Under a non-violent order, they might keep a small armed force for defence against external aggression while the people were being organized for non-violent defence. But in the meantime and as a preparation of it land armies with pickaxes and spades should take the place of armed police and engage in growing more food, building roads, constructing drainage channels and teaching people discipline and strict observance of the rules of sanitation and cleanliness. Their selfless service would then enable them to command spontaneous co-operation of the people so that the anti-social elements would find themselves isolated and powerless. Such a force could become a means for the realization of a non-violent social order instead of being an instrument of coercion in the hands of the State.

As with the army so with the police. In England the police was regarded by the people as their best friend and helper, a personification of the sense of duty, but in India its counterpart was dreaded by the common people as a bully and an oppressor.

I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that 99 per cent of the responsibility for the present bloodshed and chaos rests on the police and the military. Instead of protectors, they have become the disturbers of peace. The whole thing ought to be remodelled and the

¹ The following five paragraphs are from *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*.

² Omission as in the source

colossal waste of public revenue on these two departments checked immediately. The only way to cope with the rising tide of violence successfully is to begin with police reform.

I have never been able to stop anybody who was eager to go abroad for studies. I could not save even boys brought up in the Ashram from falling a victim to such a desire. But hardly anybody who goes abroad shows himself eager to be of greater service to the country by going abroad. Of course there is much for us to learn in foreign countries. But I can not help wondering why we are eager to go abroad but make no effort to attract foreigners to our country. If we wish to do so, then there is only one way, and that is that we should overcome fascination foreign countries have for us and start such activities in our own country. We shall be able to do that and create something new only if we make experiments. For example, new drugs are discovered and new surgical instruments are manufactured in foreign countries. Surely all these things did not happen without experiments. But we have become so lethargic that as long as we get a thin readymade we don't wish to try and make it ourselves. I do not, therefore, feel inclined to bless people who wish to go abroad.

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp.73-6; and *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, pp. 221-3

193. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 5, 1947

Announcing the death of the Buddhist scholar Shri Kosambi, Gandhiji said :

Perhaps you have not heard his name, and so cannot feel grieved. Even otherwise we should not grieve over anyone's death. But it is human nature to grieve over the death of one's dear or revered ones. We are so made that we raise to the skies anyone who goes about beating his own drum and indulges in political acrobatics but fail to appreciate the silent worker.

Kosambiji was one such silent worker. He was born in a village. He was a Hindu by birth, but he had come to believe that no other religion, not even the Vedic religion, gave as much importance to non-violence, piety, etc., as Buddhism did. So he embraced Buddhism and gave himself up to the study of Buddhist scriptures. He acquired such proficiency in the subject that he had no equal in India in scholarship. He taught Pali at the Gujarat Vidyapith and the Kashi

Vidyapith and freely gave of his profound learning.

He sent to me Rs. 1,000 which somebody had given him. He wrote to me that I should send someone to Ceylon for the study of Pali. But I asked him whether anyone would acquire insight into Buddhism by studying in Ceylon. I have told the Buddhists the world over that if they want to understand Buddhism they can do so only in India, its birthplace, that they must seek it where it first emerged as an offshoot of Vedic religion. They would grasp the deep significance of Buddhism only when they had also studied the works of Shankaracharya, that unrivalled scholar who was described as a Buddhist in disguise.

But in scholarship I cannot compare myself with Kosambiji. I am merely a barrister who became one by attending dinners in England! I have a very meagre knowledge of Sanskrit. If I have become a Mahatma today it is not because I read for the bar in England, but because I have devoted myself to service through truth and non-violence. If I command any respect today it is due to the little success I have achieved in my pursuit of truth and non-violence.

When Kosambiji realized that he was no longer physically fit to carry on any work, he decided to give up his life through fasting. At Tandonji's instance I made Kosambiji, very much against his wishes, give up his fast. But his digestion had been severely affected and he was not able to eat anything at all. So, in Sevagram, he again gave up food and keeping himself only on water gave up the breath after forty days. During his illness he refused all nursing and all drugs. He even abandoned the desire to go to Goa where he was born. He commanded his son and others not to come to him. He left instructions that no memorial should be set up after his death. He also expressed the desire that he should be cremated or buried according to whichever was cheaper. Thus, with the name of the Buddha on his lips he passed into that final sleep which is to be the estate, one day or another, of all who are born. Death is the friend of everyone. It will visit us as destined. One may be able to predict the time of birth, but no one has yet been able to predict the time of death. We saw the same thing in the case of Chakrayya.

I beg you to forgive me for taking so much of your time over this.

I received a telegram yesterday saying that I had been talking so loftily for four or five days about not yielding even an inch of land

for Pakistan under coercion, that they could take anything by appealing to our hearts. Now that Pakistan has come to be, why am I not undertaking a fast against it?

I am asked why I indulged in such talk then and why I have cooled off now. Why do I not rebel against the Congress? Why am I slavishly toeing their line? How can I remain a servant of the Congress? Why do I not undertake a fast and give up my life?

They are entitled to say these things. But I have no right to be angry with the correspondent. Getting angry means losing one's balance. There is an English saying: 'Anger is short madness.' The *Gita* also says: 'Wrath breeds stupefaction, stupefaction leads to loss of memory.'¹ Then how can I who have studied the *Gita* give way to anger?

How can I go on a fast because somebody wants me to do so? I believe I have to undergo one more fast in my life. Ever since my fast in the Aga Khan Palace² I have had a strong feeling that that was not my last fast, that I shall have to undertake one more fast. But I will not do it at anyone's bidding. I will do it when God commands.

I have said that I have become a witness of Jinnah Saheb. He wants peace in the country. I too desire peace. But if, in spite of that, riots continue to rage everywhere throwing the country into turmoil and God tells me, that is, my own heart tells me, that now I must depart from the world, I shall do so. Jinnah Saheb persuades me to sign the appeal that there should be no violence in politics. Lord Mountbatten also cast his spell on me and had me sign the appeal instead of Kripalani or Nehru. I signed the appeal on Jawaharlal's advice. Hence, we are three partners to this deal: the two of us because we have put our signatures to it, and Lord Mountbatten—not in his capacity as Viceroy, but as Mountbatten—for he is more than a mere witness.

In other words, there has to be peace in the whole country. If there is not, Jinnah Saheb will be guided by his God, Mountbatten by his and I by mine.

But through you I wish to convey to both of them that the moment they ask me to, I shall accompany them on foot or in a vehicle, whichever way they prefer. I cannot go by air. What shall I be able to see down below from an aeroplane? Besides I have never

¹ II. 63

² From February 10, 1943 to March 3, 1943

travelled by a plane. Of course I have seen aeroplanes from below and they look like fishes.

Gurgaon is still burning. I have not received any information about it today, but the Jats and the Meos are in confrontation there. Fortunately they do not wish to indulge in the mad frenzy of killing women and children and old people. They are fighting like soldiers. But why should they fight at all? That they fight is a matter of shame to me, to Jinnah Saheb and also to Lord Mountbatten. It is similarly a matter of shame for Sardar Baldev Singh and Jawaharlal. Fortunately, nothing much happened on June 2 or on June 4.

But one thing has definitely come to pass. Hindustan and Pakistan have come into being and their separate Constituent Assemblies have been formed. Should I now die to nullify them? I am not going to die that way.

I have a very big job to attend to. It is said that now India is going to be industrialized. But industrialization of my conception has to be carried out the villages with the charkha plying in every home, and cloth being produced in every village.

I would not approve of their idea of having a thousand mills in the place of one Birla Mill. I mention Birla's name because he is my friend. But I have all mill-owners in mind. I would not be disturbed if there was an earthquake or the Birla Mill caught fire, I would shed no sympathetic tears before the Birla brothers. Of course, if someone deliberately sets out to destroy his mills, I would take that person to task.

It seems that now the Congress has decided to set up a large number of mills all over India and spread a network of mechanized industries. And it wants to have a large army in the country. But I have nothing to do with that. Did I have anything to do with the violence in Bihar? And what is there now left in India that can gladden my heart? But I am still here, because the Congress has now grown into a great institution and I cannot go on a fast in protest against it. But I feel as if I was thrown into a fire-pit and my heart is burning. God alone knows why I continue to live in spite of this. Whatever I am, I am after all a servant of the Congress. If the Congress is seized with madness, should I also go mad? Should I die in order to prove that I alone was right? I want to appeal to the reason of you all, of the Congress, of the Muslims, of my friend Jinnah Saheb and win their hearts.

I would like to ask Jinnah Saheb, now that his slogan of *Pakistan Zindabad* has been realized, why he still goes to Lord

Mountbatten. Why does he not go to the Congress? Why does he not invite Badshah Khan and Dr. Khan Saheb? Why does he not show them what a pretty rose Pakistan is?

But I have been receiving complaints about Pakistan. I have a letter today which says that a British firm will be going to Lahore to manufacture arms. It is also being said that the Muslim League has decided to remain in the Commonwealth, and that it will confine itself to the Dominion Status.

The Congress has committed no crime in accepting Dominion Status. It has accepted it provisionally, with a view to putting an end to the British rule immediately. It will opt for complete independence as soon as the Constitution is ready. Will the Muslim League still keep to the Dominion Status? Both our countries should have uniform Constitutions. Both have declared complete independence as their objective. Then it also becomes Jinnah's duty to have nothing less than complete independence. That duty cannot be performed by indulging in mutual fights.

All the Hindus got tired of persuading him, and they conceded Pakistan in the hope that at last they would have peace.

One may ask why I allowed such a thing to happen. But should I then insist that the Congress should do everything only after consulting me? I am not so mad. And, if I rebel against the Congress, it will mean that I am rebelling against the whole country, because the Congress belongs to the whole country. I shall do such a thing only when I find the Congress has gone over to the capitalists.

But so far, I think, the Congress is working for the poor. It may be following a path different from mine and have its mind fixed on armaments, an army and factories but I have to convince them by arguments, not by resorting to a fast.

Even fasting can be devilish. May God also protect me from such devilish fasting. May He keep me from devilish actions, devilish speech and devilish thoughts. Better far that He takes me away before I succumb to any such thing. If I undertake a fast it will only be a pure and godly fast.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 124-30

194. LETTER TO ANAND T. HINGORANI

DELHI,
June 6, 1947

CHI. ANAND,

I have your letter. I had it read out at 4.15 a. m. after the prayers and now I am dictating this. I cannot answer all the questions. I can offer no solace to you. One who has lost faith in oneself has only Ramanama to fall back upon. So great is the value of repeating God's name that one may die with it on one's lips and yet stand to gain. So my advice to you and Gangi is that you should do whatever you can reciting His name all the time.

Everything about me is uncertain.

Blessings from
BAPU

SHRI ANAND HINGORANI
GURPURI BUNGALOWS
DECCAN GYMKHANA
POONA

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

195. A LETTER

June 6, 1947

I am replying to your letter today itself. You are gravely mistaken in assuming that as soon as swaraj comes prosperity will flood the country. If, before assuming that, you had used your imagination a bit to see that after 150 years of slavery, we would need at least half that much time to cleanse our body-politic of the virus that has infiltrated every cell and pore of our being during our subjection, you would not have found it necessary to ask me. I am sure you will understand what I mean, namely, that far greater sacrifices will be needed after the attainment of self-government to establish good government and raise the people than were required for the attainment of freedom by means of satyagraha.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 81

196. DISCUSSION WITH RAJENDRA PRASAD

June 6, 1947

If all the leaders join the Cabinet, it will be very difficult to maintain contact with the people at large. The result will be that opportunists and enemies of the Congress will incite the people and our poor people will easily fall a prey to their propaganda. That is why I suggested even in my prayer speech that a Harijan like Chakrayya or a Harijan girl should be made the nation's first President and Jawaharlal should become the Prime Minister. If similar arrangements are made in the provinces too, we shall have gained two ends at the same time. The leaders will be able to keep in touch with the people and young men and women will get trained.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 81

197. NOTES FOR DISCUSSION WITH VICEROY

[June 6, 1947]¹

Frontier Province—postponement of referendum before Pakistan scheme disclosed otherwise bloodshed is a certainty. Therefore the Ministry² may make a statement and resign.

2. There must now be no coalition Ministry but only the Congress. You may have another Pakistan Ministry, provisional.

3. You should ask Ji[nnah] at this stage to talk to Congressmen and settle all other matters and work as friends excelling one another in well doing.

4. Agreement between the States that each will have identical status and treaty with the British.

From a facsimile: *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, between pp. 288 and 289

¹ Gandhiji met the Viceroy on June 6, 1947 at 4.30. p. m. Presumably, these were the points discussed at the Working Committee meeting and referred to in "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 7-6-1947. These were conveyed in detail to Lord Ismay on June 6, 1947; *vide* the following item.

² The Congress Ministry in N. W. F. P. headed by Dr. Khan Saheb

198. TALK WITH LORD ISMAY¹

[June 6, 1947]²

Mr. Gandhi suggests that H. E. should speak to Mr. Jinnah in the following sense :

I am extremely anxious lest the referendum in N.W.F.P. should lead to bloodshed and blood-feuds between brother and brother Pathan, and I have been wondering whether it could possibly be avoided. Now that you have got your Pakistan, would it not be wise for you to go to the N.W.F.P. and speak to the people of the Province, of whatever party they may be, including the present Ministry and their followers? You could explain what Pakistan which has hitherto been a vague expression, really is and present your case in an attractive manner, in the hope that you will be able to woo them to become a Province of Pakistan, with perfect freedom to frame their own Provincial constitution.

If you are successful in your persuasion, the proposed referendum and all that it involves would be avoided. If you felt disposed to adopt this suggestion, I could, I think, give you a positive assurance that the Khan Brothers and their followers would meet you as friends and give you an attentive hearing.

Mr. Gandhi asked that if this appeal to Mr. Jinnah was unsuccessful, he (Mr. Gandhi) might be informed of the fact, in order that he might consider the position again.³ Mr. Gandhi added that Abdul Ghaffar Khan was so anxious about the permanent blood-feuds which would result from the referendum that he would go to almost any length, consistent with honour, to avoid it. In the last resort, he would be prepared to advise his brother and his colleagues in the Ministry to resign, and then to ask the Viceroy to put the N. W. F. P. under Section 93.

¹ This was an enclosure to a letter dated June 7 from Lord Ismay, Chief of Viceroy's personal staff, to Gandhiji which read: "I enclose herewith a copy of a note that I have sent to the Viceroy, summarizing the suggestions...you put forward in our talk yesterday evening."

² *ibid*

³ For M. A. Jinnah's response, *vide* "Letter to M. A. Jinnah", 13-6-1947

Mr. Gandhi emphasized that he had not discussed the above with his colleagues, and therefore that it should not be mentioned to anyone at this stage

Mr. Gandhi suggested that Mr. Jinnah should be advised to try to win over West Bengal and Eastern Punjab to Pakistan by the same methods.

Mr. Gandhi suggested that H. E. the Viceroy should speak in the following sense to Mr. Jinnah, when he found him in the right mood to listen:

I am here to help both parties to reach an agreement in any way that I can, and I regard this task not only as a pleasure, but as a duty. You must remember, however, that I cannot in any event, be here forever. Now, therefore, that the decision has been made and you have your Pakistan, why do you not go yourself and talk with the Congress leaders as friends, and try to get a settlement between yourselves on all the various points at issue? This would make for a much better atmosphere than adhering to the practice of only meeting together under my chairmanship.

Mr. Gandhi said that there was a lot of loose talk going about that H.M.G. might have different agreements with Hindustan and Pakistan which would possibly end to favour one over the other. It was, therefore, important that an announcement should be made to the effect that it was H.M.G.'s wish either to enter into tripartite arrangements with both the Dominions, or to have identical bilateral agreements with each of them; and that, in any event, there would be no question of differentiation.¹

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 254-6. Also from a copy: India Office Library and Records, London

199. DISCUSSION WITH MEMBERS OF HINDU MAHASABHA

[June 6, 1947]²

Gandhiji explained to them that his whole life was dedicated to God's service. His politics was not unrelated to the deepest things in life. It was only an extension

¹ In his letter dated June 10, to Gandhiji, Lord Mountbatten said: "Thank you so much for the admirable suggestions which you had handed to Lord Ismay...I will, of course, take the earliest opportunity of mentioning to Mr. Jinnah the points you made. I will do my best to convince him, but I hope you will not count too much on my intervention. I think the idea in the fourth paragraph of your note is a good one, and I will follow it up with H.M.G. Perhaps the Prime Minister would give an assurance in debate in parliament." *Vide* also "Letter to Lord Mountbatten", 10/11-6-1947

² In the source, the discussion precedes an account of Gandhiji's meeting with "some missionaries", who, Pyarelal says, "came on the following day" that is, on June 7; *vide* "Discussion with a Philippino And Missionaries", 7-6-1947

or application of the ideals of truth and non-violence to the social sphere. He would die in the propagation of those ideals rather than barter them even for independence. They must, therefore, excuse him for not taking their advice.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 233

200. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 6, 1947

I shall not waste time in reading out her long note.¹ I was under the impression that people had understood me by now. But I find that we are not so fortunate. Irreligion is being practised in the name of religion. But we shall have to put up with irreligion. If the lady tries to interrupt, let no one harass her. Now she has gone a step further and writes to me that I should not even deliver my speech. She may say what she likes. The prayer will not stop nor will I desist from delivering my speech. If everyone starts behaving in this manner the administration of the country cannot function. You will please remain peaceful.

I see that you are all oppressed by the heat. But you have got to listen and I have got to speak. But I can speak to you only when you maintain quiet. This does not mean that you should not fan yourselves with a piece of paper or a handkerchief. Even though it is hot, I am getting some air. This girl is fanning me, how can I then stop you?² If all of you do the fanning yourselves, I would not say that it is the job of a woman. You can bring your own fans. A woman can also act like a man. If she does not become disheartened, woman is man's 'better half'.

In the *bhajan*, the *gopi* says that hearing the flute she wants to go to the forest. But the *bhajan* is not meant only for women. We are all like *gopis* before God. God by Himself is neither male nor female. For Him there is no distinction of status, no distinction of birth. He can be described only as 'not this, not this,'. God resides in the forest that is the heart and His flute is the voice within. We do not have to go to desolate forests. We have to hear the divine music that goes on in our own hearts. When each one of us starts hearing that sweet music,

¹ A lady had again objected to the verses from the Koran being recited at prayer.

² There was laughter as the person wielding the fan was a man.

all would be well with India.

We heard this *bhajan* at an opportune moment. This lady tells me that I should retire to the forest for it is I who have spoilt Jinnah. But who am I to spoil him? If at all, I can only hope to transform him. I can do it not by force but by love. One can only destroy by force, by the atom bomb. The atom bomb has only wrought destruction. It has not drawn anyone to itself. If there is any real magnet in the world which can draw man to man, it is only love. I am witness to it. The lady says I should not read the Koran, should not speak at all, only retire to the forest. But even if I go to the forest you will drag me back. Men are created to live together. If I had learnt the art of living in a forest and drawing people there, I would not have had to make speeches or to say anything. I would have lived in solitude and silence and you would have done what I wanted. But God has not yet qualified me for that.

You may want to know what I talked¹ with the Viceroy during my long session with him today and what I have brought from him. What could he give? He is helpless. He has nothing to take and nothing to give. He tells me that he is praying to God that every man in India, whether Hindu, Muslim or Sikh, should realize that he has not come here to rob the country or cause internal strife. He has come here only to leave, if possible after seeing peace established, if not, he will leave in any case. He says that the British would not remain in the country after August 15. He will stay on as the Governor-General only if we want him to do so. The Viceroy says that at present he has nothing more than Dominion Status to give. It would have been different if we had driven them out. But this, he says, is the best way if they are to leave as friends.

The Viceroy also told me that the British were leaving as friends because India did not try to drive them out by force. People did sabotage the railways, telegraph service, etc., in 1942. But they were only a few. The masses did not indulge in such activities. He told me that we behaved decently with them. We only asked them to quit, because we were pained that they had spread poison in the country. But, he said, the Congress did not give them poison. The Congress only resorted to non-co-operation and the British realized that they

¹ For Lord Mountbatten's note of his interview with Gandhiji, *vide* Appendix IV.

could not hold on except with the help of Martial Law, and so they had decided to leave

Had our non-co-operation been perfect, the British would have left long ago and in a much better manner. The Congress had called upon the students, Government servants and soldiers to come out and join the movement. But they were weak; they could not leave their positions. But still we did not threaten to kill them or poison them. The British recognized this strength in us and so they are going. But the Viceroy says that the people still do not trust him. A journalist has written that the British had come here to rule and are now going away after dividing the country into two so that both the parts should fight and one or the other should seek the help of the British, and thus provide them the excuse for staying on.

This would mean betrayal and I hope the British will not betray us this time. Even if they do we should ourselves be brave. Why should the brave be afraid of betrayal? When the Viceroy talks to me with such honesty, why should I doubt his intentions? The Viceroy asked me if I at least trusted him. I told him that I would not have gone to him if I did not trust him. I told him I was truthful and honest.

I talked to the Viceroy in this vein and I also conveyed to him my pain at the division of the country into India and Pakistan. He then told me that it was not the doing of the British, that they had given what the Congress and the League had unitedly asked for. He said that the British could not leave at once because even dividing the effects of a small house took time and here it was the question of dividing a whole country. But I asked the Viceroy to relax. It would be better that we should attend to the task of division ourselves.

For the past two or three days I have been pleading with them that, now that they had got what they sought, even though it be a little less than expected, they should show what it is. Is it a rose in name only or does it also have the fragrance? Why not let us at least smell it? Tell us if there is place for the Sikhs and the Hindus in Pakistan. Or are they to be slaves? And do they intend to split up the N. W. F. P. by having a referendum there? Do they want to split up Baluchistan too?

Would they not show even now by their actions that though so long the Muslims had considered the Hindus their enemies they consider them so no longer? That they would not divide the Pathans, the Baluchis and also the Hindus? Will they not show that India will

remain one even if we must divide the assets like brothers and that we will carry on our affairs without the British?

I shall not mind it if they abuse me for talking in this manner. Even yesterday abuse was hurled at me when someone exclaimed why I did not die. But let these people at least explain what is in their mind. Why do they not come to me even now? Why do they not come to you? Why do they not invite the Congressmen or the non-Congressmen to meet them? There was a time when they had forged an agreement between the Congress and the League. Why do they not forge a stronger and lasting agreement now ?

Let us all try together to be friends and not enemies. The Viceroy by himself cannot achieve this. Nor can the Congress alone do it. We can become friends only by making united efforts.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 130-4

201. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

June 7, 1947

I had a long conversation with His Excellency . . .¹ The more I see His Excellency the more I feel that he is sincere. But it is quite possible to damage him if the surrounding atmosphere of which the Indian element is the author overwhelms him as it may well do any of us.

All the points we discussed² at the Working Committee meeting yesterday were touched upon by me and I carried with me the impression that he really appreciated them.

To be wholly truthful requires the highest form of bravery and therefore of non-violence.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 220

202. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

June 7, 1947

The oftener we meet the more convinces I am becoming that the gulf between us in the thought world is deeper than I had feared. He (the Sardar)³ says that you are largely responsible for the present

¹ Omission as in the source

² *Vide* "Notes for Discussion with Viceroy", 6-6-1947

³ Vallabhbhai Patel had an hour's talk with Gandhiji on the night of June 6.

situation. He is of the opinion that Badshah Khan's . . .¹ influence is on the wane. Badshah Khan has not left any such impression on me. Whatever he is today, he was always. There is undoubtedly more steadiness today than before. I also feel that Dr. Khan Saheb² and his colleagues would be nowhere without the Badshah. He alone counts in so far as the Congress influence is concerned.

If the Qaid-e-Azam does not go to the Frontier and does not woo the Badshah, his brother and his other colleagues, the Frontier Ministry should resign and so also the Parliamentary majority on the sole ground that a referendum at this moment must lead to bloodshed and probably, if not certainly, to a lasting blood-feud, which they should avoid in so far as it is humanly possible. Amrit (Rajkumari Amrit Kaur) tells me that you think to the contrary. You think the referendum should take place now. . . You are also of opinion that a referendum will not cause bloodshed, indeed that my proposal would be more likely to cause it. I do not share this view. I had told the Badshah that if I do not carry you with me. I shall retire at least from the Frontier consultation and let you guide him. I will and cannot interpose myself between you and him. After all, was it not you who brought him to me? You will now decide and tell me.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 268-9

203. DISCUSSION WITH A PHILIPPINO AND MISSIONARIES³

June 7, 1947

I would put my old-fashioned spinning-wheel even against a modern invention like the atom bomb. If everybody plied it even for half an hour daily, we should see a miracle in only five years. Europe is now looked upon as the leader in civilization and has advanced very far, but at one time Asia was more civilized than Europe. We wish to get rid of the artificial European civilization, based on machinery, that has invaded our country. We have no need for it at all. I wish to revive out ancient culture which is rooted in non-violence and spiritual

¹ Omissions as in the source

² Prime Minister of N. W. F. P., brother of Abdul Ghaffar Khan

³ In *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Pyarelal explains: "They praised India's non-violent revolution which was without a precedent in history. But they wondered if it was possible to abolish war in the present era of science and industrialization and realize the ideal of world peace."

values. Our happiness, prosperity and peace lie in doing so. If we can revive out ancient culture, we shall serve as a beacon-light in the world's effort to establish peace.

Every individual and every nation should search their hearts far more seriously than they do today. Instead of think- ing of strife and competition and wealth, we should cultivate family-feeling, strive for self-purification and spread love and a sense of brotherhood. That alone can be called an ideal state in which men can lead a really 'human' life and get opportunities to cultivate perfection in every sphere. Today even in our own country anarchy is reigning. The fault is not wholly ours. We have been suppressed as slaves for a hundred and fifty years. The British and American missionaries in India have rendered no real service to the country. Their conception of service is to do work of compassion and serve the poor. But by establishing hospitals, schools and such other institutions, they attracted our children and men and our people left their own religion and embraced Christianity. Our religion is in no way inferior to Christianity. I can cite you numerous instances like these to show how far we have been bled. And when the blood has disappeared, only the skeleton remains. That is our plight today, but I am full of hope that we shall regain our health in a few years and a revitalized India will make missionary bodies also reorientate their outlook and activities.

This body is not mine, but belongs to God, and I have this mud-pack regularly, follow a strict routine and take care of my health in order that I may loyally and with a sense of responsibility safeguard His gift and use it for the service of the people.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 93-4; and *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, pp. 233-4

204. DISCUSSION WITH SOCIALIST WORKERS

June 7, 1947

Today the rulers are not foreigners but our own country-men. If we do not work in perfect harmony with them, our newly-won freedom will be in danger. Let all people sit together and find a proper solution to problems on which there are differences. But our greatest defect is that, as soon as we differ from somebody ever so slightly, or a misunderstanding arises, instead of meeting the person concerned and trying to find a solution we take him to task publicly.

This creates a great mental gulf between people, leading to antagonism. Parties and isms are only results of such differences. One fruit of this poison we have seen in the coming into existence of Pakistan. Are we not satisfied even with that? You have simply not understood what socialism means. The Russian type of socialism will not suit India at all. Even in Russia their policies have not succeeded completely. Why don't you try to save the country from the calamity which has befallen it today? So long as this communal virus has not been eradicated, socialism will never come. Note down and remember, all of you, these words of an old man. The people will want to see our work and our sacrifices; they will judge our labour and look for perfection of character in us. But you wish to pay no attention to these things. On the one hand, hundreds of thousands of our brothers and sisters have become homeless. If now you incite the people and exploit these riot to establish new parties or spread your isms, rest assured God will never forgive this terrible crime of betrayal of the country.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 4-5

205. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 7, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am telling you in all humility that it is improper to obstruct the prayer. I cannot stop the prayer. It will go on. But I find that every day there is some complaint or other. It pains me very much.

I want to continue with the same subject. I want to talk about what is in the air, because great pressure is brought to bear on me. I am being told that while I kept on opposing [the idea of Pakistan] till the Viceroy's declaration and saying that we would not agree to anything under coercion, now I have become silent. I am being rightly told so. I must confess that I am not happy about this decision. But many things happen in the world that are not to our liking; and yet we have to put up with them. We have to put up with this thing in the same manner.

A newspaper has said that even now the All-India Congress Committee can reject the proposal. I also think that the All-India Congress Committee is fully entitled not to accept the proposal. But

we should not suddenly oppose the Congress to which we have been loyal all this time and which has earned reputation in the world and has also done so much work.

A large number of *Sanatanists* believe in the monster of untouchability and think they are following their religion by clinging to this monster. But God alone will judge who is a true *Sanatanist* amongst us. Similarly, if the Congress also puts a religious garb on irreligious practices, we shall have to wind up the organization. Who can kill the Congress? We shall all lay down our lives before it. We will do it not by committing suicide. But we shall continue to fight it and will not bow down to it till we bring it on to the correct path or die ourselves. But we shall do this when we find that the Congress is deliberately erring. In my view, it is not committing a deliberate blunder at present. Nor has it committed deliberate blunders earlier. Had it functioned so far by accepting irreligion as religion, it would not have risen to the position it has today.

It is not correct to say that the Congress Working Committee should have consulted the A.I.C.C. before taking this decision. The Working Committee cannot function if it has to wait for consultation at every step. Subsequently the A.I.C.C. can challenge the Working Committee and vote it out to form a new one.

When I was working regularly for the Congress and enjoyed the right to enforce the constitution of the Congress, I had said during one of the discussions that we could not collect 300 or 1000 members of the A. I. C. C. every now and again. It would be impossible for the Working Committee to function in this manner. Of course, later on, the A.I.C.C. can certainly call for an explanation from the Working Committee. It can also remove the Committee by passing a vote of no confidence so as to make sure that it will not repeat its mistakes, and form a new Committee.

Supposing the Working Committee issued a *hundi* of several lakhs in the name of the A.I.C.C. which the latter did not approve. The A.I.C.C. would still have to honour the *hundi*, but it could certainly dissolve the Working Committee and elect a new one so that the mistake was not repeated. In fact in such a situation the A.I.C.C. ought to take such a step.

The same rule applies in the case of its decision regarding the Hindustan-Pakistan affair. The division is now a *fait accompli*. But there is still ample scope for adjustment. We can make or unmake at

will Hindustan and Pakistan or whatever else we call it. True, the Congress does not represent the League. But as I have looked at the Congress I feel that the Congress represents the entire Indian nation. On that account the Congress can never say that because the Muslims have done great harm to us it will also harm them in return. The Congress would not remain what it is if it did that. Even when I went to the Round Table Conference¹ I had said that I would do them a good turn even if they harmed us.

The Congress wants to establish democratic rule. It will not act against the interests of the Princes either. But the Princes will be able to retain their position only when they become the trustees of their subjects like the Raja of Oundh². A small principality like Oundh will be long remembered only because it bowed to the sovereignty of the people. As against this, the State of Kashmir, although it is worth millions, will be wiped out if it does not listen to the voice of its people. Hitherto these rulers may have behaved arrogantly with the support of the British authorities; but now they must realize that their authority issues from the people. I made a special mention of Kashmir because at the moment our eyes are fixed on it. But this applies to all the native State.

I talked at such length in order that the Congress may continue to belong to the people and the people may continue in the Congress fold, i.e., they may follow the Congress discipline. If we start having internal strife, the Congress is going to perish. If you do not approve of the decision of the Working Committee you can frankly say so at the next A.I.C.C. meeting. I have no intention to attend the session. I will attend if I am invited. But who is going to listen to my solitary voice? After all you are the people. You can convey it to the Congress in a civil manner whether or not you approve of what it has done.

Now it becomes the duty of the Congress to give up what has been granted as Pakistan and make its best efforts in the portion that remains with it. Let the people in Pakistan go ahead of the Congress in their efforts to bring progress to their land. If this happens the two can live in amity and happiness.

In the end Gandhiji repeated his appeal to Jinnah Saheb and called upon him to invite the Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and all others to come to a settlement

¹ In 1931

² Appasaheb Pant

and spare the Viceroy the trouble and the Congress leaders the needless running around. He appealed to Jinnah to build a Pakistan where the *Gita* could be recited side by side with the Koran, and the temple and the gurudwara would be given the same respect as the mosque, so that those who had been opposing Pakistan till now would be sorry for their mistake and would only sing praises of Pakistan.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan–I, pp. 134-7

206. A LETTER¹

[Before June, 8, 1947]

All rights to be deserves and preserved come from duty well done. Thus the very right to live accrues to us only when we do the duty of citizenship of the world. From this very fundamental statement perhaps it is easy enough to define the duties of man and woman and correlate every right to some corresponding duty to be first performed. Every other right can be shown to be a usurpation hardly worth fighting for.

Harijan, 8-6-1947

207. WALLS OF PROTECTION²

Let us ask ourselves what walls should be erected to protect *brahmacharya* of which I wrote³ last week. The answer seems clear. It is not *brahmacharya* that needs walls of protection. To say that is easy enough and sounds sweet, but it is difficult to understand the import of the statement and more so to act accordingly.

It is true that he who has attained perfect *brahmacharya* does not stand in need of protection walls. But the aspirant undoubtedly needs them, even as a young mango plant has need of a strong fence round it. A child goes from its mother's lap to the cradle and from the cradle to the push cart till he becomes a man who has learnt to walk without aid. To cling to the aid when it is needless is surely harmful.

I made it clear last week that *brahmacharya* is one out of the

¹ Extracted from 'Gleanings'

² The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, which was published simultaneously with the source.

³ Vide "How did I Begin it"

eleven observances. It follows, therefore, that the real aid to *brahmacharya* are the remaining ten observances. The difference between them and the walls of protection is that the latter are temporary, the former permanent. They are an integral part of *brahmacharya*.

Brahmacharya is a mental condition. The outward behaviour of a man is at once the sign and proof of the inner state. He who has killed the sexual urge in him will never be guilty of it in any shape or form. However attractive a woman may be, her attraction will produce no effect on the man without the urge. The same rule applies to women. But he or she who has not conquered lust should not turn the eyes even towards a sister or a brother or a daughter or a son. This advice I have given to friends who have profited by it.

As for myself I have to admit with great shame that while the sight of women had ceased to rouse any sexual urge in me in South Africa, in the early days of my return to India past recollections roused the urge against which I had to battle fairly hard. The same is true of the vague fear which is so unbecoming in man.

I was cowardly by nature. I was frightened to sleep in the dark. To sleep alone in a room was an act of bravery for me. I hope I have lost that cowardliness. Yet I do not know what would be my state if I lost my way and had to wander alone in a thick forest on a dark night and if I were to forget that God was ever with me. If this childhood fear has not completely gone from me, it would be certainly more difficult for me to be fearless in a lonely jungle than to control the sex urge.

There are certain rules laid down in India for the would-be *brahmachari*. Thus he may not live among women, animals and eunuchs, he may not teach a woman alone or even in a group, he may not sit on the same mat with a woman, he may not look at any part of a woman's body, he may not take milk, curds, ghee or any fatty substance nor indulge in baths and oil massage. I read about these when I was in South Africa. There I came in touch with some men and women who, while they observed *brahmacharya*, never knew that any of the above-named restraints were necessary. Nor did I observe them and I was none the worse for the non-observance. I did give up milk, ghee and other animal substances but for different reasons. I gave up the attempt two or three years after my return to India. But if today I could find any effective vegetable substitute for milk and ghee, I would gladly renounce all animal products. But this is another story.

A perfect *brahmachari* never loses his vital fluid. On the contrary, he is able to increase it day by day and, what is more, he conserves it; he will, therefore, never become old in the accepted sense and his intellect will never be dimmed.

It appears to me that even the true aspirant does not need the above-mentioned restraints. *Brahmacharya* is not a virtue that can be cultivated by outward restraints. He who runs away from a necessary contact with a woman does not understand the full meaning of *brahmacharya*.

Let not the reader imagine for one moment that what I have written is to serve as the slightest encouragement to life without the law of real restraint. Nor is there room in any honest attempt for hypocrisy.

Self-indulgence and hypocrisy are sins to be avoided.

The true *brahmachari* will shun false restraints. He must create his own fences according to his limitations, breaking them down when he feels that they are unnecessary. The first thing is to know what true *brahmacharya* is, then to realize its value and lastly to try to cultivate this priceless virtue. I hold that true service of the country demands this observance.

NEW DELHI, June 8, 1947

Harijan, 15-6-1947

208. LETTER TO P. K. ELAYADAM

NEW DELHI,
June 8, 1947

MY DEAR ELAYADAM,

I have received your letter of 3rd instant informing me that Rs. 500 have been received by Khadi Pratishthan. I have before me also your letter of 12th May describing your condition. I fear that what you say leads me to think that your mind is not sound and that you are unnecessarily afraid of being murdered. I am sure that nobody is after you. Imagining the worst happened to you, why should there be any fear? You see in the papers that innocent persons are daily murdered throughout the world. From that you should derive the lesson that since death is the inevitable lot of every creature born, it should be welcomed as a faithful friend whether it comes out of illness or accident, even though it may be named murder. Therefore I would

advise you to lead a useful life of service wherever you are and on hearing from you I shall instruct Khadi Pratishtan to refund the money received by them.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

P. K. ELAYADAM, ESQ.

C/o SHREE KASHI VISHWANATH SEVA SAMITI

50, BURTOLA STREET

CALCUTTA

From a photostat: C.W. 10566

209. *LETTER TO SARAT CHANDRA BOSE*

June 8, 1947

I had gone through your draft.¹ I have now discussed the scheme roughly with Pandit Nehru and the Sardar. Both of them are dead against the proposal and they are of opinion that it is merely a trick for dividing Hindus and the Scheduled Caste leaders. With them it is not merely a suspicion but almost a conviction. They feel also that money is being lavishly expended in order to secure the Scheduled Caste votes. If such is the case, you should give up the struggle at least at present. For the unity purchases by corrupt practices would be worse than a frank partition, it being a recognition of the established division of hearts and the unfortunate experiences of the Hindus. I see also that there is no prospect of transfer of power outside the two parts of India. Therefore, whatever arrangement is come to, has to be arrived at by a previous agreement between the Congress and the League. This, as far as I can see, you can't obtain. Nevertheless, I would not shake your faith, unless it is founded on shifting sand consisting of corrupt practices and trickery alluded to above. If you are absolutely sure that there is no warrant whatever for the suspicion and unless you get the written assurance of the local Muslim League supported by the centre, you should give up the struggle for unity of Bengal and cease to disturb the atmosphere that has been created for the partition of Bengal.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 187-8

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Sarat Chandra Bose", 24-5-1947

210. A LETTER¹

June 8, 1947

Hinduism has denied to women the right to remarry. Therefore, to be fair, men too ought not to remarry, much less expect or ask for my blessings. But if they must remarry, let them select as their partner a widow who is desirous of remarrying. If widowers stopped marrying maidens they would be highly obliging the country.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 101

211. NOTE TO AMRIT KAUR

June 8, 1947

The work you are doing in the Constituent Assembly is also service done to me. Personal service, when it merges into universal service, is the only service worth doing. All else is rubbish.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 241

212. TALK TO A WOMAN RELATIVE²

June 8, 1947

Women at any rate should think of God and His infinite power and know that His is the only real support. While cultivating self-confidence and courage, they should also exercise wisely their natural qualities of humility, simplicity and kindness with which God has endowed them. India's women were never weak, are not so even today and will not be so in future. If we think over the matter, we shall see that from the times of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* their courage has been unrivalled, and that courage has been the result of strength of character. Revive that strength of character. If the women do not remind themselves of the examples of Draupadi and Sita and display the same strength of virtue, they will never be able to serve the country well no matter how many of them get educated. If the atrocities one hears of are perpetrated on women, the fault does not lie with men alone. Women also are responsible. I know that today women have taken the downward path. In their craze for equality with men, they have forgotten their duty. Ba was in no way weaker than I;

¹ A widower wanting to remarry had asked for Gandhiji's blessings.

² She was one of a group from South Africa on a visit to India.

in fact she was stronger. If I had not had her co-operation I would have been sunk. It was that illiterate woman who helped me to observe all my vows with the utmost strictness and kept me ever vigilant. Similarly in politics also she displayed great courage and took part in all the campaigns. From the worldly point of view she may have been illiterate, but she was an ideal woman who had received what I regard as true education. She was a devout *Vaishnava*, used to worship the *tulsi*, religiously observed sacred days and continued to wear the necklace of holy beads right up to her death. I have given that necklace to this girl¹. But she loved the Harijan girl as much as she loved manu or Devdas's Tara. She was a living image of the virtues of a *Vaishnava* described by Narasinha Mehta in his *bhajan*. It is because of her that I am today what I am. She never spared herself, no matter how ill she herself was, in serving me. And often I have been in danger of my life. In the fast of 1943² I may say I was nearly at death's door, but she never cried or lost courage but on the contrary kept up other people's courage and prayed to God. I can see her face vividly even today.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 98

213. TALK WITH COMMUNIST WORKERS

June 8, 1947

I will tell you the same thing that I told³ those Socialist friends on two days. All of you should think first of the interest of the country as a whole. Instead of doing that, you are wasting your time over minor grievances. The moment you come upon some error by somebody, real or imaginary, without any investigation you Communists start making in-flammatory speeches, denounce the Government and incite the people. Is there not a single act of Government deserving your co-operation? Just think for a moment. If you were in the place of Nehru, what would you do? You should, therefore, either take the places of Nehru or Sardar—I stand guarantee that they will step down the moment you ask them to do so—or co-

¹ Lakshmi

² The source has '1942', a misprint.

³ On may 27 and June 7; vide "Talk with Socialists", 27-5-1947 and "Discussion with Socialist Workers", 7-6-1947

operate with them. That will be for your own good. In any case you should stop making speeches full of baseless allegations. Your principles are fine indeed. But you do not seem to follow them in practice, for you do not seem to know the difference between truth and falsehood or justice and injustice. What is more saddening about you is that, instead of having faith in India and drawing inspiration from its unrivalled culture, you wish to introduce Russian civilization here as if Russia was your motherland. I disapprove of relying on any outside power, however much that may materially benefit us, for I believe in the principle that your eating is not going to satisfy my hunger, that I can satisfy my hunger only by eating myself. I tell Rajendra Babu the same thing every day, that in the matter of food we should not depend upon any foreign country. It would be more honourable for us to share among ourselves the food that we have than to live on other people's charity. Let us be worthy of our freedom. We may certainly accept useful and beneficial ideas from foreign countries, but this does not mean that we should uncritically admire everything foreign. There are good and bad things in every country. It is a grave error to believe that everything in our country is bad and in other countries good. Some things in foreign countries are good while some features of our culture are unrivalled. You also use the word 'satyagraha' as part of your jargon. But anybody who uses this word should realize that by doing so he accepts a great responsibility. A satyagrahi should rely wholly on truth. He cannot then afford to be ambiguous in his attitudes. He cannot jump on to a bandwagon. In brief, he cannot depart from his principles in the smallest degree. A satyagrahi cares for nothing but truth. He will give no pain or do no injustice whatever to anybody either in thought, word or deed. And he must always have perfect clarity in his thoughts.

All of you are servants of the country and are eager to serve it. Such as we are, we are brothers and sisters born in the same country. As such, we should supplement one another's work, give up slandering one another and stop fruitless arguments, be generous and mutually forgiving. Let us give up our narrow-mindedness, cultivate generosity of heart and raise the good name of the country to the highest point in the whole world. In that lies everybody's happiness, peace and prosperity.¹

All of you are like my own children. Since you heard me

¹ What follows is in Hindi.

patiently, I poured out my heart to you. You can come to me whenever you wish. I want your help. I can do something only if I have it. What can I do by myself? One cannot clap with only one hand, as the saying is.

[Form Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 102-4

214. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 8, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Our peace during the prayer should not be disturbed even if bombs are showered from the sky and there is an upheaval. As the *gopi* hears the notes of the flute in the wilderness, the devotee of God hears the voice in the recesses of his own heart. It has been described as 'the voice of silence' in English. In other words, we can hear that voice only when we are quiet.

I have already informed you that Prof. Kosambiji who was an erudite scholar and was considered a leading authority in Pali recently died at the Sevagram Ashram. Balvantsinha, Manager of the Ashram, writes that he had not witnessed such a death so far. It was exactly as Kabir described in the following couplet:

The servant Kabir says: Although we wear this sheet with ever so much care, it has to be given up even as it is.

If we can all befriend Death in this manner, it would be to the good of India.

I am told that I should act as an arbitrator in the dispute between the Meos and the Jats. But how can I act as an arbitrator? In the first place I do know any of them. And then, only a person who has the authority to have his judgment accepted can act as an arbitrator. I possess no arms nor would I seek the help of a court of law. But I think they should now restrain themselves. Whether what has happened is good or bad, now the Congress and the League have also come to a settlement. They should not go on fighting till either side accepts defeat. The Meos are a brave community and the Jats and Ahirs too would not give a chance to an-one to say that they had been defeated. Fortunately, they are not killing the aged, infants and women. Both the sides have amassed enough arms. They are fighting

bravely, but anyway it leads to destruction. A poor man is as much pained when his hut is burnt down as a king when his palace is burnt down. Fighting is going on so close to us and yet we are able to do nothing about it. Darkness has descended over the region. Even so those of you who know them should carry my voice to them if they can and try to stop the fighting.¹

I am accused of spoiling the situation in Bengal. It is my claim that nothing is spoilt at my hands. Whether it is in Bengal, Bihar or Noakhali, nothing has ever been spoilt at my hands. I can only improve things and I have done so. Now, like the Punjab, Bengal too is going to be divided. In one part of Bengal the Muslims are in a majority and in the other the Hindus. A large number of Hindus desire partition, for, how long can one put up with turbulence? They say one there is partition they can at least live in peace in their homeland. The Muslim League in Bengal has rejected this proposal. But who takes the Bengal Muslim League seriously? Division of Bengal is certain under the new proposal.

Now I am being blamed for not letting Bengal be divided. It is true that I do not want the division. But then I also totally disapprove of the whole country being divided into Hindustan and Pakistan. Even if I was the only Hindu remaining, I would still have the courage to go and live in the midst of the Muslim majority. What is the worst they could do? Kill me; could they do anything worse? But they would not kill me. They would protect one solitary individual. God would protect me. God always protects one who has no one to protect him. That is why the poet says, "God is the strength of the weak." I do not at all like the division of Bengal. But I will say that the Hindus should let themselves be subdued and give up their desire in order to save their life and property. If they feel that they will be able to live in peace in their part of the province, let no one imagine that I shall come in the way.

Sarat Babu came to me the other day. He does not want Bengal to be partitioned. He says that the whole Province has one culture, and the same food habits. Why then should it be divided in the name of religion? Sarat Babu has his view, I have mine. The people however have the right to act as they desire. My individual opinion cannot thwart the opinion of many.

¹*Vide* also "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 29-5-1947 and "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 5-6-1947

I always co-operate in good things. If a bad man recites Ramanama, shall I not join him? I shall certainly join him in reciting Ramanama. And if a man considered good indulges in wicked acts, shall I join hands with him? If I do so, I shall not be Gandhi for Gandhi can never worship Satan. Whoever acts out of good intention, out of love, will have my support.

I have come to know that money is being squandered to stall the partition of Bengal. Nothing enduring can be achieved with the help of money. Votes purchases with money have no force. I can never be party to such an act. I can never support an act of goondaism, even if committed by my own kith and kin.¹

Hence, I would like to tell Sarat Babu that even though he and I would like to stop the partition of Bengal we should forget about it for the time being. It cannot be achieved by impure means. God cannot be realized by impure means and no means for obtaining anything dishonourable can ever be pure.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 137-40

215. TELEGRAM TO SARAT CHANDRA BOSE²

[After June 8, 1947]³

HOW CAN BRIBE-GIVERS AND BRIBE-TAKERS BE PUNISHED
BY PRIVATE PERSONS EXCEPT AT THE BAR OF PUBLIC
OPINION? BE CALM AND STEADFAST.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 188

¹ *Vide* also the following item.

² The telegram was in reply to that of the addressee which read: "If information false, punish informants, if information true, punish bribe-givers and bribe-takers." The addressee was referring to Gandhiji's allegation regarding "votes purchases"; *vide* the preceding item.

³ *ibid*

216. MESSAGE FOR ANNIE BESANTS'S BIRTH CENTENARY¹

NEW DELHI,

June 9, 1947

When I was studying in London in 1888 and after I had become, like many, an admirer of Bradlaugh² and Besant³, imagine my excitement when one fine morning I read in the London Press that Annie Besant had become a Theosophist under Blavatsky's⁴ inspiration. I was a mere boy practically unknown to anybody. I would have been more than satisfied if I could have touched the hem of the garments of the massive Blavatsky and her distinguished disciple. But I could not though some friends had kindly taken me to Blavatsky Lodge. When Dr. Besant came to India and captivated the country I came in close touch with her and though we had political differences my veneration for her did not suffer abatement. I hope therefore the centenary celebrations will be worthy of the great woman.

M. K. GANDHI

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 109-10

217. A LETTER

NEW DELHI,

June 9, 1947

MY DEAR...,⁵

I am ashamed to have kept you long in suspense. This is my day of silence. Rajkumari reminds me of yours of 20th May and I wrote out the enclosed⁶ which I hope you can decipher. Now that I tax my

¹ Which was to be on October 1, 1947

² Charles Bradlaugh (1833-91), English free-thinker and radical, prominent for his championship of individual liberty; was close associate of Annie Besant till 1885.

³ 1847-1933, British Theosophist; founded Indian Home Rule League in 1916; and was President of Indian National Congress in 1917

⁴ Helena Blavatsky (1831-91) founder of Theosophical Society

⁵ The name is omitted in the source. Presumably the addressee was Marjorie Sykes.

⁶ *Vide* the preceding item.

memory, I fancy that the Williams Brothers¹ whom you would not have known took me to madam Blavatsky. This is of no consequence. I have written this for the sake of accuracy.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 109

218. *FOREWORD TO “CHARLES FREER ANDREWS”² DRAFT³*

Charlie Andrews though a very great scholar was simple like a child, straight as die and shy like an Indian woman. With the biographers the record was a labour of love. I am sorry I have not read it.

M. K. GANDHI

NEW DELHI, June 9, 1947

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 108

219. *LETTER TO MARJORIE SYKES*

NEW DELHI,
June 9, 1947

MY DEAR MARJORIE,

Yours received just now. Here are a few words of foreword.⁴ I have no time to look at your chapter. I have handed it to Rajkumari who is sitting near me.

Love.

BAPU

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 108

220. *DRAFT OF LETTER TO ABDUL GHAFAR KHAN*

June 9, 1947⁵

DEAR BADSHAH,⁶

Here is a note from Jawaharlal.⁷ It is the result of a difference of opinion between him and me. In the circumstances I must not guide

¹ *Vide* “An Autobiography”

² By Benarsidas Chaturvedi and Marjorie Sykes

³ For the foreword as published, *vide*

⁴ *Vide* the preceding item.

⁵ From of the source

⁶ The superscription is not in Gandhiji’s hand.

⁷ For extracts from Jawaharlal Nehru’s note, *vide* Appendix V.

you. He has put forth his argument as usual in his very able manner. Now you have to act as you think best. His suggestion that you should come to Delhi and discuss the situation before taking any final decision is worthy of consideration. I am planning to go away to Bihar, if I can, before the meeting of the A.I.C.C.

I hope you were none the worse for your journey to Peshawar.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a facsimile: *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, facing p. 289

221. DRAFT OF LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

June 9, 1947¹

CHI. JAWAHARLAL,²

I have your note which I have read most carefully. If I shared your Premises, I should whole-heartedly agree with you.

I am sending your note by messenger to the Badshah with my covering letter³ of which I enclose a copy herewith.

The more I contemplate the differences in outlook and opinion between the members of the W. C. and me, I feel that my presence is unnecessary even if it is not detrimental to the cause we all have at heart. May I not go back to Bihar in two or three days?

Would it be wrong if you insisted that referendum would be wrong without the presentation of the picture of Pakistan?⁴

From a facsimile: *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, facing p. 289

222. A LETTER

June 9, 1947

CHI. . . .,⁵

Bhai . . . has gone to you. I had a long talk with him at the end of which it was decided that both of them would leave the Ashram. . . . The step will pain both Bhai . . . and me. But, having regard to his health and his mental suffering, I have advised him that since it is

¹ From the source

² The superscription in Devanagari is not in Gandhiji's hand.

³ *Vide* the preceding item.

⁴ This sentence is not in Gandhiji's hand.

⁵ Omissions as in the source

quite uncertain when I shall come there it is best that he should not continue in the Ashram, I have . . . 's letter. I cannot reply today

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 106-7

223. A LETTER

June 9, 1947

CHI. . . .,

Kosambiji has passed away. We should send to Ceylon as quickly as we can some Indians who follow Buddhism and are desirous of learning Pali. Do you have any such students in mind? Try to think over what rules we should frame for selecting such students and give me some suggestions. For instance, what would be the expense for each student, etc. . . .

I got your article on Anandshankarbhai.¹ If you had written in Gujarati instead of in English, Gujaratis would have benefited by your article. Whom will this benefit? I could read only the first paragraph.

Blessings from

M. K. GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 107

224. LETTER TO MADALASA

June 9, 1947

CHI. MADALASA,

I have your letter.

Shriman is coming here on the 12th. Since I have started writing in *Harijan*, you may get your problems solved through it. I have not been able to understand your question properly. Do not try to explain away to yourself any writing or action of mine. Whenever you feel perplexed by something, you must try to get your doubt resolved. My writing can never warrant indulgence. My life is dedicated to the cause of self-control. It is possible that I might not succeed in reaching my

¹ Anandshankar Dhruva died on April 7, 1942.

ideal. But I am sure that I will never give people excuses for self-indulgence.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 333

225. LETTER TO PRABHAKAR

DELHI,
June 9, 1947

CHI. PRABHAKAR,

I am enclosing Sankaran's letter. How far is this true? He also writes about Bhai Ranade. What is all this? However much we may work, if our minds are not pure or if our conduct is not sincere, we are good for nothing.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N.9037. Also C.W. 9161. Courtesy: Prabhakar

226. TALK WITH VISITORS¹

June 9, 1947

This fight between brother and brother is not going to stop so long as the masses do not get work as well as bread. Order in the society, in fact in the country, cannot possibly be restored unless the indigenous crafts are developed. This is the sole remedy for banishing starvation from the country. The affluent in India can be counted on one's fingers, whereas there are millions who are starving.

I fought for India's independence. There were satyagraha movements and as a result we have achieved what the world would consider success (not the kind I would have wished). The partition has come in spite of me. It has hurt me. But it is the way in which the partition has come that has hurt me more. And it is difficult to say what the result of the constant tension will be. I have pledged myself to do or die in the attempt to put down the present conflagration. I

¹ The source does not identify them excepts as foreigners.

love all mankind as I love my own countrymen, because my God dwells in the heart of every human being and I aspire to realize the highest in life through the service of humanity. It is true that the non-violence that we practised was the non-violence of the weak, i.e., no non-violence at all. But I maintain that this was not what I presented to my countrymen. Nor did I present to them the weapon of non-violence because they were weak or disarmed or without military training, but because my study of history has taught me that hatred and violence used in howsoever noble a cause only breed their kind and instead of ensuring peace endanger it. There is no miracle except love and non-violence which can drive out the poison of hatred. Thanks to the tradition of our ancient seers, sages and saints, if there is a heritage that India can share with the world, it is this gospel of forgiveness and faith which is her proud possession. I have faith that in time to come India will pit that against the threat of destruction which the world has invited upon itself by the invention of the atom bomb. The weapon of truth and love is infallible, but there is something wrong in us, its votaries, which has plunged us into the present internecine strife. I am, therefore, trying to examine myself because it must be owing to some shortcoming in me which it has been my fate to see reflected in the present outburst of violence.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 111-2

227. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

June 9, 1947

I have received some letters saying that *Allopanishad* about which I had talked to you some days ago is not to be found in any collection of religious writings. I had mentioned this work from memory so I consulted a friend¹ and he has written to say that the collection I have in mind does mention *Allopanishad*, saying it has seven *mantras*. These Upanishads date back to the time of the Atharva Veda. He has said much else which would be of greater interest to students. Hence I shall not quote that part of the letter.

Then I have a letter from Jayachandra Vidyalkar. Jayachandraji says :

¹ Mathuradas Trikumji; *vide* the following item.

Maharana Kumbha, grandfather of Rana Sanga, was the first to offer organized resistance to the Muslims aggressors. He conquered the territories occupied by the Muslim in Gujarat and Malwa and erected the victory pillar at Chittor. On the pillar side by side with the many representations of Hindu gods and goddesses and next to those of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh the name of Allahs is also inscribed. It is well known how the Hindu leaders like Maharana Ranjit Singh and Chhatrapati Shivaji respected Islam. Why do these champions of Hinduism who resent the recitation from the Koran at your prayers not object to Allah's name inscribed on this victory pillar ?

After pointing out that the cause of Hindu-muslim animosity lies in faulty writing of history, Vidyalankarji requests me to see to it that the teaching of history is done in the right spirit, without which all attempts to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity must fail.

Lately I have been receiving a large number of letters attacking me. A friend points out how ineffective were my words when I said that vivisection of the country would be the vivisection of my own body and calls upon me strongly to oppose the partition of the country. But I do not think I am in any way to blame in this matter. When I Said that the country should not be divided I was confident that I had the support of the masses. But when the popular view is contrary to mine, should I force my own view on the people? I have repeatedly said that we should never compromise with falsehood and wickedness. And today I can say with confidence that if all the non-Muslim were with me, I would not let India be divided., But I must admit that today the general opinion is not with me, and so I must step aside and stay back. The lesson which we have been trying to learn for the past 30 years and which we now tend to forget is that only through truth and non-violence can we triumph over untruth and violence. Impatience can be overcome only with patience and excitement with calm. Today we cringe before our own shadow. There is nothing in common between me and those who want me to oppose Pakistan except that we are both opposed to the division of the country. There is a fundamental difference between their opposition and mine. How can love and enmity go together?

Another friend writes that this Viceroy is even more dangerous than the other Viceroys; that whereas the others crushed us at the point of the sword this one trapped the Congress with his smooth talk. I can never agree with this opinion. The correspondent has unwittingly and unknowingly praised the Viceroy and has debunked the intelligence

and efficiency of the Congress Ministers. Why can he not understand the simple thing that the general opinion, that is, the opinion of those who are fit to hold any opinion, is supporting the Congress leaders? The leaders are not fools. They too find the partition repugnant, but as representatives of the country they cannot go against public opinion. They derive their power from the people. The situation would have been different if the correspondent had the power. And under no circumstances would it be proper to criticize the Viceroy when the leaders are elected representatives of the people or when our own people betray the country. The saying “as the king so the subjects” is not so apt as its reverse: “As the subjects so the king.”

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 140-2

228. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

June 10, 1947

CHI. . . ,¹

I am writing this at 4.30 in the morning after the prayer. I got your letter yesterday. You are as persevering as ever. I even used yesterday the information you sent.² Do you read reports of my speeches these days? I was somehow under the impression that *Allopanishad* was included in Nathuramji's collection. I see now that it is referred to in his notes. Your other discovery also does you credit. So you have regained sufficient strength to write all that! You have been a close student of my life. Even so, I wrote something in order to save your time and mine. I do feel unhappy that I have not been able to convince people that I am perfectly pure. But time always does its work, and it will do so in this case, too. I am being tested. The task here is a very difficult one. I think I shall be here up to the 15th at any rate. How I wish you would recover completely!

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 215; also *Bihar Pachhi Dilhi*, p. 107

¹ The name is omitted in the source.

² The addressee had sent to Gandhiji copies of *Allopanishad* from a manuscript as well as from the Adyar collection of *Unpublished Upanishads* found at the Royal Asiatic Library. What follows is from *Bihar Pachhi Dilhi*, which, however, places this under June 9, 1947.

229. A LETTER

June 10, 1947

If we examine all that we say we shall find that we indulge in exaggeration so much that it has almost become a habit with us. We do not care to examine the truth or otherwise of our idle talk. If we appreciated the value of silence we would be rendering a great service to the nation. The present time particularly is not for making speeches. Deeds, not words, are what is demanded of us. 'Silence is everything.'¹ He who wants to see truth and take shelter in God must observe at least one day of weekly silence. I say it on the strength of my own experience of silence on Mondays.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 112-3

230. A LETTER

June 10, 1947

This is a time of trial. I have passed through many an ordeal in my life. But perhaps this is to be the hardest. I like it. The fiercer it becomes, the closer is the communion with God that I experience and the deeper grows my faith in His abundant grace. So long as it persists, I know it is well with me. I am dictating these letters early in the morning. I woke up but lay reciting Ramanama. However, since attending to one's duty is as good as reciting Ramanama, I woke up Chi. Manudi. I send the girl to sleep whenever it suits me and wake her up when I wish. And whenever I wake her up she promptly gets up and can prepare herself to take down with an alert mind what I dictate. She falls ill now and then. No doubt I am overtaxing her. I know I make her work beyond her capacity. But God seems to sustain her in spite of it all as if to help me in my hour of trial. Hence she can sit upright at any hour whether it be midnight or very early in the morning. This too is Divine help in my time of trial. Still another sign of His grace is the way in which He is keeping up my physical strength enabling me to maintain my serenity in the midst of daily shocks and turmoil. I remain happy and cheerful. It may be said that it is for this reason that I have been constantly realizing that

¹ Gandhiji quotes the saying, ~~शून्यता ही सत्य~~

“Adversity so-called is not adversity, nor is prosperity what we know the that name; the only adversity is to forget God, the only prosperity His ceaseless remembrance”.¹ For sixty years we have been in the thick of the fight, and now we have ushered the goddess of liberty into our courtyard. Yet many big tasks remain to be fulfilled. For the situation is much like having a sumptuous meal all ready and someone pouring dal into the pot of rice pudding. Thus, having worked so hard and for so long we now need most to cultivate humility and capacity for hard work.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 113

231. A LETTER

June 10, 1947

The spinning-wheel is the key to swaraj. It helps us to identify ourselves with the poor millions. But we should not on that account succumb to a feeling of pride. If one spins with the egoistic feeling that one is thereby helping the poor, one's spinning would be futile. Helping the poor is, however, one's duty; it is a Divine obligation. If God has granted a man inexhaustible means of wealth to sustain himself, he needs must do this much for the sake of his countrymen. One who spins with the realization that it is one's dharma is the true *sevak*.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 113-4

232. A LETTER

June 10, 1947

To seek God one need not go on a pilgrimage or light lamps fed with ghee and burn incense before the image of the deity or anoint it or paint it with vermilion. For He resides in our hearts. If we could humbly obliterate in us the consciousness of our physical body, we would see Him face to face.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 114

¹ Gandhiji quotes from *Ashram Bhajanavali*; vide Vol. XLIV, p. 390.

233. ADVICE TO HINDU MAHASABHA YOUTHS¹

June 10, 1947

You do not know I repudiated the title of Mahatma long before you questioned it. But maybe out of your concern for me, you feel it necessary to put me on my guard lest I should fall into the dotage of old age.

He repeated to them that if people did not know how to face death non-violently, they could by all means die fighting valiantly. But even if they wanted to avenge wrong-doing in Pakistan, the right way was to go to Pakistan and fight with those who were the authors of it. There could be no bravery in taking cowardly reprisals on the Muslims residing in India.

I say the same thing to Pakistan, too. In England they managed to survive when odds seemed all against any chance of survival. The secret of it was their wonderful unity, national discipline and organization. For betrayal of the country, father did not hesitate to send his son to the gallows. But in India, even after partition. Hindus and Sikhs are quarrelling among themselves. Each wants to go his own way. Nobody listens. Where will it all end? We, old leaders, are like autumn leaves. Tomorrow you shall have to shoulder the whole burden. It is up to you, the youth, therefore, to shed your indifference, inertia and sloth and throw yourselves into constructive work with all your heart and soul.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 247-8

234. TALK WITH RAJENDRA PRASAD

June 10, 1947²

We ought to take warning from this.³ If I could free myself from here, I would like to tour all over the country and launch a new movement among the youth to throw themselves into constructive work. I can see their enthusiasm to do something for the country. But it is getting no sustenance and there is every danger of its running into a wrong channel. I sensed the malady from which our country is suffering long ago. We, top leaders, are getting old. Before we pass

¹ The two youths had come during Gandhiji's morning walk. They said Gandhiji was no mahatma and that he was misleading the Hindus.

² Inferred from Pyarelal's introductory remarks in the source

³ The reference is to the remarks of Hindu Mahasabha youths who had met Gandhiji the same day; *vide* the preceding item.

away, we should devote whatever strength God has given us to train younger people to shoulder the responsibility of building up the India of our dreams just as we trained them before as non-violent soldiers for the freedom struggle. People cannot be trained for the serious tasks ahead unless at least a portion of the top-ranking leaders remain outside the Government to work among the people.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Volume II, p. 248

235. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 10, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Whatever I have said in connection with the decision of Bengal, I have not levelled allegations against any party. I have only repeated what I have heard. Who would not be happy if Bengal was spared partition and could remain one undivided whole? But I cannot join hands with anyone who talks of preserving unity through falsehood, fraud and bribery. Nothing need be said if no Bengali—either Hindu or Muslim—has done it. Why should anyone wear the cap if it does not fit ?

But people do entertain suspicion that something wrong is being perpetrated in Bengal. Those who told me this also gave me their names and addresses. But I do not think it proper to disclose those here. If they have been telling me falsehoods, it is bad and they should be punished. But who am I to punish anybody? I have not the power to punish anyone.

But I have one great thing with me and that is public opinion. Public opinion has tremendous power. In our country the significance of this expression has not yet been fully realized. In the English language, however, the expression has a forceful connotation. Even the king is helpless in the face of what the English call 'public opinion'. Even the redoubtable Mr. Churchill, scion of a great family, a powerful orator and erudite scholar—certainly not an ignoramus like me—could not save his office in spite of all his achievements. It only means that public opinion in England is highly awake, no one can do anything in opposition to it.

In India public opinion is not as vigilant as in England. Had it been so a worthless fellow like me would not have presumed to

become a mahatma. And even after I became a Mahatma everything that I did would not have been put up with. As it is, in India anyone who is called a mahatma ceases to be answerable to the public, whatever—right or wrong—he might do.

Tolstoy had been a great warrior, but when he realized that war was not a good thing he gave up his life in trying to put an end to war. He has said that the greatest power on earth is public opinion and it is generated by truth and non-violence.

That is what I am trying to do. But nothing is going to come of my efforts unless public opinion in India is informed with courage and truthfulness.

But that is not the case today. The impression I have is that we do not want the Dominion Status that is to be granted to us on August 15. The reason is the public opinion that has been forming over the years in favour of complete independence. This talk of Dominion Status pricks the country. The feeling is justified and yet not quite right. It is not right because we are not aware of the potentialities of Dominion Status. First, with the coming of Dominion Status the British will quit India in two months. Secondly, we can shake off the Dominion Status whenever we want. Of course if we persist in our madness others are hardly to blame. Anyway, to return to the subject of public opinion, if it stays vigilant all will be well. If through public opinion, without any bribery, without any corrupt methods being adopted, Bengal decides to remain one, then it is well and good. But we have been cowards and slaves so long that we are unable to resist the temptation to do ignoble acts.

But if one has not acted wickedly and still people level charges against one, why should one feel unhappy? For instance, there are many high-placed officers who do not become corrupt, who remain clean; and yet allegations of corruption are made against them. This does not perturb them. If someone calls me a wicked and corrupt man, do I have to weep? Do I become wicked merely because someone calls me so? I do admit that false allegations are sometimes made against people out of malice and cowardice. We should not talk ill of anyone.

We should see good points of people. If we want to be free let us not find fault with others, let us look at their better side and try to encourage them.

I now assume that the division of India is a fact and the

Congress has been forced to accept it. But if the partition cannot make us happy, why should it make us unhappy? Only we should not let our hearts be sundered. We must save our hearts from being fragmented. Otherwise Jinnah Saheb's claim that we are two nations will stand vindicated. I have never believed in it. When we are descended from the same ancestors, can our nationality change simply from our changing our religion? When Sind, the Punjab and maybe the Frontier Province too go to Pakistan will they no more belong to us? I for one do not regard even Britain as an alien country, why should I then regard Pakistan as another nation?

It may be said that I belong to India and in India to the Bombay Presidency, there again to Gujarat, in Gujarat, particularly to Kathiawar, where again to a small town of Porbandar. But because I belong to Porbandar I also belong to the whole of India, that is, I am also a Punjabi and if I go to the Punjab I shall live there regarding it as my home and if I am killed I shall accept death.

I am happy that Jinnah Saheb has said that Pakistan will not belong to an emperor, but that it will belong to the people and the minorities too will get a square deal there. I would only like to add that he should put into practice what he says. He should also impress this upon his followers and tell them to forget all talk of war.

We too will not think of suppressing the minorities in our part of the land. Even the handful of Parsis in India shall be our co-sharers. It would be bad if the Hindus and Muslims joined hands and threatened to annihilate the Parsis saying they were drink-addicts. The Parsis are my friends and I tell them that if they do not give up drinking they will kill themselves. But we shall not kill them. In the same manner Hindus and Sikhs should be protected in the Punjab. The Muslims should treat them kindly and in a brotherly way and reassure them. If the Muslims start tyrannizing over them, the Hindus and Sikhs should tell them, without fear of death, that they will not accept Islam under duress nor partake of [beef]¹. The Hindus should not think that they have become a new community which cannot accommodate Muslims. We are in a majority in this part of India. We must enlighten the majority and work with courage. Courage does not reside in the sword. We will become truthful, we will become servants of God and, if need be, we will lay down our lives. When we do this India and

¹ The source has 'meat'.

Pakistan will not be two separate entities and the artificial partition would become meaningless. If we fight among ourselves the charge of our being two nations will be proved. Let us all therefore pray to God that although India and Pakistan have become separate nations our hearts may not be divided.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 142-6

236. *LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN*

NEW DELHI,

June 10/11, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

The Rajkumari has given me the purport of your conversation with her.

Though you have been good enough to tell me that I could see you at any time I wanted to, I must not avail myself of the kindness. I would like, however, to reduce to writing some of the things I hold to be necessary for the proper and swift working of the scheme.

1. As to the referendum in the Frontier Province I must confess that my idea does not commend itself to Pandit Nehru and his colleagues. As I told you, if my proposal did not commend itself to them, I would not have the heart to go any further with it.

2. This, however, does not in any way affect my proposal that before proceeding with the referendum, you should invite Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah to proceed to the Frontier Province and to woo the Ministers including Badshah Khan and his Khudai Khidmatgars who have made the province what it is—better or worse. Before he goes, no doubt, he should be assured of a courteous hearing from them.

3. Whether he favours the idea or not, Qaid-e-Azam should be asked to give a fair picture of the Pakistan scheme before the simple Pathan mind is asked to make its choice of Hindustan or Pakistan. I fancy that the Pathan knows his position in Hindustan. If he does not, the Congress or the Constituent Assembly now at work should be called upon to complete the picture. It will be unfair, I apprehend, to choose between Hindustan or Pakistan without knowing what each is. He should at least know where his entity will be fully protected.

4. There is as yet no peace in the Frontier Province. Can there be a true referendum when strife has not completely abated? Minds

are too heated to think coherently. Neither the Congress nor the League can disown liability for disturbances by their followers. If peace does not reign in the land, the whole superstructure will come to pieces and you will, in spite of division, leave behind a legacy of which you will not be proud.

5. The sooner you have a homogeneous ministry the better. In no case can the League nominees work independently of the whole Cabinet. It is a vicious thing that there is no joint responsibility for every act of individual members.

6. The only way to keep the wonderful time-table made by you is to anticipate the future and ask your special staff to work out all the items presented by you, without reference to the Cabinet and then when the time comes, the report should be presented to the respective parties for acceptance, amendment or rejection.

7. The more I see things the more firmly I believe that the States' problem presents a variety of difficulties which demand very serious and fearless treatment on your part.

8. The problem of the civil and military services, though in a way not equally difficult, demands the same firm handling as the States. Gurgaon strife is an instance in point. So far as I know one single officer is responsible for the continuance of the mischief.

9. Lastly may I suggest that the attempt to please all parties is a fruitless and thankless task. In the course of our conversation I suggested that equal praise bestowed on both the parties was not meant. No praise would have been the right thing. 'Duty will be merit when debt becomes a donation.' It is not too late to mend. Your undoubted skill as a warrior was never more in demand than today. Fancy a sailor without his fleet, save his mother wit!

10. I have tried to be as succinct as possible. I could not be briefer. If any of the points raised herein demand a personal talk, you have but to appoint the suitable time. Please do not think of calling me for the sake of courtesy.¹

11. I received your kind note of 10th instant whilst I had almost finished this note. It does not call for a separate reply.

¹ The addressee in his reply of June 12, said that he doubted "whether it would be practicable to make any special staff work out all the details of splitting up of the Departments of the Government of India."

This was finished at 9.25 p.m. It will be typed tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY

NEW DELHI

From the original: India Office Library and Records, London; also *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government*, 1944-47, pp. 256-8

237. LETTER TO CHAMPA R. MEHTA

NEW DELHI,

4.15 a.m., June 11, 1947

CHI. CHAMPA¹,

I have your letter. My advice is that, as the girls are there. You should stay on there and return to Sevagram when it is cooler. Let the girls study whatever they can there. You do the same. Nothing is definite about me. Your place is ultimately in Sevagram. More in my next letter.

Blessings from

BAPU

CHI. CHAMPABEHN MEHTA

SATISHKUNJ

PANCHGANI, DIST. SATARA

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8761. Also C.W. 1053. Courtesy: Champa Mehta

238. LETTER TO PARASURAM

NEW DELHI,

June 11, 1947

CHI. PARASURAM²,

Shri J.P. Narayan tells me that you would like to serve the Socialist Party if I agreed. I could have no objection whatever to your bettering your prospects. I was told you were in the *Harijan* office till you felt you could join me. You know that I have not filled you

¹ Daughter-in-law of Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta

² Hailing from Malabar, he was Gandhiji's stenographer for two years and left the service in the beginning of January, 1947; *vide* "Letter to Parasuram", 2-1-1947

place and I have no intention of doing so. You will return when you like.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 5858. Also C.W. 3072

239. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA¹

NEW DELHI,
June 11, 1947

MY DEAR KU.,

The Bania fingers seem to be paralysed. May your departure be as distant as possible!

Love.

BAPU

PROF. KUMARAPPA

A. I. V. I. A.

MAGANWADI

WARDHA

From a photostat: G. N. 10196

240. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

DELHI,
June 11, 1947

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have your letter. I get no free time at all, and so you should not worry if I do not reply or am late in replying.

Kosambiji has passed away. We shall be honouring his memory by sending out scholars of Pali.

We may take it that physical division of the country is now certain. Since the Congress has accepted the plan, we must now look for another way. That way I have been showing. Just as land or other property can be partitioned, so also can men's hearts. If, therefore,

¹ This was in reply to the addressee's letter of June 9, in which he had discussed his going to London with a delegation of Indian businessmen. Referring to the British Government's plan to scale down their war debts he had expressed the hope that Gandhiji would not let the sterling credits slip through his Bania fingers.

our hearts are true we can behave as if they had not been partitioned.

I hope Kanchan and the baby girl are doing well. Kanchan must be delighted beyond measure.

Find out where I am in July. You will also have to consider whether you will be able to free yourself from your work at the time. I shall be here up to the 15th at any rate. After that, Rama alone knows.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

I got your long letter just now. I understand your unhappiness. We shall talk over the matter when we meet.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8410. Also C.W. 5622. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

241. ADVICE TO SADHUS¹

June 11, 1947

Those who live carefree lives at the expense of other peoples' sweat can never achieve spiritual progress. Today religion has become fossilized. . . The corruption that is evident today in all religious orders and the mental, physical and moral deterioration of our society are all traceable to the fact that we have looked down upon physical labour. . . You should, therefore, map out a programme which will enable you, besides spreading the knowledge of Ramanama, to serve society by performing bread labour and getting the masses to do the same.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 238.

242. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

NEW DELHI,

June 11, 1947

But I do not at all believe in such violent activities.² They have only one occupation: to incite people wherever possible. There is a

¹ Two of them had joined Gandhiji on his morning walk.

² Manu had asked Gandhiji why he was so critical of the Communists.

saying in Kathiawad, now current in Gujarat, that one may look for insects in water but some look for them even in milk. These people thus have no such thing as principles. They make no distinction between truth and untruth, violence and non-violence. What is even more pitiable is that they receive their guidance from Russia. We certainly want to adopt what good things or good ideas we find in others but at the same time we should be practical. The Communists in Bengal and other places are indulging in destructive activities. They must see who will ultimately suffer by that. The country has not even become fully independent. Will it bring equality if people surreptitiously set fire to Government buildings or destroy post offices and telegraph wires? And whatever is destroyed belongs to the people ultimately. That is why I do not believe in this ideology. My communism will be full of dignity and courage. To cause harm clandestinely is unmanly and barbarous. It suggests cowardice. If we examine our history we shall find that when the Rajputs fought they fought bravely in the field and at sunset they stopped combat and men of both sides met each other as friends. What does the legend of the *Mahabharata* show? There may be differences of opinion about the truth of the actual events narrated in this epic created by our ancestors but the idea behind it and its moral are wonderful. Besides, socialism or communism is in our very blood. Our prayers, our Vedas and Shastras provide innumerable instances of it. What do we say in our morning prayers?

I desire not a kingdom nor paradise, nor even release from birth and death. I desire only an end to the pain of the anguished.

What can Lenin, the Communist leader, add to this? Why are we so much infatuated by him?

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 121-2

243. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

June 11, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Although I have spoken to you about the impending division of Bengal, nevertheless I wish to speak to you about it again a third time.

I have just received a letter.¹ It is full of anger. As I have told you, anger is a kind of madness. The man who is a prey to anger loses all discrimination. The letter I received shows such anger.

The writer says that I have caused great harm to Bengalis. In what way have I caused harm to Bengalis? I have said that I do not want that Bengal should be vivisected. It is true that I do not want that. If a just scheme were offered to us I would say that a Bengali is above all a Bengali, be he Hindu or Muslim or Christian. If he wants to uphold his mother tongue, uphold his country, who can interfere? I wish to tell you that even the Congress cannot interfere, nor can the League. It is very clear that if Bengal could remain united it would be a very good thing. But how is that to be? That is the question. If we wish to achieve something good but choose a method which is crooked we shall not reach our goal. If you adopt a wrong path and want to go east you will end up by arriving in the west. We must therefore not choose a wrong path. We should take the right path. That is what I have been saying. But people get angry. I want to tell you that I stick to what I have been saying. I stand by what is right. If someone does not have right on his side, whether he is my brother or my son. I do not care. I therefore tell the Bengalis that if Bengal is to be divided it will be through their own decision and if Bengal is to remain united it will also be through them. So far nothing has happened. This much for Bengal.

But I have other matters brought to my attention, too. Today some friends from Campbellpur came to see me. They said that they were so far living happily there. They did not run away. But what were they to do? They are scared about what their plight would be in Pakistan and Campbellpur certainly would be included in Pakistan. I told them that whatever the situation might be in Pakistan they were after all living in India. If the map of India is divided in two, how can it affect them? I said, “You are brave people. You don’t fear anyone except God. Anyone who fears God need fear no one else in the world. I therefore cannot advise you to leave Campbellpur.” They wanted to know how they could defend themselves if they remained there. I said I had told the Hindus in Noakhali that they were not to move out from where they were. They wanted weapons. But what could they be doing with the weapons? The Government had the weapons and if the Government could not protect them, they being in

¹ From H. S. Suhrawardy; *vide* the following item.

a minority, then the Government was incompetent. Such a Government should go and I told them to force such a Government to go. If a few Muslims are left behind here are they to be slaughtered and would the Government merely watch? Then the Government no longer remains a Government. It becomes a tyranny. And why should we live under a tyranny? We have been fighting the British for so many years. Must we now fall from the frying pan into the fire? Is it for this that we have undergone so much suffering, made so much noise and resorted to satyagraha and non-co-operation?

That will not be right. I said the same thing to the Muslims of Bihar. They said that I could talk in that way because I was a Mahatma, but they were traders and had businesses and families and children to look after. I must show them a way. I said I was helpless. I could not change now in my old age.

What were they to say? They were good people and I was busy. I told them to go saying I could only advise them to be brave. I do not indulge in tall talk. Man is born to be brave. Man is not born to become cowardly or to become scared. Man is a part of God. He has in him the divine spark. I have not heard that a cow or a bullock or a horse partakes of the divine spark. It is true that as all creatures are creatures of God we are more or less alike. But the difference between man and other creatures is that we do not say of the latter, as we can about men, that they have in them the divine spark. Then if we have the divine spark, is it so that we may become frightened of each other or is it so that we may love each other? So I tried to explain things to them. But how were they to understand?

Mr. Jinnah is doing something very big. Nobody had ever dreamt that in this day and age Pakistan would become a possibility. But today Pakistan is a reality. True, it has not yet come into being. But surely by the 15th of August it will be formed. When I think over the matter I tell myself that I should not grieve over it. The Congress says there was no alternative to division. Jinnah says that he will not rest till India is divided. So let there be division. But shall I throw up my hands and accept this division? I say that nobody can cut me into pieces. Therefore nobody can cut India into pieces. This is mere talk. I tell you that if you become truthful, then whether it is Pakistan or India or whatever other name you may choose, the task will be the same. Who can tear asunder that which God has created one? But I can ask Mr. Jinnah what he intends to do with regard to those people. It is already agreed what parts are to be included in Pakistan.

Campbellpur is so included. It cannot be shifted. What are the people there to do? Should they flee? Does he want that they should continue to live there? He says that all will get justice; that in Pakistan the same standard will apply to all and no one will be discriminated against merely on the ground that he is a Hindu or a Christian. He says that all will get the same justice.

Today my tongue, my words, have lost their power. But he still has that power. He is the ruler of Pakistan and nobody can deny it. So I ask the ruler of Pakistan, what he intends doing. He should make his intentions public. Let me now go a little further. Badshah Khan is a friend. Badshah Khan can go somewhere else. He can stay with Maulana Azad. He has a beautiful bungalow. He can eat there what he wants. He can put up with Jawaharlal. He has a huge mansion. It is not like my poor hut. And what would I offer him to eat? I cannot even provide meat. He agrees to take whatever I eat, cereals, a little fruit, and that is all. But he is happy with it and thus he is my friend. He is a fakir. Dr. Khan Saheb is his brother. Dr. Khan Saheb can do nothing without Badshah Khan's help. Badshah Khan is a fakir. That is why he is "Badshah" or king. He has become a king not through the sword but through love, through service. When I go there I never hear him called by any other name. It is here that he is called the Frontier Gandhi. There they do not even know Gandhi, to say nothing of Frontier Gandhi.

So Badshah Khan and others decided that there ought to be a referendum. Tempers have not yet cooled, for Pathans are hot-blooded. What will be gained by a referendum? They will not all of them say that they want Pakistan or that they want Hindustan. Then there will be division among the Pathans. I should like to ask the leader of Pakistan if he wants a division among the Pathans. And will he compel one of the parts? Would it not be better for him instead to explain what Pakistan is ?

Pakistan has been granted. The Congress has agreed, willingly or unwillingly. Now Punjab is to be divided, Bengal is to be divided. I tell you that it is in the hands of the leader of Pakistan to stop the division of the Punjab and Bengal. Why does he not say 'I now have Pakistan. Why do you fear? We have fought. Let us forget who has been or has not been at fault. I have just signed that declaration with Gandhi that we shall not resort to the sword to gain political ends. We shall try to gain those ends by argument. Let us then argue. I will not

resort to a referendum.' If Jinnah says that he will welcome all the Pathans, those who consider him their enemy and those whom he considers his enemies—the Khudai Khidmatgars, the Khan Brothers, the Hindus, the Sikhs, the Parsis and Christians—he will welcome all, then I will say that you lose nothing by remaining in Pakistan. Why should he not say this much? Why should he not say what shape Pakistan is going to take? If he says this everyone will be happy.

Pakistan is not something imaginary. India is not something imaginary. I should ask the Congress also to explain. No poison must be spread. If poison continues to be spread, what will be the result? Then the Pakistan that has been formed will be a bad thing. The English will have gone, leaving the Indians, both Hindus and Muslims, to abuse them.

Pakistan was not inevitable. But when they saw that Hindus and Muslims could not make up their minds to work together in the Constituent Assembly, what could they do? Then they talked with both the parties and both agreed on Hindustan and Pakistan being separate entities. I am not concerned with what name you give it. But it should be done properly. If it is not done properly the poison will remain. I am sorry that Mountbatten has come today. He has not come with any wicked intention. But I have a fear that through him harm will come. Unless of course he stops doing what he must do, unless he pleads with me, pleads with the Congress, pleads with Mr. Jinnah, pleads with you and tries to satisfy everyone. But in this world nobody can please everybody. He who tries to please everybody always fails. This is the law of God. It is the experience of the whole world. So he cannot expect to please all. I would say that if the Congress is erring he should take it to task. He should say, 'I have come here. I am an officer of the Navy and I like to talk frankly.' He should say that what we do is not right, what the Congress does is not right. But why should we bother him? After all his dharma is different from ours. But why should brother fight against brother? Why now? When there was time we fought. We shed blood. What we were fighting for, we got.

I notice that Ibn Saud has sent a telegram to the Qaid-e-Azam. He says in it that he is not happy over what has happened. But he hopes that there will be peace in the world. The Qaid-e-Azam has said in reply that he also wants peace. But where is peace to come from? There is no peace in India today and if Hindus and Muslims continue

to fight as enemies, how can there be peace? I shall say that all the telegrams addressed to me, all the anger directed at me, are futile. I say simply, where there is truth there is God. Where there is non-violence, there is God. Where these are not, there is nothing.

I shall only say that Mr. Jinnah carries a great responsibility. He has to reassure the world. At any rate, he has to reassure those who are in Pakistan and those whom he wants to be in Pakistan. He has to draw them to him. If he cannot do so it is bad for India and it is bad for Pakistan. It is bad for the Hindus, and for the Muslims. I cannot wish anyone ill. My sole prayer is that we may do only what is right.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All-India Radio

244. LETTER TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY

June 12, 1947

I have your long, angry letter¹. Instead of being angry you should be thankful to me that I have dispelled all suspicion, if there was no ground for any. . . Do you not realize that the unity of Bengal is as dear to me as it is to you? The partition agreed to by the Congress and the Muslim League, however reluctantly it may be, can still be undone by you if you have the Muslim opinion behind you and if you would, as I suggested to you when we met, stoop to conquer the Hindus.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 190

¹ Dated June 10, it read : ‘‘I am sorry that by this statement of yours the issues also have become confused. Newspapers have been only too glad to jump on the statement that the United Bengal plan is dishonest. I do not expect any answer from you. . . or even that this letter will have the slightest effect upon you but I consider it my duty to convey to you my reactions in view of the irreparable—pardon me, Mr. Gandhi, for using this expression—mischief that your statement might cause. Not being able to specify whom you mean, you have slandered all persons who believed in a United Bengal.’’ *Vide* also the preceding item and ‘‘Telegram to Sarat Chandra Bose’’, p. 110.

245. TALK TO ARMY MEN

NEW DELHI,
June 12, 1947

I know that this is a transitional period and going through the pages of history we find that whenever there has been a revolution such inhuman things have happened. But I wanted to change history. For example we fought the battles of satyagraha on the strength of ahimsa and truth for sixty years and achieved something which is beyond imagination. In the same way I want to put army men to good use and see how they can serve the country in a different way. But I want one thing and people want something different. What is to be done about that? Only His will truly prevails. It is no exaggeration if I say that science is being misused these days, that it is being put to diabolical use. Nothing can stand up to it except ahimsa. I have no doubt about it.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 127

246. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 12, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You see Khwaja Saheb¹ sitting to my right. I told you earlier how I once went to his house with Swami Satyadev. At that time Swami Satyadev would not even drink water offered by a Muslim. But Khwaja Saheb was not offended and warmly welcomed him. He was then a trustee of the Aligarh University. Later he resigned the trusteeship to join the non-co-operation movement. I seem to remember that at the time I went to his house a meeting of the League was in progress there. Was there any satyagrahi in that assembly?—I asked. The Maulanas Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali were in jail and everyone was feeling discouraged. Khwaja Saheb told me that I could have two satyagrahis and a half. One was Shuaib Qureshi, who was a well-known and courageous young man. Then there was another gentleman, present there, who was a staunch satyagrahi. He had once been assaulted by a mob and injured in two places on his arm. But

¹ Khwaja Abdul Majid, President, All-India Nationalist Muslim Majlis

though he was strong he remained calm and did not offer physical resistance. Lastly, Khwaja Saheb said, he himself was half a satyagrahi. From then on he has been like a brother to me.

He did not want the country to be divided. Nevertheless it has happened and he has come to me to lament it. I told him that we would not weep and I made him laugh.

Sapru Saheb too has felt hurt by what has happened. Well, the League wanted it, but the Congress did not like it. How long can a thing over which the two are not agreed last? Geographically we may have been divided. But so long as hearts too have not been divided, we must not weep. For all will be well so long as our hearts remain whole. The country may well be divided today into Pakistan and Hindustan. In the end we have to become one. Not that they will come and join us through vexation. Our behaviour will be such that even if they want to they will not be able to keep themselves away from us.

It irks Jawaharlal that the rest of the country should be called Hindustan. When one part is now Pakistan, how can the other part be Hindustan, he asks. He is right. For it will mean that it belongs to the Hindus. What then would the Christians, the Jews and the Muslims left here do? Must they leave? Must Pantji ask Khawaja Saheb, who belongs to U.P. and is a friend of his, to leave U.P.? If this happens, Mr. Jinnah will have been proved right in his assertion that the hearts were already divided.

But this is not what history says. I told you about the letter I had from the well-known historian Shri Jai Chandra Vidyalankar. He says that even when Hindus and Muslims fought against each other they never killed in the name of religion. In our childhood also we never felt that we had separate identities. In days gone by when, accompanied by Hindus, Jainuluddin¹ set out on a pilgrimag to Kashi, he got repaired all derelict temples he passed on the way. The name of Allah is inscribed on the Victory Tower of Chittor.

Why should our hearts now become so soiled that we cannot sit together or see each other with a kindly eye ?

Assuming that a few Muslims have become wicked, shall we then also become wicked? This is not what Jawaharlal wants. He says that so long as Muslims were part of the country the name Hindustan was fine for the understanding was that anyone born in Hindustan belonged to

¹ Sultan of Kashmir; contemporary of Rana Kumbha of Chittor, the great-grand-father of Rana Pratap

Hindustan, whatever his religion. Now Hindustan will imply that the country belongs to Hindus. And who among the Hindus? Only the caste Hindus. But as I have said the caste Hindus—Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas—are a very small part of the population. The vast majority consists of untouchables and Advivasis. Will they be ruled by the few caste Hindus? True, today it is they who rule the roost. But if the untouchables and the Adivasis are allowed to fall under the domination of the caste Hindus, Mr. Jinnah will have been proved right in saying that a handful of caste Hindus want to keep all the rest under their heel. Could we be such fools? Could we accept the two-nation theory of Mr. Jinnah? It would mean that if my son becomes a Muslim he becomes a national of another country. If we segregate three-quarters of our fellow country-men and keep them away from the governance of the country, our Hindustan will be just as Mr. Jinnah has pictured it.

Then there will be a Parsistan, a Sikhistan, separate bits for the untouchables, the Adivasis and so forth and Hindustan will no longer remain Hindustan. It will undergo Balkanization.

If this is what the English desire there will be no place left in the world for them.

So we must not weep over what has happened. Jawaharlal has suggested Union of Indian Republic as the name for the country. That is, all will live together here. If a part wants to secede we shall not force it to remain, but those that remain shall live as brothers. We shall so treat them that they will not want to break away, they will not feel that they are separate. All will be loyal to the Union and serve it.

Today someone asked me why we should still continue with Hindustani. Such a question should not be raised. If we adopt the attitude that since Urdu will be the language of Pakistan we should have Hindi as our language then the charge of separatism against us also will be proved. Hindustani means an easy language to speak, read and write. It used to be one language at one time but lately we have Urdu loaded with Persian expressions which the people cannot understand and Hindi crammed with Sanskrit words which also people cannot understand. If we used that language we should have to eject from our midst people like Sapru. Although a Hindu, his mother

tongue is Urdu. If I start talking to him in Sanskritized Hindi he will not be able to make head or tail of it. We should therefore continue the work of Hindustani—of the Hindustani Sabha—and prove our love for those whose language is Urdu.

I see God's will in what has happened. He wants to test us both to see what Pakistan will do and how generous India can be. We must pass the test. I am hoping that no Hindu will be so mad as to show inadequate respect for things the Muslim consider sacred or fail to accord the same status to the Aligarh University as he does to Malaviyaji's Hindu University. If we destroy their sacred places we shall ourselves be destroyed.

Similarly we should protect the fire temples of Parsis and the synagogues of Jews as we protect Hindu temples. I must also say that untouchables will be treated here on par with the people of the highest caste. True Hinduism embraces all religions.

We must see that we have a hundred per cent success in this. We cannot act on the principle of tit for tat. That is an obsolete principle. The times have changed. Now if someone abuses us we have to answer him by love. We have to answer lies with truth and meanness with generosity. Always and in every situation our eyes, ears and hands should remain pure. Only then can we save ourselves; only then can the world survive. I have not the least doubt of it. We must not run away with the idea that now that we have given the Muslims what they wanted we can do what we like.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 150-4

247. LETTER TO M. A. JINNAH

NEW DELHI,
June 13, 1947

DEAR QAID-E-AZAM,

His Excellency the Viceroy writes saying that you will gladly accept my suggestion and put the case of Pakistan to the leaders and the people there, provided I can obtain an undertaking from the Congress that they will not interfere.

I do not know what you mean by the undertaking from the Congress that they will not interfere.¹

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

QAID-E-AZAM M. A . JINNAH
10, AURANGZEB ROAD
NEW DELHI

From a copy: India Office Library and Records, London; also *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government*, 1944-47, p. 261

248. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

NEW DELHI,
June 13, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

Your two letters of 12th instant were received last night for which I thank you. I have sent a letter to Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah of which a copy is enclosed herewith.² The condition precedent to the Qaid-e-Azam accepting my suggestion is dangerous in its implication. My suggestion is simply what I conveyed to you in my letter³ of 11th instant.

Before proceeding with the referendum you should invite Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah to proceed to the Frontier Province to woo the Ministers including Badshah Khan and the Khudai Khidmatgars. . . I have added, "Before he goes, no doubt, he should be assured a courteous hearing from them." The visit, therefore, if it takes place, will take place for convincing and converting the Ministers and Badshah Khan and his Khudai Khidmatgars. It should in no sense be a propaganda tour. I hope both you and Her Excellency would have a quiet and cool week-end in Simla.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY

From the original: India Office Library and Records, London. Also *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government*, 1944-47, pp. 260-1

¹ The addressee in his reply of even date, *inter alia*, said : "I thought it was quite clear what I meant, that the Congress should undertake that they will not interfere with the people of the Frontier in any way whatsoever."

² *Vide* the preceding item.

³ *Vide* "Letter to Lord Mountbatten", 10/11-6-1947

249. A LETTER

June 13, 1947

A time-table should be drawn up for all the work to be done. If everything is done according to a schedule, one will not fall ill and one will certainly have peace of mind. That is how I am keeping myself alive. Ramanama is our only Saviour. Therefore whenever we have the time we should repeat Ramanama.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 132

250. LETTER TO A WOMAN

June 13, 1947

I have your loving letter. That you did all this on getting a son is something I do not like. I personally like daughters more. Nature has not endowed man with the power and feelings that daughters are blessed with. It will not be well with us till women shed the ignorance that makes them value sons above daughters. And you have come to me for “thanks-giving”. By the same token you may vow tomorrow that if you become addicted to drink you would come to me for thanks-giving! I say this in jest but it will show you my distress.

Besides, I do not possess the power you attribute to me. I am a sinner like others. However, may God protect you and your son. You should bring him up so that he grows up to serve the poor of India.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 132-3

251. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

June 13, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

When I was walking around in Noakhali I saw that people were very frightened. And frightened people cannot think of God. Then we had to pass through villages and find our way along narrow tracks round the fields—something which few men and women in Noakhali ever did. But the experience I gained from this walking tour I could not have gained otherwise. We had to pass through the fields owned

by both Hindus and Muslims. So we uttered both names of God as we walked.

When God is here, there and everywhere God must be one. If then we call Him by different names and are intolerant of other people's names for God it would be nothing but madness. That is why I had posed the question whether those calling God Rahim would have to leave Hindustan—of course now we must give up calling the country Hindustan—and whether in the part described as Pakistan Rama as the name of God would be forbidden. Would someone who called God Krishna be turned out of Pakistan? Whatever be the case there this cannot be permitted here. We shall worship God both as Krishna and Karim and show the world that we refuse to go mad.

A friend has sent me a harsh letter asking me if I must still persist in my madness. "In a few days you will be leaving this world," he says, "Will you never learn? If Purushottamdas Tandon¹ says that everyone should take up the sword, become a soldier and defend himself, why do you feel hurt? You are a votary of the *Gita*. You should be beyond dualism. You should not feel grief or joy over every little thing. You talk like the foolish sadhu who again and again tried to save a scorpion from drowning while it went on stinging him. If you cannot give up your refrain of ahimsa you can at least allow others to take the path of their choosing. Why do you become a hindrance?"

If I have the steadfast intellect of the *Gita* I am going to live a hundred and twenty-five years and not a day less. If all of us cultivate steadfastness of intellect there is no reason why even one person should not live to 125 years. Of course if God so wills it He may remove me today, but I am not going to die in a hurry. I have to live and work yet. Purushottamdas Tandon is an old co-worker. We have worked together for years. Like me he is devoted to God. When I heard that he was saying the things he did I was grieved. Were we going to lose what we had learned from thirty years of experience and what we had been so assiduously cultivating? Self-defence is invoked for taking up the sword. But I have never known a man who has not passed from defence to attack. It is inherent in the idea of defence. Now, for my feeling hurt. If I had perfect steadfastness of intellect I

¹ 1882-1961, Congress leader; president of the Congress in 1923; actively associated with Servants of the People Society, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Sabha

would never have felt hurt. Even as it is I am trying not to feel hurt. But each day I advance a little further. Otherwise I should be a hypocrite for reciting the *sthitaprajna* verses of the *Gita* every day. Of course mere recital of the verses cannot make one a *sthitaprajna* in a day.

If I utter Ramanama and it does not spontaneously come out of the heart in a single day, should I give up? I had a Punjabi friend, Rambhaji Datt Chowdhary, who is now no more. Sometimes he composed poems. When he came out of jail he brought along a poem he had composed, and since he himself could not sing he asked his wife Sarla to sing it. In her melodious voice Sarla sang: ‘‘Never admit defeat even if you should lose your life.’’ And I told myself that I would never accept defeat. If I regularly recite the *sthitaprajna* verse every day I must one day achieve steadfastness of intellect. Then nothing that Tandonji or anyone else can say will make me laugh or cry. I shall then leave the laughing and crying to God and give up grieving.

The example of the sadhu and the scorpion is a good one. When some person without faith asked him why he was so set on saving the scorpion, whose very nature it was to sting, he answered: ‘‘If it is in the nature of the scorpion to sting it is in the nature of man to put up with the sting. If the scorpion cannot give up its nature, how can I give up mine? Do I have to become a scorpion that stings and kill it?’’

In the end the learned friend has counselled me that if I cannot give up being stubborn and must persist in ahimsa I should at least not stand in the way of others. Shall I then become a hypocrite? Shall I deceive the world? The world then will only say that there is a so-called Mahatma in India who mouths sweet phrases about ahimsa while his co-workers indulge in killing.

Something regrettable has happened. I have been a friend of the Princes, and their servant too. I have been a servant also of the rich. I have been dragging the Rajas and the rich people to the Bhangi Colony to secure their help. Where was the occasion otherwise for them to visit the Bhangi quarter? But I am a Bhangi and they come there.

I have seen Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer’s statement in the Press. He is a learned man. He has been a disciple of Annie Besant. On my

Harijan tour¹ I went to Travancore on his invitation and I stayed there as his guest. I had gone there not to quarrel but to work together with him. I find his statement jarring. If he has been misreported he must forgive me but if the report is true he should give thought to what I have to say. He says that on August 15 when India gains freedom Travancore will be declared independent. And the independence he has in mind is of such a nature that already the Travancore Congress has been forbidden to hold meetings. According to a report Sir. C. P. has declared that all those who are opposed to the idea of independence should quit Travancore. This order comes from a man who himself belongs not to Travancore but to Madras. How can he say such a thing?

While there was British Raj Travancore was required to pay homage to the British. Now that India will be a free democracy how can it do what it likes? The State now is ours, that is, it is part of democratic India. As I have often said, in a democratic India a raja and a scavenger will have the same status. As human beings they will be equal. They may well be different in their intellectual endowments. If the Maharaja of Travancore is gifted with a greater intellectual calibre he should use it in the service of the people. If he uses his intellectual gifts to suppress the people it is a worthless thing. If he suppresses or annihilates the people of Travancore, does he propose to rule over the bare land?

I am told Hyderabad is going to follow suit. They have not yet stated their position very clearly. They say for the time being they will watch without joining either Dominion. But of whom will the Nizam become independent? Ninety per cent of the population of Hyderabad consists of Hindus and they include among them some well-known figures. If the independence contemplated by either Hyderabad or Travancore is not such as can make the people feel that they are free, then these States cannot survive. The times have changed and they should realize the fact.

Is this what the Englishmen, who have come here to do good, will in the end bring about? I cannot understand the English. People say I am mad because I trust everybody—yes, while I am called mad because I do not give up my insistence on ahimsa I am also called mad because I trust the British. Why do I listen to Mountbatten?—they ask. If he is an honest man, can't he—acompetent commander—

¹ In 1934

see that to allow some six hundred Princes, who were not able to make the slightest move without permission before, to do as they like, is to make a mockery of freedom? It is a blessing that quite a number of Princes have already expressed themselves in favour of joining India.

The British say that they are going, that they will not double-cross us. Let us then pray that God may grant wisdom to the British and their representatives. May they be brave and truthful so that after they leave no one can call them names and say that they caused harm to India.

So far as I am concerned they may leave right now without waiting two months. We could then all come together and settle things between us. I even go so far as to say that even if we have to indulge in mutual slaughter, we should be left to ourselves. Only the English should go.

To the two States I shall say they may stay but they must stay only to serve the people. Even the Congress will not survive if it does not serve the people.

Let the Princes not question the right of the Congress to say anything in the matter. The Congress has rendered much service to them. I remember when I was at school something had gone wrong with the succession in Mysore and the Congress had helped to secure the throne for the Prince. Something similar once happened in Kashmir and the Congress helped. Then Baroda had once been in disgrace and the Congress made not a little effort to rehabilitate the Prince. The Congress always considered the Princes as its own countrymen. What harm could they do? In time, it was thought, they would co-operate. If the Princes now stand up and say, "Well, we are the rulers", it would not be proper. They ought to come into the Constituent Assembly, rather they should send popular representatives there.

If they do not do so then it seems that strife is going to be India's lot. We are hardly out of the Hindu-Muslim quarrel and we are faced with this new conflict with the Princes. Then there will be the I. C. S. I hope the Civil Service will conduct itself decently and no occasion for a quarrel will arise. But if there must be quarrels there are innumerable little groups who will advance their claims to this bit of the country or that. But what will become of India then? There will be nothing left for anybody. The country will be destroyed.

My fate has ever been to be involved in conflict. I want that

conflict should now cease. But I cannot see the country lose its freedom while petty factions fight.

In the end I shall say that we must go on uttering the names: Rama—Rahim, Krishna—Karim. We may not abuse the Princes, but we must tell them that they should be the servants of their people; they can be masters no more.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 154-60

252. WHO AND WHERE IS GOD ?¹

I have defined *brahmacharya* as the way of life which leads to Brahman. The knowledge that Brahman is God does not help us to know what His real nature is. So if we have true knowledge about God we can know the correct path that leads to Him.

God is not a human being. Therefore to say that He incarnates Himself in the form of a human being is also not the whole truth. We can only say that God incarnated in the form of a man only means that that man has more godliness in him than other men. As God is omnipresent, He is everywhere and dwells within every human being and all may therefore be said to be incarnations of Him. But this leads us nowhere. We call Rama and Krishna incarnations of God because people saw divinity in them. In truth Krishna and others exist in man's imagination—they are creations of his imagination. Whether they were historical figures or not has nothing to do with man's imagination. Sometimes we tread a dangerous path in believing that Rama and Krishna were historical entities and are compelled to take recourse to all manner of arguments to prove that.

The truth is that God is the force. He is the essence of life. He is pure consciousness. He is omnipresent. In spite of that all do not get benefit from or shelter in Him or say everyone is not able to secure shelter under him.

Electricity is a great force but all cannot benefit from it. There are certain laws for generating it and therefore we can get electricity only if we abide by those laws. Electricity is a lifeless force. Men, the living beings, have to labour hard to acquire the knowledge of its laws.

¹ The Gujarati original appeared in *Harijanabandhu* which was published simultaneously with the source.

Similarly there are laws for knowing the great living force which we call God. But it is self-evident that it requires hard labour to find out those laws. That law in short is termed *brahmacharya*. I can say from my experience that the simplest way to cultivate *brahmacharya* is Ramanama. Devotees and sages like Tulsidas have shown us this path. No one need give undue importance to my experience. Perhaps I realized it only at Uruli-Kanchan that Ramanama was the panacea for all ills. Very little work remains to be done by a person who knows how to make full use of it, and yet his work would be most impressive.

There are numerous aids to *brahmacharya*. But the true and eternal one is Ramanama. Only when Rama descends from the lips into the heart can one know His real power. The eleven vows are certainly there to achieve this infallible means. The ends should be such that it should become difficult to differentiate between the ends and the means. Take only truth from among the eleven vows. We can well ask whether Truth is the end and Rama is the means or vice versa.

But let me come to the point. The current meaning of *brahmacharya* is complete control over the sex organs. The golden means to attain that end is Ramanama. For proving the efficacy of Ramanama there are undoubtedly certain rules. They have been discussed once. Even so we shall dwell on them again.

NEW DELHI, June 14, 1947

Harijan, 22-6-1947

253. LETTER TO M. A. JINNAH

NEW DELHI,
June 14, 1947

DEAR QAID-E-AZAM,

Yours¹ of the 13th instant was received when I was at a meeting.

I had hoped that H. E. had not clearly understood your meaning. I now see that I was mistaken. I cannot ask the Congress to commit hara-kiri.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 375

¹ *Vide* "Letter to M. A. Jinnah", 13-6-1947

254. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

BHANGI COLONY,
NEW DELHI,
June 14, 1947

I can see as through a crystal the sincerity and love in Jawahar.¹ He has always argued with me and made me feel confused over so many issues. But today he hardly ever argues over anything that I say. He would be heart-broken if I hesitated to attend the A. I. C. C. He has made me a captive of his love. That is why I have proclaimed that I am at Jawahar's and Sardar's orders. He has the heart of a child. And yet he has the intellect, learning and power that only the greatest among intellectuals could boast of. He can renounce things as easily as a snake its slough. His tireless energy would put even a youth to shame.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 137-8

255. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 14, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am very fond of this prayer of the Elephant King. The story of *Gajendramoksha* is part of our best literature. When the elephant, even with his immense strength, is helpless and sees that his own might cannot save him from being dragged down by the crocodile, then he surrenders himself to God.

We are in a similar plight. It appears to us at the moment that we are vanquished but we are not really vanquished. He who sees God by his side can never be vanquished.

God has so made man that when man is about to be drowned, when he sees that he has lost all, only then does he think of God. When he is happy he does not think of God.

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru had met Gandhiji at midday to inform him that he would be called upon to address the A. I. C. C. in the evening; *vide p*"Speech at A. I. C. C. Meeting", 14-6-1947

Yesterday I spoke¹ of what Sir C. P. Ramaswamy, the Diwan of Travancore has said. This is the age of telegraph and radio. What I said reached him and he has sent me a very long wire.² He has explained many things but he has not lifted the ban on meetings and processions by the Travancore Congress Committee. He has not said a word about it. This is not good. It bodes ill.

He says further that Travancore has always been a free country. This is right in a way. In ancient days our country was divided into innumerable kingdoms but India was always considered one country. Our saints and seers established places of pilgrimage in all parts of the country and did many things that promoted its social, economic and religious unity. But politically the country was never united. During the reigns of Chandragupta and Ashoka, India had to a large extent become unified but even so a small bit in the South remained outside the empire. It was only when the English came that for the first time the country became one from Dibrugarh to Karachi and Kanya Kumari to Kashmir. The English did it not for our good but for their own. It is wrong to say that Travancore was free under the British regime. The Princes were never free. They were vassals of the British, they were subservient to them. Now when the British rule is on the way out and power is coming into the hands of the people, for any Prince to say that he was always independent and shall remain independent is wholly wrong and not in the least becoming. True Sir C. P. has been a friend of mine. But what of it? Even if it be my son why should I hesitate to say what is true? If when India is free Sir C. P. declares that Travancore is independent, it means that he intends to enter into a conflict with free India.

I can only tell him that he should descend from the pedestal of power and live as a servant of the people of Travancore. If after once dispossessing you of the kingdom the British for a consideration returned you to power and gave you the right to oppress your subjects, what is there to be so proud about it? It would be a matter of pride if you considered your subjects as your masters. Of course India is not down. But if it is faced with problems it is not a gentlemanly thing to kick someone who is down. If India has become divided into two, you are not concerned with it. You must be decent and understand, you must not promote useless strife.

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 13-6-1947

² *Vide* "Telegram from C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer"

Some friends have come from Rawalpindi with news of happenings there. Sucheta Kripalani also gave me the distressing report of the situation there. One thing made me very sad. When the Pakistan issue was still undecided the conditions there were tolerable but now the Muslims are on the rampage. They say that now that they have Pakistan, they will make slaves of everyone else. I mention this at the prayer meeting here so that what I say may reach the ears of the Muslims. It will certainly reach the ears of Mr. Jinnah. If what I say is wrong, let my Muslim brethren take me to task and say that it is not right. Let them invite me to Peshawar to see how happy Hindus, Sikhs, women and children are. But I have got the names. If some ordinary men had said such things, one need not have worried because there are always a few irresponsible people everywhere. But if all the Muslims think and express themselves in these terms then it is very bad.

Mr. Jinnah says that under the Muslim majority the minorities will live in peace. But what is in fact happening? If after Pakistan has come into being the conflict is further sharpened then it will only mean that we have been made fools of. It will mean that they will be masters and anyone following a different religion will have to stay there as a slave or a servant and admit that he is inferior to them.

I am eager to hear from them that all are well treated in Pakistan and that temples also are well looked after. When I see that I shall bow my head to them. But if that does not happen then I shall know that Mr. Jinnah was uttering a false-hood and I shall begin to suspect Lord Mountbatten who although a commander of such a high rank was in such a hurry. He could have allowed the carnage to go on, if it had to go on, and said that he would not bow before the sword.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 160-3

256. *SPEECH AT A.I.C.C. MEETING*

NEW DELHI,
June 14, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I wish I had made some preparations for this meeting. Unfortunately I could not. You will no doubt agree that no one could be as much hurt by the division of the country as I am. And I don't

think that anyone can be as unhappy today as I am. But what has happened has happened. You know of my efforts in the building up of the Congress. Why was the Congress Working committee formed? When a government has to be run, even if it is a government of the people, a cabinet of ministers has to be appointed. Our Working Committee performs a similar function. It acts in your name. You have the power to keep it going or to dismiss it. The Working Committee has on your behalf accepted partition. Now we have to consider what our duty is. If you want to throw out the resolution¹ you can do so. But you cannot make any changes in it. If the Congress Working Committee has done this, it has done so deliberately and for certain weighty reasons. And this decision has been taken jointly by the Congress, the Muslim League and the British Government. The Working Committee does not approve of the scheme in its entirety. But even so it has accepted it. The Cabinet Mission plan had been devised by the British Government, but not this new plan. Both the Congress and the League have a share in its formulation. If you reject it, the world will call you irresponsible. You must therefore go along with those who have acted on your behalf. If you want to reject it, you must remember that what the country needs most today is peace. If you are sure that your rejecting the scheme will not lead to further breach of the peace and further disorders you can do so. Whatever you decide to do, you must do after a great deal of deliberation.

So many things are happening today which bring to mind the English saying about swallowing a camel and straining at a gnat. The decision that has been arrived at has been reached with your complicity and yet you complain of the Working Committee, the Working Committee which has men of such great calibre on it. Those people had always said that the Congress would not accept Pakistan and I was opposed to Pakistan even more. However we may leave aside my position. The decision has not been mine to take and the Working Committee has accepted it because there was no other way. They now see it clearly that the country is already divided into two camps.

But our constitution permits it and your duty demands it that if

¹ The resolution, passed by the A. I. C. C. on June 15, welcomed the decision of the British Government to transfer power and accepted the British Government's proposals of June 3, which were "likely to lead to the secession of some parts of the country from India".

you feel that the Working Committee is in the wrong you should remove it, you should revolt and assume all power. You have a perfect right to do so, if you feel that you have the strength. But I do not find that strength in us today. If you had it I would also be with you and if I felt strong enough myself I would, alone, take up the flag of revolt. But today I do not see the conditions for doing so.

We have great problems to tackle and mere criticism cannot help in the solution of great problems. It is easy to criticize but doing some work is not so easy. The Congress has to its credit some important achievement but the Congress so far has not borne the responsibility of Government. It has not even had a look at it. It was kept busy by work which was even more important. Everything cannot be done at the same time. When now the responsibility of Government has devolved on us we have gladly accepted it and we have detailed some of our best workers for the job. There they have to grapple with some very intricate problems. They have to attend to the affairs of the millions of our countrymen.

I criticize them, of course, but afterwards what? Shall I assume the burdens that they are carrying? Shall I become a Nehru or a Sardar or a Rajendra Prasad? Even if you should put me in their place I do not know what I should be able to do. But I have not come here to plead for them. Who will listen to my pleading? But the President¹ said that I should at least show my face here. Hence I have come to show my face and to speak a few words.

It is most important that you should understand the times. The demand of the times is that we should bridle our tongues and do only what will be for India's good.

You will have seen from the newspapers what I have been doing these days. But you may also hear it from me. If through me something has been spoiled then it is my duty to use all my power for putting it right. It is open to me whether to spoil it further or to mend it. I shall cite here the example of Rama. His father went mad and his mother became foolish and Rama was exiled. The people of Ayodhya were grieved but it all led to something glorious coming out at the end. I do not consider the *Ramayana* as history but the lesson that is to be drawn from it is of daily use. It would be wrong to believe that Ravana had ten heads. But there was a Ravana that was *adharma*. It was this Ravana that Rama killed during his exile and saved dharma.

¹ J. B. Kripalani

This is what we have to do today. We have to draw something good out of this bad thing. I am not the one to be upset by defeat. From my childhood up I have spent my life fighting and my struggle has been to extract good from evil. If there is gold in mud, even if there is a lot of the mud and very little gold it should not be thrown away. We should draw out gold and diamonds even from mud.

This decision puts both our religions on trial. The world is watching us. In the three-quarters of the country that has fallen to our share Hinduism is going to be tested. If you show the generosity of true Hinduism, you will pass in the eyes of the world. If not you will have proved Mr. Jinnah's thesis that Muslims and Hindus are two separate nations, that Hindus will for ever be Hindus and Muslims for ever Muslims, that the two will never unite, and that the Gods of the two are different. If, therefore, the Hindus present at this meeting claim that India is their country and in it Hindus will have a superior status, then it will mean that the Congress has not made a mistake and that the Working Committee has only done what you secretly wanted.

But if you want to save dharma you must be true Hindus. There are only a hundred thousand Parsis in India. Our ancestors gave them shelter and set an example in world history. Must we now kill them? And what shall we do with the Jews? We must so treat them that they will enjoy perfect freedom here. And what about the untouchables? It is said that Islam has risen to abolish untouchability. If you say that untouchables are nothing, the Adivasis are nothing, then you are not going to survive yourselves. But if you do away with the distinction of *savarna* and *avarna*, if you treat the Shudras, the untouchables and the Adivasis as equals then something good will have come out of a bad thing. There should be no distinction of high and low in a democratic polity. But if we oppress them and oppress those following other faiths then it will mean that we do not want India to survive, that we are out to destroy it. It does not matter if the land is divided. But if we divide the hearts then what the Congress Working Committee has done has been well done.

It is not a small thing that some States should secede from India. It is a very serious thing. Today and yesterday at the prayer I said a great deal about the States. I shall briefly repeat here what I have been saying. I myself come from a native State. Time was when I myself used to be severe with the States' people telling them not to force their burden on the Congress for we were fighting against a third power and the States' people also were giving us help in our fight. I had

wanted them to consolidate that strength. But now with the British gone, we cannot let the Princes do as they please. Those of them who now want to be independent should ask themselves what good the British ever did them. They were content to be vassals of a foreign government, the British Government, for so many years, but now that the millions of India are going to have the reins of power in their hands the Rulers refuse to be subservient to the people's government. I must tell the Diwans of all the States that if they do not advise the rulers to join the Constituent Assembly, they would be showing disloyalty to the Rulers. We do not want to be enemies of the Princes. If they want to be independent they may be independent. We shall not imprison them. If they want to stay on in the country, they must understand that their subjects are with us. If they do not want to stay in the country they may go and settle down in Paris or elsewhere. But if they want to remain in India they must remain as servants of the people. They must understand the implications of democratic government. They must concede that all men are created equal. They must not don the mantle of superiority. Only then can they survive for ever. They must recognize the paramountcy of the people as they recognized the paramountcy of the British Government. Then they can freely carry on in their own States. Only they cannot carry on as they did during the days of the British regime, plundering the people. They must dedicate themselves to the service of the people and become their true friends.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 142-6

257. LETTER TO PIR MAQDOOMSHAH BANORI

[After June 14, 1947]¹

BHAI PIR MAQDOOMSHAH SAHEB,

Mridulabehn gave me your letter. I am sorry to know what you say about the Khaksars.² It is bad if it is true. I am making enquiries

¹ This was in reply to addressee's letter date June 14, 1947.

² The reference is to the opening of fire by the police on Khaksars who in violation of the order banning processions, etc., had taken out a procession which is resulted in violence.

of the Bihar Government. I shall do what I can. Be calm.

Mridulabehn has gone to Ahmedabad.

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

258. *LETTER TO SHRIKRISHNA SINHA*

[After June 14, 1947]¹

BHAI SHRI BABU,

Pir Maqdoom Shah has written about the Khaksars. I enclose the letter. What are the facts?

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

259. *LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK*

NEW DELHI,
June 15, 1947

CHI. PREMA,

It is 4-30 just now. I am writing this after the prayer. Others around me are sleeping. The nib of the pen is broken and I don't wish to get up and get a new one. Meanwhile Chi. Manu came in with a glass of fruit juice and I asked her to bring me a nib. And now I am writing with a new nib, and it won't move smoothly till the grease on it has gone. This is how the old man's work goes on. What place does a man like me have in the midst of you all who are soaring in the sky in the refreshing breeze of the coming independence?

I am now waiting to see where God will lead me next.

I cannot permit you to publish my letter. It will do me no harm, But I am afraid lest my imperfect memory harm somebody else.²

General Shah Nawaz told me that he would not be able to do full justice to the job unless its control was entirely in his hands. I replied that, if it was so he should resign. This is all so far as I am concerned.

¹ *Vide* the preceding item; both letters are written on the same sheet of paper.

² The addressee had wanted to publish her correspondence with Gandhiji in connection with the Rashtra Seva Dal's allegation against Shankarrao Deo, the Congress Secretary, that he had obliged Shah Nawaz Khan to resign from the supreme command of the Congress Seva Dal in spite of Gandhiji's sympathies with the latter.

I accepted . . .¹ offer because she wanted to work under me in Bihar. She is a great help to me indeed. It is perfectly true that she has no faith in truth and non-violence. But, then, how many others like her have been doing such fine work! Who cares for truth and non-violence these days? You look at the matter from one point of view only. Go on doing your work to the best of your ability and bring credit to yourself.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-5: Kumari Premabehn Kantakne, pp. 325-6

260. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

NEW DELHI,

June 15, 1947

CHI. MIRA,

I have your another long though interesting letter.

I am sorry about your illness. You must get rid of it even if you have to be in Uttarkashi for a long time.

I am myself thinking of going to Uttarkashi but it is all in the realm of dreamland. Therefore take no thought of it. You may however send me every detail about it.

I must not think of Dharampal just now. Those who are with me are too many. I want to be alone but I know I cannot be. My movement is quite uncertain.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 6528. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9923

261. A LETTER

June 15, 1947

When seemingly good men become bad, they develop cunning. A bad man is in the same plight as a cunning man. The [answer to the] second question is beyond your understanding. You may ask it when we meet again. If everybody did his own duty, our condition

¹ Omission as in the source

would improve immediately. The *atman* is its own friend and its own foe.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 141-2

262. A LETTER

June 15, 1947

Only the self-reliant man can progress towards success in any task. This is as true of a country as of a man. At present we have no faith in ahimsa because we have no self-reliance. It has become second nature with us in every matter to look to other people or other nations. As a result we have become so weak in body, mind and resources that we cannot protect even our own selves. That is why I tell Rajendrababu every day that it is better for us to starve than to import even a single grain of food from outside. But mine is a voice in the wilderness. Or could it be that I am growing too old and therefore losing my grip over things?

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 142

263. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI¹

NEW DELHI,

June 15, 1947

If I did not feel unhappy I would be a person with a heart of stone. It is easy to become a saint and sainthood gives greater satisfaction. Sitting in a forest or in solitude and pursuing knowledge is no doubt a kind of spiritual living, but to practise goodness while living in the world is, in my opinion, more difficult kind of spiritual living. One may not be a scholar but one must show sympathy towards the poor and the afflicted. Yes, it is a sign of a *sthitaprajna* to remain calm in the face of a calamity or illness or the death of a dear one. But it is the duty of a man to show sympathy towards those who suffer and to endeavour to lighten their suffering.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 141

¹ Manu Gandhi had asked Gandhiji why the happenings in the country made him unhappy if he was trying to become a *sthitaprajna*.

264. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

June 15, 1947

I am sorry that today my silence has to begin earlier than usual, because tomorrow afternoon there is going to be a meeting of the Working Committee. I therefore give you my message in writing. I have had letters from various countries asking me one question which I wish to answer today through this message. The question in brief is: 'Why is it that in your country political parties take recourse to violence to gain political ends? Day by day violence continues to increase in your country. Can you explain why? For thirty years you fought the British non-violently. Why does it end up thus? Would you still want to give the world the message of non-violence?'

In answering the question I have to confess my bankruptcy. However, ahimsa can never suffer bankruptcy. As I have explained the ahimsa which we have practised during the last earlier thirty years has been the ahimsa of the weak. Whether this view of mine is valid or not you will judge for yourselves. What has to be admitted is that in the changed conditions of today the ahimsa of the weak has no place. The truth is that India has not so far had an opportunity to practise the ahimsa of the brave. Nothing is gained by my repeating that no power in the world can stand before the ahimsa of the brave. For the truth of this can only be proved by repeatedly and extensively manifesting it in life. So far as I can I have endeavoured to manifest it in my life. But maybe I am not fully qualified, maybe I am a beggar. Why then should I ask you to follow me when I am not able to show results? The question is pertinent and my answer is simple. I ask no one to follow me. Each should go by the voice within. If you cannot hear the voice within you may do as you like. In any case you must on no account blindly follow anybody.

Another important question is that, if I am fully convinced that India is following the path of error, why do I associate with those who are in error? Why do I not go my own way in the faith that if I am on the right path my old co-workers will all return to me? I like the question. I shall not argue against it. I will merely say that my faith and my creed are as they were. They have not weakened. It is possible that my method was wrong. When one is in a difficulty old experiences and old patterns help but one should not become merely

mechanical.

I further request all those who wish to advise me that they should have patience with me and above all they should join me in the faith that to ameliorate the pains of this suffering world there is no way save that of ahimsa, however arduous it may be. Millions like me may not be able to practise this in life. For this they themselves will be to blame, not ahimsa.

I may here mention another matter to you. Although I am observing silence, some friends from Travancore came to see me. They assured me that there was not the least bit of exaggeration in what I had been saying concerning that State. They also told me that where meetings were organized they were lathi-charged and yesterday some thirty-five persons were taken into custody. The voice of the people there is being throttled. Whatever may be the case I have not the least doubt that in a free India it is an absurd thing for a State to proclaim independence. This may even be interpreted to mean that they have declared war against the hundreds of millions of people of free India. It is a very unwise thing especially when the Maharaja does not enjoy the support of his people. It was perhaps possible when the British were at his back. But now the conditions are drastically changed.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 163-5

265. A LETTER

June 16, 1947

Every day all kinds of reports keep appearing in newspapers. This should not happen. They are all mere speculation. Just by chance a report may turn out true and from this newspapermen claim that they can foretell the future. There is, however, only one power in the world that knows the future and that is God, and He never makes predictions. I never read the predictions appearing in newspapers and I would advise you too not to read them. I have never seen anybody profiting from them. I would, therefore, request you not to trust even English or British newspapers.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 151

266. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 16, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

This morning when I was observing silence, Shri Purushottamdas Tandon paid me a visit. I have told you how I was pained by Tandonji's statement that every man and woman should carry arms. A correspondent had asked me how I, a votary of the *Gita*, could feel hurt. The letter also said that Tandonji believed in the principle of tit for tat. I asked Tandonji about it. Tandonji explained that although he did not believe in the principle of tit for tat, he certainly believed that everyone should carry arms for self-defence. This he said was also the teaching of the *Gita*.

I told Tandonji that he should at least write to the friend and explain that he did not believe in the principle of tit for tat so that he should not labour under a misapprehension. I do not believe that the *Gita* advocates violence for self-defence. I understand the *Gita* differently. If the *Gita* or some other Sanskrit work advocates this I am not prepared to accept it as Shashtra. An utterance does not become scriptural merely because it is couched in Sanskrit. Tandonji reminded me that I had advised the killing of the monkeys which ravaged fields or otherwise caused harm. I do not like to kill any living thing, not even an ant. But the question of fields is a different question and people differ.

Tandonji said we might not adopt the principle of tit for tat or a tooth for a tooth and a slap for a slap. But if we did not take up arms and show our strength how were we to defend ourselves?

My answer is that self-defence is necessary; but how does one defend oneself? If someone comes to me and says, 'Will you or will you not utter Ramanama? If you do not, look at this sword.' Then I shall say that although I am uttering Ramanama every moment I will not do so at the point of the sword. Thus I shall risk my life in self-defence. Now if I recite the *Kalma* I do not lose my religion. What does it matter if I say in Arabic that Allah is one and that Mohammed is His only Prophet! There is no sin in saying this and if by my merely saying this they accept me as a Muslim, I shall consider it a matter of pride. But if someone comes to me and wants to make me recite the

Kalma at the point of the sword I will never do so. I will defend myself with my life. I want to stay alive to prove this paradox. I do not wish to stay alive in any other way.

I have said that geographically our land may very well be divided but that our hearts should not be divided. But who will listen to me? The day was when everyone listened to Gandhi because Gandhi showed the way to fight the British. And how many Britishers were here? Only seventy-five thousand. But they had such resources, such might, that, as Annie Besant said, they answered brickbats with bullets and our violence was wholly ineffective. Ahimsa promised to be more efficacious, so Gandhi was looked up to, but today they say that Gandhi cannot show the path and therefore arms should be taken up for self-defence. One can then only say that all these past thirty years that we spent in non-violent struggle had been wasted. We should have thrown out the British through violence.

But I do not think that the thirty years were wasted. It was good that under the severest oppression we remained non-violent. They used their arms against us. But we were not cowed down and the message of the Congress spread throughout the length and breadth of India. Only it did not penetrate the seven lakh villages of India because our ahimsa was the ahimsa of the impotent. No one at the time showed us how to make an atom bomb. Had we known how to make it we would have considered annihilating the English with it. But there having been no alternative my advice was accepted. But today people say that nobody now cares for me.

But all of you who come here to the prayer meeting every day, why do you do so? How do I force you? You come bound by the string of love and quietly listen to me. If I can thus make myself heard by even the Hindus alone, you will see that India holds her head high in the world. I say nothing of the Muslims. They think I am their enemy but the Hindus and the Sikhs do not consider me their enemy. If the Hindus will heed my advice regarding the non-violence of the brave I shall tell them to throw their arms into the sea; I shall show them how the brave can rely on non-violence.

The Congress Working Committee consists of only a handful of men. I have seen that some of them are narrow-minded, as I could gather from one or two speeches. But I have information from all over India. They say, 'Where will the Muslims now go? What the Muslims can do we can do, for we are in a majority. After the British leave we

shall rule over them. We consider ourselves rightful rulers because we went to jail and submitted to beatings and whippings.' It does not become us to talk in this way. This is violence. If you do not wish to listen to any talk of non-violence, if you are predisposed towards violence it is a matter of shame. If you go by the principle of tit for tat, you can take it that both the faiths will be destroyed. Islam will be finished, as also Hinduism.

If we practise the non-violence of the strong, the Pakistan that they have secured will only remain a plaything. We shall lose nothing through non-violence.

I do not consider Pakistan and India as two different countries. If I have to go to the Punjab, I am not going to ask for a passport. And I shall go to Sind also without a passport and I shall go walking. Nobody can stop me. They might say I am their enemy but if I went I would go not to become a member of some Assembly but to serve and it would not be for the first time in my life. I went to Noakhali and let no one imagine that, because it is now to be included in Pakistan, I would not go there again. A part of me lies there. I shall tell the Hindus there that if they are true Hindus they should not fear anyone even if they are surrounded by murderers.

I shall consider myself brave if I am killed and if I still pray to God for my assassin and I shall utter the name of God not with my lips alone but seeing Him in my heart. I shall not go to temples and mosques looking for God.

Today Badshah Khan, who has been so brave, is not able to show bravery. For years he has been instructing the Pathans in ahimsa. But today he says he cannot declare allegiance to India. If he did that there would be a carnage ten times as bad as in Bihar. What is he to do? Ahimsa is not a commodity which can be bought in the market. If we could display true ahimsa, the Frontier Province alone could save the whole of India.

The Muslims cannot drive a bargain with us. They cannot have all that they were given under the British regime. They cannot be given separate electorates if they ask for them. Separate electorates were a poisonous weed planted by the British but we shall be just to them. Their children will have as much opportunity of education as other children. In fact if they happen to be poor, they will have even more facilities. If we show such justice the people of India will have

proved their courage¹.

The A. I. C. C. passed its resolution only yesterday. But Gandhiji received two newspaper cuttings, one from a Nagpur paper purporting to report a speech by the Premier of the Central Province and the other criticism of the speech. The speech makes the Premier say as follows: It was Mr. Jinnah's claim that the Muslims had a separate culture and that in Pakistan only Islamic law would prevail. It would be difficult for non-Muslims to live in Pakistan in such conditions. Pandit Shukla pointed out that while there were 1,85,00,000 Hindus in the Muslim areas of British India, There were 30 million Muslims in the Hindu areas of British India, and these have lived in these parts for generations. What would be the condition of these, Pandit Shukla asked. They would be treated as aliens. They would have no citizenship rights. The grants that were being given today for their education would be withdrawn and they would have to depend on their own resources.

The report went on to say: Pointing to Minister² Hasan who was sitting next to him, Pandit Shukla jocularly observed that Dr. Hasan would not only have to quit the Cabinet, but that he would not be allowed to live in Wardha. He would have to seek shelter in Pakistan. Even though religious and cultural freedom might be conceded to the Muslims living in Hindustan, they would have no representation in the legislatures or in the services. They would have to maintain their own institutions and they would be entitled to no Government grants.

If the report was fairly accurate, Mahatma Gandhi observed, the speech was unfortunate, although it might have been made in lighter vein. Surely the Union Provinces were not going to be caught in the trap prepared for them. They had to show by their action that the Muslim members in the Provincial Cabinets were just as welcome as they were before and that no matter what was done in the so-called Pakistan provinces, the Union Provinces would be strictly just and fair in their treatment of their Muslim brethren. Pakistan should make no difference in their regard for the Muslims as well as the other minorities. This had no reference to the apples of discord which the foreign power had thrown in their midst such as separate electorates.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 166-70; and *The Hindu*, 17-6-1947

267. A LETTER

June 17, 1947

Your letter was read out to me today at 4.15 after the morning prayer. After taking honey in hot water, I am now replying to it.

¹ What follows is from *The Hindu*.

² For Health

Maybe I read your letter or listened to it in a hurry. But one may be able to concentrate even when one is in a hurry¹ I have spent my whole life in examining principles and I am still doing the same. I may not be able to convince you just now. But won't you agree that "one had rather lose a hundred thousand than one's credit"?

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 159

268. A LETTER

June 17, 1947

Time is kind and time is also a healing friend, but it is equally cruel and can also be an enemy.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 159

269. LETTER TO SURENDRARAI B. MEDH

NEW DELHI,

June 17, 1947

CHI. MEDH²,

Tell the satyagrahis³ that they should adhere to truth and non-violence and not violate their pledge even in the face of death.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5005

270. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

June 17, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I have no hand in choosing the *bhajans* that are sung these days. But often the *bhajan* that is sung fits the occasion. Today's *bhajan* says that in the company of the good one forgets the notions

¹ Omission as in the source

² A co-worker of Gandhiji in South Africa

³ Of South Africa

of self and others and no one is an enemy or a stranger. This indeed is the need of the hour. But everyone coming to me says, 'However much you may shout, the separation is going to endure. Each party must consolidate itself. I do not like this kind of talk, though I am not much worried either. I shall continue to say that what has happened has happened; only it should not be sealed and made permanent.

As you know, when the prayer ended yesterday, a friend asked a question. I asked him to put it in writing. He has done so. He says that if the decision about Pakistan is not undone he and his wife will both end their lives by fasting and they will do the fasting here at this spot.¹ But if someone must fast it is I. There is a philosophy about everything, that is, there are certain laws and certain methods for doing everything. Even a small thing like the charkha has a philosophy. We did not know it before but now a theory has been evolved, and we have come to realize the power of the charkha. I go so far as to say that the whole world will gain its freedom through the charkha. The world will not be freed through the atom bomb. There are two kinds of Shastras in the world—one *satvik* and the other *rajasik*, one conforming to dharma, the other not conforming to dharma. The shastra of the atom bomb does not conform to dharma. It does not show faith in God. It usurps the place of God.

Fasting, similarly, has its shastra. Fasting not governed by a philosophy does not conform to dharma. If someone says he will fast so long as God does not appear before him, he may well die but God will not appear before him.

Fasting for a public cause also has its shastra and I am the only one adequately versed in it. I cannot consider the fast proposed as conforming to dharma. My heart is not going to be touched by it. The world too will have no sympathy with it. I should therefore advise the couple to give up this idea and return to their home. This does not mean that they should sit still. We must not let the thought enter our minds that we have become separated. Let us not recognize Pakistan in our hearts; let us not consider anyone an enemy or an outsider.

All this will come about by keeping the company of the good, by reading noble works and by giving up wicked thoughts. Only then

¹ Gandhiji could not offer them hospitality as he himself was a guest there. So the couple fasted in front of the Bhangi Colony. They however yielded to Gandhiji's advice the next day, i.e., June 18, and broke their fast saying henceforth they would devote themselves to constructive work; *vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 19-6-1947

will our hearts become cleansed of evil thoughts. Cleansing the heart is not an easy thing. Only by uttering Ramanama can this be accomplished.

But our minds today are filled with hankering after comforts. We will not think of Rama but rather of a cigar. Our thoughts turn in wrong directions. People continue to proclaim that they will teach the Muslims a lesson. We thus lend support to the argument for the perpetuation of Pakistan.

It is Mr. Jinnah who created Pakistan. We had not thought it possible even in our dreams that he would manage to get it. But he is a brave man. With the help of the British he has succeeded in getting Pakistan. If we now shut our eyes to it and go about saying that we shall teach the Muslims a lesson it is not going to undo the fact of Pakistan.

I am not asking you to kowtow to the Muslims. One does not kowtow to one's younger brother. One does one's duty by one's younger brother and earns his trust.

You will have seen from the newspapers that I had been to see the Viceroy today.¹ The Viceroy asked me, "Did you see the newspapers today?" I said, I rarely saw newspapers. Then he said, "We have accomplished something good today." He had received separate reports from the Hindus and the Mussalmans on the question of partition and was able to make them agree to produce a joint report.

What I say is that when two brothers have decided to separate it cannot be done by losing temper. If there is a chair in the house it cannot be broken into two. If there has to be division in the ratio of three and one the statistics will have to be worked out very carefully. The good thing we have started with the formation of a committee should be carried further. One's goodness is not proved merely by one's displaying a smile. If what we have is not merely sweet words but a sincere desire to work together, then I will say that the creation of Pakistan has been to the good. Then it will not be necessary to trouble the Viceroy. We shall merely tell the experts to sit together and compile an inventory that will satisfy both the parties. Where calculation helps we should resort to calculation. Where calculation does not help we should draw lots. But we must not fight.

¹ For the Viceroy's report of the meeting, *vide* "Lord Mountbatten's Note on Interview with Gandhiji and M. A. Jinnah", 17-6-1947

Lastly, I have today received a lengthy wire from Sir C. P. Ramaswamy, the Diwan of Travancore, in which he has tried to explain to me that he has the support of the Christians and others in Travancore. I dislike such wires. By sugarcoating something bitter it cannot be made sweet. The very basis of the thing is wrong. "Come now, we are independent." Independent of whom? Of the people? What is to be gained by becoming independent of India? Why do they indulge in this kind of circumlocution? They should boldly say that they are with India. Only then will it be said that they are loyal to their people; else they are disloyal to them.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 170-3

271. LETTER TO DINSHAW K. MEHTA

NEW DELHI,
June 18, 1947

CHI. DINSHAW,

I have your letter. Let the [clinic] at Uruli-Kanchan be a separate one.

The nature-cure clinic at Purandar is not required for what I have in mind, but for Gulbai's sake you may buy it over if you have the money.

I am not in a position to send for you nor have I the time. I have lost interest in everything. I have not the strength to guide you. In the case of nature-cure, nothing save Ramanama has any relevance in my life. Read what I am writing for the *Harijan* journals these days, both in Gujarati and English.

You may write to me in English whenever you want to. The bond of love that has grown between us is for ever. But you are an urban, anglicized gentleman, whereas I am an unsophisticated villager. That is why you and I cannot see the same thing in the same way. Similarly although I am very close to my English friends they go their way and I go mine. Still the love grows; it certainly does not diminish. Truth binds us all.

Now I have covered everything. Is there anything more?

Of course you are free to come whenever you wish.

I understand what you say about Manu. You have said enough.

Can you read all this?

Blessings to all of you from

BAPU

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

272. A LETTER

June 18, 1947

. . .¹ is making a great mistake in leaving home. Is there any difference between Sevagram and Gopuri? It is best that he should live where he feels happy. We can live only in our own bodies. Another's body may seem attractive to us, but we can hardly live in it.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 165

273. LETTER TO MOHAN SINGH THAKUR

June 18, 1947

CHI. MOHAN SINGH,

So your brother is gone, as you too will, and I and all of us. Our grief is due to selfishness. So do not grieve. Do what you think is your duty. If you can come back, do.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Hindi: C. W. 10429. Courtesy: Navajivan Trust

274. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

NEW DELHI,
June 18, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your short but newsy letter. Letter² to Mohan Singh is enclosed. Read what I have written to Chimanlal.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat the Hindi: G. N. 1980

275. A LETTER

June 18, 1947

I have your letter. I think your relations with the women are not pure but are tainted with lust. You should free yourself of it. When a

¹ Omission as in the source

² *Vide* the preceding item.

person belongs to an organization, he should abide by its rules.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 165

276. A TALK

NEW DELHI,

June 18, 1947

If people start fasting over every little thing right from now, what is going to happen later? For my part I shall certainly plead with them¹, try to make them see reason, but if, nevertheless, they fast I am not going to yield even if they come to the verge of death. Because even that is a test of my truth and non-violence. To yield to a wrong thing out of fear is also a kind of lie and violence. A devotee of truth and non-violence remains steadfast even if the whole world goes against him. Only then can he propagate the principles of truth and non-violence. Who knows that God is not thus testing me? But I feel that Hindus themselves are responsible for subverting Hinduism. How can there be peace when there is no unity? There are so many castes and sub-castes among Hindus. Why, they have even separate festivals. I remember there is a festival called *Shitala Satam*² in the month of *Shravan*. My mother used to say that *Shravan Sud Satam*³ was of *Kanabis* and *Shravan Vad Satam*⁴ was ours. I can cite many such differences. These so-called small things have a profound impact on the people and make them feel that they are separate from others. That is why I say that the scholars, poets and writers of today should try to stamp out such bad customs and do their best to promote unity through their speech, thought and deed. Such customs were perhaps appropriate for the period in which they originated. But now we must get out of the rut. And religious leaders, writers, poets and scholars should lead the way. If that happens people will slowly come nearer to each other and, if they do so outwardly, they will automatically come nearer mentally also.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 165-6

¹ The Maharashtrian couple who had decided to go on a fast; *vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 17-6-1947

² Seventh day of the month

³ Seventh day of bright fortnight of the month

⁴ *ibid*

277. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 18, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I spoke to you yesterday about a friend and his wife who were fasting on the road outside Valmiki Mandir. Today they have sent me a very respectful letter. But the letter does not show wisdom. They are young, I am old. If I say that I possess a little wisdom they should accept my word. They say they can see the wisdom of what I say but that their conscience will not let them give up their fast.

You must have heard of the *Gita Rahasya* written by Tilak. It is so rich in thought that it needs to be studied again and again. I read it in Yeravda jail. True, I do not find myself in agreement with everything he says but the fact remains that Tilak was a great scholar and had a vast knowledge of Sanskrit literature. It is a long time since I read this work and so I cannot remember his exact words. But I shall tell you the substance of what he says. I think what he says is right.

He says at one place that “conscience” is an appropriate word for the inner voice, but that when one says that one acts according to the promptings of one’s conscience it does not really mean that one acts according to the promptings of one’s inner voice. According to the Vedic thought all creatures are endowed with conscience. But in many people conscience is dormant, which is to say the inner voice is torpid. How can it then be described as “conscience”? According to our Shastras the inner voice awakens only when one follows *yama-niyamas* and practises various other disciplines. I have digested this teaching of Tilak well so that I am able to tell whether what is taken for the inner voice is really the inner voice or not. If a voice told a thief, ‘kill that girl, cut off her limbs and take away her jewellery’, I would not say it was the still small voice within. It would be sheer wickedness. We are all today sunk in stupor. It frequently occurs to us to kill innocent children. But the prompting does not come from the inner voice.

Then I am an expert on fasting. Some Jain friends had resorted to fasting merely because they were not able to get something which they wanted. I persuaded them to terminate the fast. I told you also how even a great scholar like Dharmanand Kosambi had given up fasting on my advice. Kaka Kalelkar, who is here, tells me that just

before his death Dr. Kosambi had told him that I had been right in advising him to give up his fast. So, as an expert on fasting, I advise the couple to terminate their fast if they can do so. Three days should be enough.

You will have seen from the newspapers that I met Mr. Jinnah yesterday. I could not tell you about this meeting before because such a meeting had not been mooted. When I was at the Viceroy's House, the Viceroy told me that Mr. Jinnah was present there and that I should see him. Well, I could not have refused. I am the kind of person who would not hesitate to visit Mr. Jinnah at his house. We met and we agreed that it would be good if we also met Badshah Khan. Then we were to see the Viceroy in the evening. But Badshah Khan, like the humble man he is, had taken a bus to Deoband and it took him not three but five hours to get back and this meant that we could not see the Viceroy again in the evening.

The Viceroy has left Delhi today but he would have been happy if we could have met. We therefore went to Lord Ismay at 4.30 in the afternoon. Badshah Khan has now gone to see Mr. Jinnah at his residence and he is still with him.

Do not please build any great hopes on this. But we can certainly hope that the wound that we have received in the shape of Pakistan can be prevented from becoming still deeper. We can but strive. The result is in the hands of God. Let us pray that the effort may lead to a happy result.

What would be a happy result in this instance? This, that the Pathans in the Frontier Province may all be united. Pathans are a sword-happy people. One can hardly find a Pathan who cannot wield a sword or a gun. From generation to generation vendetta rules their lives but Badshah Khan saw that they could defend themselves better by dying than by killing. He wanted the Pathans to develop this lofty courage and render service. But before this dream could be realized this question of referendum came up.

Some will now say that they want to be with Pakistan. Some others will say that they will remain with the Congress. And the Congress of course has come to be regarded by some as an organization of the Hindus. This will create a schism among the Pathans and may lead to a strife which it may be difficult to curb. They will indulge in mutual slaughter. Badshah Khan wants that by some means it may be made possible for the Pathans to remain free without having to submit to a referendum. They should make their

own laws and remain united. It would not then matter whether they chose Pakistan or India. They say they have no money. They are a poor people. They do not want to be an independent nation. But they would decide which country to join after they have got over the present quarrels.

Then it also irks Dr. Khan Saheb that some Hindus found it necessary to take refuge in Hardwar. Therefore Badshah Khan wants these Hindus to return to N. W. F. P. There are still numerous Hindus in the N. W. F. P. who are too poor to be able to leave. They can feel secure only after this question of the referendum is settled. It is for this that Badshah Khan has gone to see the Qaid-e-Azam. What he brings from there remains to be seen.

Khwaja Abdul Majid has been to see me. He wants to be assured that, now that Pakistan has been conceded, the

Nationalist Muslims will not be ignored. The Khwaja Saheb, being a good Muslim, also considers himself a good Hindu just as I being a good Hindu consider myself a good Muslim. He says that separate electorates should be done away with for we all want to present the Union of India to the world as a united nation. We may follow different religions but in the eyes of the law we shall all be citizens of India and anyone who is loyal to India should have the same rights as everyone else. I assure Khwaja Saheb that he would certainly have all those rights. At least there are two of us, who regard each other as a man of religion and goodwill. We shall see to it that no one is deprived of his rights on the ground of religion. At the same time we have to see that no special concessions are made on religious grounds. This is what Mr. Jinnah did. First he advanced eleven demands, then fourteen, then twenty-one and in the end he advanced the demand for Pakistan. Nobody now shall be permitted to do this. India is a vast country and it has a place for everyone who will be loyal to it.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 173-7

278. LETTER TO KANCHAN M. SHAH

NEW DELHI,

4.30 a. m., June 19, 1947

CHI. KANCHAN,

I have your letter. I hope you are now content. Munnalal is in your hands, and so certainly are you in his. If you understand this, it

will be more than enough. If the Ashram does not improve, how can Sevagram improve? If Sevagram does not, how can India?

May all of you keep well.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 6251. Also C. W. 6975. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

279. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

NEW DELHI,

After morning prayers, June 19, 1947

CHI. MATHURADAS,

This is only to tell you that I admit the truth of what you say.¹ It is very true that even-mindedness is yoga.² Neither Truth nor ahimsa can be attained without this even-mindedness. Whenever I get excited, I feel ashamed of myself afterwards, become unhappy and my hope and wish to live for 125 years loses its edge. Long life is not for indulgence. Are not anger and impatience also forms of indulgence? Why should you become unhappy because I am unhappy? Rest assured that I am quite vigilant. My position is like that of a castor-oil plant on a treeless heath. Wait and watch. I have now a whole heap of copies of the *Allopanishad*. The search has certainly benefited us. These days there are no interruptions during the prayers.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a facsimile of the Gujarati: *Bapuni Prasadi*, pp. 217-8

280. A LETTER

June 19, 1947

With regard to your letter the following emendation easily suggests itself. Cohabitation for purposes of procreation is still after all sense-enjoyment. It is, therefore, right to forbid it. But I do not wish to stretch the point. Your argument as a whole seems correct. But I cannot go into it in detail. I am returning the letter. Since you have

¹ The addressee had conveyed his uneasiness at Gandhiji's growing irritability.

² *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 48

faith in me, you seem to think along lines similar to mine¹ It is perfectly possible that pure conduct may not have behind it pure thought. What we must examine is the thought and in doing so we must be severe. Examine a thought with complete objectivity, even if it be the thought of an impure man.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 172

281. LETTER TO MAHESH DATT MISHRA

NEW DELHI,
June 19, 1947

CHI. MAHESH,

I have your two letters. My going there has been postponed. It will not be possible to have you or anyone else with me. Your place is to study. It will be different if I settle down somewhere else. Mridulabehn was saying to Manubehn: “Why does Bapu stop Mahesh? His place is in his own town or in the C. P.” If you think I am stopping you then you are wrong. You can go where you wish, but there should be some stability.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 6719. Also C. W. 4463. Courtesy: Mahesh Datt Mishra

282. LETTER TO DAMODAR

NEW DELHI,
June 19, 1947

CHI. DAMODAR,

I have your letter. You must recover fully.

What is there in your brother’s inter-caste marriage to ask for my blessings? For a marriage of this nature, a person like you should not ask for anyone’s blessings.

Most marriages take place for pleasure, by no means for preser-

¹ Omission as in the source

vation of dharma. It should be enough that they are performed.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

283. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

June 19, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Yesterday at the end of the prayer meeting a friend asked me a question. I told him to put it in writing, which he did. But the slip of paper containing the question remained in someone's pocket and when the garment was washed, the slip suffered in the process and when it reached my hands nothing could be made of it. It is a matter of shame but the questioner is not present at the meeting so I do not know to whom I should express my apology.

What I told you yesterday about the couple fasting here for the last 3 or 4 days first made them somewhat angry. How could I describe myself as an expert on fasting? Why was I so proud? But when I met them at 9 o'clock last evening I explained to them that if a man five-foot tall claimed to be five-foot tall he could not be called proud. They had said it in the heat of the moment. And they realized that rather than fast they should not in their hearts recognize the division of India. They broke their fast with milk and fruit. I congratulated them. They asked me, "Tell us, how can we co-operate with injustice?" I said, "Give up the gains accruing from injustice." We should not use coercion against anyone. We should not benefit from injustice. This is the path of non violence. This is non-cooperation.

I had said yesterday that Badshah Khan was seeing Mr. Jinnah and that we should pray for the success of the meeting. It may be asked what fruit our prayer has yielded. I cannot tell you more than what Mr. Jinnah has stated in the newspapers. He says that the talks were cordial. That is good. But what has been the issue? He says the issue will be known when Badshah Khan sends word from the N. W. F. P. This means that there is no issue. But we cannot expect to see today the fruit of yesterday's prayer. He who expects this does not know

God. Let me tell you something about the significance of prayer.

We cannot demand the results of prayer nor may we give up praying. We may give up food and drink for a time and occasionally we should do so. But we may never give up praying. We must go on praying till our last moment. As food nourishes the body so Ramanama nourishes the soul. There are times set for the recitation of *Gayatri* in the morning and evening worship and for *namaz*. But there is no time set for uttering Ramanama. He who utters Ramanama with every breath is blessed. Such a man can live to 125 years. If I die before completing 125 years then you may consider that I had not attained to the state that I have described.

I shall go to Hardwar the day after tomorrow. Jawaharlal will be accompanying me. He is supreme in the United Provinces. Today he is supreme in the whole of India. We are faced with a complex situation. There are thousands of refugees there. What shall we do about them? I am against providing free food to people. One must do something for the food one gets. God has ruled that only he who works shall eat. I must tell the refugees that they must work. Of course they should try and get back home as soon as they can. But in view of the happenings in the N. W. F. P. I cannot ask them to rush into the jaws of death. I must ask the Muslim League that they should bring to book all those in Pakistan who have committed crimes. I do not advocate abuse for abuse and violence for violence. But it is the duty of the Government to protect the people it governs even if they be followers of a different faith. True, they have asked everyone to come back. But how can people go back if they know that they will be ill-treated there. Therefore the government there should declare that it will punish the criminals and see that people are protected. If they do this I will see to it that the refugees do not stay on in Hardwar even for a day.

In the N. W. F. P. today it has been made clear to the people that they are to cast their ballot for either India or Pakistan. India is being represented as Hindu raj and people are reminded of Bihar. In this atmosphere hardly any Muslim would want to give up Pakistan for India. Under the circumstances Badshah Khan wants that for the time being N. W. F. P. should be a free province, i. e., without joining either Pakistan or India, the Pathans should be allowed to formulate their own laws and frame their own constitution.

The Congress should tell the Pathans to make their own

constitution and assure them that the Congress will not interfere in it in any way. We shall have such control as the centre exercises in other provinces, but in internal matters they can carry on their affairs according to the *Shariat*.

The League should similarly declare that the provinces to be included in Pakistan will have freedom in internal matters and the centre will be responsible only for certain given subjects. That is to say, we shall be having two centres with the provinces enjoying the maximum autonomy. If this is conceded there will no longer be any need for a referendum. I will also then advise the Pathans that since they are nearer to Pakistan geographically they should join Pakistan. Today I cannot tell them this because I do not know how things in Pakistan are going to shape.

If in this confused situation a referendum is still considered necessary it may be held but the choice should not be between Pakistan and India but between Pakistan and Pathanistan. This, simply, is what I wish to tell them.¹

He was, however, able to tell them that the movement for a Free Frontier State called Pathanistan had come to stay, for it was a solid movement. If it was an anti-Indian movement, it was a bad and mischievous thing. If it was meant to conserve, as he thought it was, pathan life and culture, it deserved every encouragement. Geographically, it was only a bit of India. Numerically too, the Pathans were very few, compared to the millions of India. But their war-like qualities and their position on the map of India gave them a unique importance.

Also, the Frontier was a Congress province. It was so when the Congress was in the wilderness, and it was now the same too when Congress was in power. It was also represented on the Constituent Assembly. But now, it was face to face with a delicate position. There was the referendum immediately to be held. Both the Congress and the League were committed to it. It was not open to any one party to vary the terms. The issue was to be Pakistan or Hindustan. That had a sinister meaning in the context of what had happened in front of them. Were they to be with the Hindus or with the Muslims ?

The Congress was not a Hindu organization. It never was and, he hoped, never would be. But how could the Pathan mind grasp the difference in the midst of confusion becoming worse confounded from day to day? He would advise the Congress to make its position clear and would ask the Muslim League to do likewise. Let both honour the Pathan sentiment and let the Pathans have their own constitution

¹ What follows is from *The Hindu*.

for internal affairs and administration. It would promote Pathan solidarity, avoid internal conflict, retain Pushtu culture and the Pushtu language. If they would do that, they would be better able unitedly to federate with Pakistan or the Union of India, and that would be his advice whether there was a referendum or not. Any premature referendum would be a leap in the dark.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 178-82; and *The Hindu*, 29-6-1947

284. LETTER TO VINA

NEW DELHI,
June 20, 1947

DEAR VINA,

Your letter is unnecessarily long. I have thought of you as a determined girl with terseness of speech. It therefore pains me when I find it otherwise.

Of course the best men or women irrespective of party laws should be selected for responsible service, provided that they are always lovers of the country and incorruptible.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

285. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

NEW DELHI,
June 20, 1947

CHI. AMRIT BABU,

Your two letters. I am sorry about Ramen¹ and Abha². How I wish both will be healed under Kularanjan Babu. Shanti Kumar³ wants Abha in Bombay. I have sent his communication to Kanu. My movement is unsettled. Otherwise I would have her with me. My own inclination is that she should give the fullest trial to Kularanjan Babu.

¹Addressee's son and daughter, Ramendranath Chatterjee and Abha Gandhi; they were both ill and taking nature-cure treatment under Kularanjan Mukherjee in Calcutta.

² *ibid*

³ Shantikumar N. Morarjee.

About Paniala¹ you should discuss with Satis Babu and act as he decides. It grieves me that I am not in Noakhali. I do not know when I shall return. The poor widows should be supported. You can show this to Satis Babu.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C. W. 10567. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

286. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

June 20, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I shall set out for Hardwar tomorrow morning. And I shall be back by the evening. I expect it will be night by the time I return. I shall therefore not be present here for the prayer. If you desire you can nevertheless assemble and pray. I have to go there to reassure the refugees. I do not think I shall be able to do much. But it is a duty I have to do.

Today someone has sent a letter to this little girl Manu warning her that if she recites verses from the Koran at the prayer she will be killed. To threaten someone thus is not in keeping with our traditions and Manu is only a little girl. If she recites verses from the Koran she does so under my instructions. I myself do not have a good voice. If it is a joke, it is not a good joke.

As for the verses from the Koran, I have explained my position to you. There is nothing objectionable in the verses. I have explained to you the meaning. The Muslim friend who is my constant companion says that he who recites this prayer is not harassed by Satan. Tulsidas says the same thing in his *Ramayana* about the virtue of Ramanama and we have the same feeling about the *Gayatri Mantra*. Why then such threats? What good do they do? If any good comes from such threats it will be only for the threatened girl for such things make her more fearless.

I want to tell you that today we have forgotten swadeshi. I have

¹ The reference is to the rehabilitation of women widowed during communal riots in Paniala, Noakhali.

been telling you from the beginning that if we ape foreign manners it is futile to talk of self-rule. Such threats show Western influence. What harms us, what keeps us starved, is not the swadeshi. Formerly when someone did something in the style of foreigners I used to take him to task. But then at that time I held sway and the gun did not rule the country. Today my writ does not run. I am an old man. I cannot run about from place to place. If even today my voice could reach people, I would say the same thing that I have been saying for the last thirty-two years. I am now 78 but I spent my youth in exile in South Africa and what I have taught for thirty-two years after my return from South Africa has amounted to this: that in imitating Western ways we will destroy whatever we have achieved. Swadeshi is that which appeals to the soul.

I talked about completes swadeshi and I insisted that khadi was its centre. We did not then have the national flag. We later devised the tricolour which represents all the people of India. Today the tricolour has all but ceased to flutter. If we enshrine it in our hearts we can rise very high.

Today although we wear khadi or a khadi cap there is only emptiness inside. I had then said that not only foreign cloth but even the mill-cloth produced in India was taboo for us. Camphor which we do not produce here and which is a very useful thing is not foreign when imported from Japan. But if we import from Japan something which we can produce here it is poison to us. Our people in their millions used to make cloth. They met their own requirements and also exported shiploads of it abroad. What crime have they committed that now they should send out their cotton and the cloth made from it should then be brought to India and sold here cheaper than the cotton? What lies behind this is something that can make one's hair stand on end.

There was a time we made piles of foreign cloth and burnt it and nobody said that national wealth was being destroyed. Mrs. Naidu burnt a sari that had come from Paris and the late Motilal Nehru applied the match-stick to all his foreign clothing. He had wardrobes filled with foreign clothing. When he went to jail he sent me a letter—I am unable to trace it now—in which he said that it was only now that he was really living and that all the prosperity of Anand Bhavan had never given him the joy he felt there. In the jail he had no cigars, no drinks and no meat. He was not even given enough to eat. But he still

felt happy. True all this did not last long. Man after all wants to soar high but he cannot always sustain himself in the flight. Again and again we rise only to fall. But the rising becomes a cherished memory. At least it is so in my case. But where are those times now?

It is not the times that have changed. A well-meaning petty trader has sent me a postcard bemoaning the change. He says we have all become selfish, not only the traders, the rulers too are selfish. Our ministers are selfish. And the British even while they are going indulge in petty tricks and incite quarrels in order to gain something. If they want to go, why don't they give up their greed? Why don't they make their going decent? But why talk about the British? The Congressmen themselves are selfish. Who shall put out the flames when the ocean catches fire? If salt loses its savour with what shall it be salted? The Congress made so many sacrifices and fought for so long. Where is that glory now? They now want to be Presidents and Secretaries. All this in my opinion represents foreigners.

I hear that there are curbs on the sale of Indian mill-cloth, but that there are no curbs on the sale of imported cloth. What is all this? I do not understand this swaraj. What we gain with one hand, we seem to lose with the other. It is a matter of sorrow.

A correspondent asks me to reassure West Punjab. I have done so, but expressions of mere sympathy are not going to do much good. After all Punjab is a place where Lala Lajpat Rai was born. It is the home of brave men. It is the country of the Sikhs. I do not admire the bravery of the Sikhs wielding the sword. In my view true bravery is that which an unarmed man shows. But the people in the Punjab today talk of acquiring arms. When I asked them if they wanted money, they said, "No, we want weapons." This mentality is again foreign. What can I tell them to assuage their suffering? I can only tell them that the Punjab should produce not sheep and goats but lions. I know the Punjab. I know its women too. They are strong of body. They should also be strong of heart. The atmosphere there is not conducive to making men lion-hearted. Women of the Punjab today crave for gaudy foreign clothing. They want saris which will be transparent. The men too are not far behind. Even if they do not wear such clothes they want to attire their women in them. When the sisters from Punjab come to me and I ask them why they display so much jewellery and dress themselves in such clothes they answer that their husbands or fathers or brothers insist on their wearing them. Why do men make

dolls of their women?

If we give up all this we shall not feel frightened. Whom are we afraid of? The Muslims? If they become devils let us become men. Then they will also become men. When I, a poor bania, am not frightened, why should you be? The worst they can do is to kill me. Let them kill me. Will they drink my blood? Let them do so. That will save some food and I shall consider that I have been of service. But who am I to render service? It would be more appropriate to say that it is God who has used me for service. Hence I tell you, “Do not be frightened.”

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 182-7

287. TOWARDS REALIZATION¹

What is the mark of him who has Rama enthroned in his heart? If we do not know this, there is danger of Ramanama being much misinterpreted. Some misinterpretation is already in existence. Many sport rosaries and put the sacred mark on the forehead and vainly babble His name. It may well be asked whether I am not adding to the current hypocrisy by continued insistence on Ramanama. I must not be deterred by such forebodings. Silence thus brought about is harmful. The living voice of silence needs to be backed by prolonged heartfelt practice. In the absence of such natural silence, we must try to know the marks of him who has Rama in his heart.

A devotee of Rama may be said to be the same as the steadfast one (*sthitaprajna*) of the *Gita*. If one goes a little deeper it will be seen that a true devotee of God faithfully obeys the five elemental forces of nature. If he so obeys, he will not fall ill. If perchance he does, he will cure himself with the aid of the elements. It is not for the dweller in the body to get the body cured anyhow—he who believes that he is nothing but body will naturally wander to the ends of the earth in order to cure the body of its ills. But he who realizes that the soul is something apart from, though in the body, that it is imperishable in contrast to the perishable body, will not be perturbed nor mourn if the elements fail. On the contrary he will welcome death

¹The Gujarati original appeared under the title “Marks of a Votary of Ramanama” in *Harijanbandhu*, which was published simultaneously with the source.

as a friend. He will become his own healer instead of looking for medical men. He will live in the consciousness of the soul within and look to the care, first and last, of the indweller.

Such a man will take God's name with every breath. His Rama will be awake even whilst the body is asleep. Rama will always be with him in whatever he does. The real death for such a devoted man will be the loss of this sacred companionship.

As an aid to keeping his Rama with him, he will take what the five elements have to give him. That is to say, he will employ the simplest and easiest way of deriving all the benefit he can from earth, air, water, sunlight and ether. This aid is not complementary of Ramanama. It is but a means of its realization. Ramanama does not in fact require any aid. But to claim belief in Ramanama and at the same time to run to doctors do not go hand in hand.

A friend versed in religious lore who read my remarks on Ramanama some time ago wrote to say that Ramanama is an alchemy such as can transform the body. The conservation of the vital energy has been likened to accumulated wealth, but it is in the power of Ramanama alone to make it a running stream of ever-increasing spiritual strength ultimately making a fall impossible.

Just as the body cannot exist without blood, so the soul needs the matchless and pure strength of faith. This strength can renovate the weakness of all man's physical organs. That is why it is said that when Ramanama is enshrined in the heart, it means the rebirth of man. This law applies to the young, the old, man and woman alike.

This belief is to be found in the West too. Christian science gives a glimpse of it. In this issue of the *Harijan* Rajkumari has given apt illustrations culled from a book written by Seventh Day Adventists.¹

India needs no outside support for a belief which has been handed down to her people from time immemorial.

HARDWAR, June 21, 1947

Harijan, 29-6-1947

¹ In her article "Education in Health", Amrit Kaur explains that three Seventh Day Adventist friends came to see Gandhiji and presented a book to him called *The Ministry of Healing*.

288. LETTER TO SARAT CHANDRA BOSE

HARDWAR,
June 21, 1947

MY DEAR SARAT,

I have a moment to myself here. I use it for writing two or three overdue letters. This is one to acknowledge yours¹ of 14th instant.

The way to work for unity I have pointed out when the geographical is broken. Hoping you are all well.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C. W. 10535. Also *The Nation*, 11-6-1949, and *My Day with Gandhi*, p. 236

289. ADVICE TO REFUGEES²

HARDWAR,
[June 21, 1947]³

It is useless and depressing to recount the story of the horrors they have gone through.

But every affliction has its own rich lesson to teach if we would learn it. I hear many of those who were well-to-do in the past are idling away their time in playing cards and even gambling. Some are reported to be buying property or resorting to other methods of making money. I call it criminal behaviour. If I was given the rare opportunity of making common cause with poor refugees, I would share with them my talents and such riches and I had brought with me. All of you should make a co-operative effort so that wherever you go ultimately you lead a better and corporate life as a result of the life lived in Hardwar. Hardwar is considered to be a holy place. I do not think it is holy but you can make it so by your behaviour.

Harijan, 6-7-1947

¹ Reiterating his proposal for a united Bengal; *vide* also "Letter to Sarat Chandra Bose", 8-6-1947.

² Extracted from "Weekly Letter" by Sushila Nayyar who explains that a deputation of sixteen representatives of the refugees from the N. W. F. P. and the Punjab met Gandhiji at Hardwar.

³ *ibid*

290. FROM AMERICA¹

Mr. Richard Gregg writes from U. S. A.:

Today's New York newspaper carries a dispatch from New Delhi stating that you have given up hope of living for 125 years and that there is no place for you in India because of the deluge of violence. If this report is substantially correct, I beg you, please reconsider your attitude. As I see the matter there is far more at stake than present violence in India, even if this should last for fifteen years.

India is the source of the deepest and strongest spiritual insight and culture in the world. . . . It is also the most enduring. Despite the grave harm that has been done to Hindu culture by the modern loss of religion and contact with the West which so fully embodies that secularism, Hindu culture still stands supreme. . . .

More than anyone else, you represent that Hindu culture, and the continuance of your life is of great importance to all the world. Even though for a time the number of those who agree with you and truly follow the road of ahimsa may shrink to only a handful, the very smallness makes possible an enhancement of quality and spiritual power. We may not tell God that if violence (the folly men) does not stop within a certain time that fits our hopes, we will stop doing our utmost including living as long as we can in order to our utmost. I only dare say this to you because I want you so much to stay with us.

The dispatch from which Mr. Gregg quotes is substantially correct. The loss of hope arises from my knowledge that I have not attained sufficient detachment and control over my temper and emotions which entitle one to entertain the hope. One day I found to my cost that I had not attained the required detachment. No one has the right to live at all unless it is a life of service. And a man without detachment in terms of the Gita cannot render full service.

A faithful confession of one's failings is good for the soul. It enables one the better to get rid of those failings. Let the readers of the *Harijan* know that I am making every effort to get out of them so that I can regain the lost hope. In this connection I should also repeat that the hope is open to every one who dedicates himself to the service of his fellowmen. Nor need it be laughed out as an idle dream. That it may not be realized in me and many fellow aspirants should be no

¹ Only extracts from the letter are reproduced here.

proof of its futility.

The statement that I find no place for myself in a society that bases itself on violence had nothing to do with the reported loss of hope. I deliberately use the adjective 'reported' for I do not want to harbour the thought of hopelessness. What was true when the report was made, need not be and is not true in an equal measure today.

It must be clear that there can be no place for a man of peace in a society full of strife. Yet he may live the full span of 125 years and may hope by ceaseless striving to make a place for himself. That is exactly the meaning of my second statement and no more. I am in that society, though not of it. The statement registers my protest.

Has the non-violent effort of the past 30 years come to naught? I have already argued out the position in my speeches reported in these columns. It is to be hoped that the violence has not penetrated India's villages. Be that as it may, I wholly endorse Mr. Gregg's warning that "we may not tell God that if violence (the folly of men) does not stop within a certain time that fits our hopes, we will stop doing our utmost including living as long as we can." I very much fear that the dispatch in question tore the sentences out of their context and evoked the doubts expressed by Mr. Gregg. I hope I am incapable of judging God.

NEW DELHI, June 22, 1947

Harijan, 29-6-1947

291. LETTER TO H. GREENFIELD

BHANGI COLONY,

NEW DELHI,

June 22, 1947

DEAR MR. GREENFIELD¹,

I have just finished reading your very interesting monograph on salt. If it has not been sent for printing and if it still admits of improvement, I would suggest that the tenth chapter on future development should be expanded so as to place at the disposal of the public cheap and effective methods of producing salt in small quantities.

¹ Member. Central Board of Revenue

You have suggested a Salt Board. The idea seems to be attractive but I do not at all like the suggestion about controlling production and distribution through selective licences. I am studying the present movement of salt and so far as I know it is very unsatisfactory. Special contractors are said to produce salt and control its price also. My information may be inaccurate, even faulty. If it is neither inaccurate nor faulty the manner is a great handicap. I abide by the suggestion made to you at one of our pleasant talks that salt should be manufactured by Government or under its supervision but without monopoly. Whoever wishes may compete with the Government at his own risk. By so doing the best quality of salt would be produced at the cheapest rate. If this is done with care, attention and faithfulness, India will be able to produce all the salt required for the consumption of men and animals and for purposes of curing and industry.¹

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 168-9

292. TALK WITH RAJENDRA PRASAD AND OTHERS²

NEW DELHI,

June 22, 1947

You do not know it but only yesterday I went to Hardwar and the hardships of the people there made me very unhappy. One can have an idea of the life women and children are leading there only if

¹ As the addressee was on leave in London, F. M. Innes, who was officiating, replied on June 23 : “ . . . I am arranging . . . for an account of cheap and effective methods of producing salt to be drafted. . . It would be better to add this as an Appendix to the monograph rather than include it in Chapter X . . . with regard to your comments regarding the proposed Salt Board and . . . control . . . through licences it is difficult to say anything at present . . . I hasten to assure you, however, that it is not the present intention to establish a Government monopoly . . . ” The addressee, to whom the letter was forwarded assured Gandhiji in his letter dated August 4 that his monograph had not yet been printed and therefore it was possible to make changes. He added : “ Any properly constituted Salt Board would, I am sure, readily supply clear . . . instructions on the manufacture of good cheap salt The important thing is to see that the Board is composed of competent . . . persons . . . As for the question of monopoly it is for the Government of the future to decide . . . ”

² Rajendra Prasad was accompanied by two friends from Himalayan territories.

one has actually gone through it. But we are not ordained to have that kind of experience. In a few days the rains will arrive. Only God knows what will happen then. There is so much work to be done and yet all of us are sitting idle. I do not understand it. This is the chief difference between the foreigners and us. When five of us meet we plan big schemes, talk about them but in the way of implementation the result is zero, whereas the people outside will have no peace till they have achieved what they decided on. These days I received heaps of letters. Everyone thinks that we are now sure to get swaraj, so why not by some means or other get into positions of power? I feel very unhappy when I read such letters and tell this girl to say in reply: “Bapu has no power. Yes, if you want to do scavenging work, you can come with a broom and a basket. He has the power to give that work because he is himself a scavenger.”

I do want to visit the Himalayas. But first I want to have a look at the tragic scenes of mass killing in Hardwar, Noakhali, Bihar and the Punjab. You have just seen the striking natural beauty of the Himalayas. I have seen the reverse. I have seen to what extremes the stone hearts of human beings can go. What is going on in the Frontier Provinces today? How much a great man like Khan Saheb has to suffer? Only I can understand his unhappiness. It is only God who keeps him alive. His physical health is so bad that the less said about it the better. But he does not care. His intestines do not function at all. But he has never paid any attention to that. He roamed about in the villages of Bihar in the hot sun. He never bothered whether he had anything to eat or not. Whenever he got time he slept on the floor using his only pair of clothes wrapped in a towel as a pillow. He loves this girl very much and therefore he accepts services from her. He improved in health when she daily cooked new dishes for him to eat and looked after him. Manu broke down when he embraced her while taking leave but the eyes of a Pathan like Khan Saheb were also filled with tears. Who knows how much that Khudai Khidmatgar has still to suffer? But he is a brave soldier. He is born for the sake of the country. He will bravely face all the hardships that come his way and when the time comes he will embrace death with a smile on his face. Of that I have not the least doubt.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 191-2

293. TALK WITH WOMEN WORKERS¹

NEW DELHI,

June 22, 1947

Frankly speaking we are not going to make any progress till we have patriotism, sincerity and honesty. We are not even fully independent yet and I have been receiving complaints that some so-called eminent leaders of India are making money through their sons, that nepotism is on the increase as also is corruption and that I should do something about it. If it is true all one can say is that we have reached the limit of our misfortune. I am an old man. Why should I be afraid of anything? How long can this kind of administration go on? The fact is that we have raised our standard of living so much that we are compelled to resort to dishonest ways. We are human beings. Since God has granted us human form we should show at least a modicum of honesty in our conduct. We are betraying our way of life and that is why we are suffering. I have a few letters describing some of the dishonest means Congressmen are resorting to in order to further their selfish interest. This has made me unhappy. I must also confess that at present I am not in a position to say anything to anyone. For haven't I grown too old and therefore has not my mind too atrophied? However, bear in mind that all this is not going to go on for very long. I do not want to live to see all this. But if they go on deceiving us there will be such a tremendous upheaval that the golden history of our cherished freedom, won without shedding a drop of blood, will be tarnished. A mother, having brought forth a child, selflessly devotes herself to his care till he grows up and becomes independent. Even after the children are grown up her constant desire is to make herself one with them. Unless we have the same feeling and devotion for our motherland, many countries will be lying in wait to crush us down. You sisters can do much if you are disposed to. But to my grief and shame I have to say that women today have given themselves up to luxurious ways of living. They take pride in going to the clubs, wearing foreign dresses and talking in English with their own countrymen. I can understand one's talking in English with those who do not know our language. But to say nothing of compatriots talking among themselves in English, even husbands and wives,

¹ Four or five women working in refugee camps who were accompanying Gandhiji during a walk

brothers and sisters prefer to talk with each other in English rather than in their own language. Shall I call this our shame or our sorrow? But these seemingly small things are an indication of how little devotion we have for our country or rather of how much influence the British exercise on us.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 192-3

294. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

June 22, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

As you know I had been to Hardwar to see the refugees from the Punjab and N. W. F. P. There are some 32,000 refugees there from Dera Ismail Khan and other places. I had no time to enter into any discussions with the refugees but I talked¹ to them fully. I also visited their camps. I heard many things said about the refugees. There are two kinds of people among them: there are those who are really poor and in a bad way and there are others who are well-to-do. Some of them are given to gambling, drinking and to questionable methods of making money. I must say that it does not behove them to behave thus at this time of crisis.

People have gone there driven by their misery. They have got separated from their relatives. But what can be gained from crying over it? I told them to try and forget their sorrow. By forgetting sorrow one gets rid of sorrow. They have to create joy from sorrow. A great calamity has come to pass in the shape of the division of India, but why should I cry over it?

I want to tell you and through you I want to tell them that they should forget their sorrow. These 32,000 men and women should form themselves into a co-operative organization. They should take up work. They should not gamble and drink and smoke hemp. They should keep themselves engaged in some work or other. The Government cannot feed so many of them even if it wants to. Today everywhere the black market is rampant. Even if people are truthful

¹ Vide "Advice to Refugees", 21-6-1947

they cannot get full rations for themselves. But crying and complaining will not help. People should learn to co-operate.

In that historic march in South Africa we covered twenty miles each day. We were a large crowd. All I had to give to each was an ounce of sugar and a little bread. This did not constitute enough rations for a person. It was always evening by the time we had done our twenty miles. I would notice cooking going on. I discovered that people were picking edible leaves from grass, adding salt and then cooking it. Water there always was. It made me very happy. One could always travel in such company.

The soil of Hardwar is even more fertile and various other industries can also be taken up there. If they do this they will not feel the fatigue. Those who have to live on other should so conduct themselves that they are not felt to be a burden.

Let them profit by the reported holiness of Hardwar though he was sorry to have to confess that the holy places had become dens of thieves and mendicancy had received the stamp of virtue. He had very sad memories of the Kumbha Mela of 1915 when he had the privilege of serving as a servant with his companions from South Africa in the Servants India camp. It was open to the refugees, if they would, to make the place holy by their behaviour.¹

I met a few sisters there who were engaged in sewing and spinning. I met a few men also who were doing something or other. It is good. They should not become beggars. They should be brave and fearless.

As I could not go everywhere myself, Dr. Sushila Nayyar went around the camps. She found the conditions there extremely insanitary. This should not be so. And it is a thing the Government will not do for us. We must ourselves keep our surroundings clean. The camps should be spread out. It is said there is danger from wild animals. But why should wild animals be feared. As man fears animals of the forest so the latter fear man. The 32,000 refugees should really not be frightened of wild animals.

They should be ashamed of fear of man or wild animals. Wild animals fled the haunts of men. Such was the universal experience. Let them recollect that Shraddhanandji founded his Gurukul on the other side of the Ganges which was infested by wild animals. Then they should remember that the police were there to afford such protection as they needed. Courage, hope, personal bravery, purity and industrious co-operation would make their life pleasant. They would then not be a

¹ This and the paragraph below in small type are from *The Hindu*.

burden on those among whom they lived but they would be, as they should be, like sugar to milk.

A distressing thing has come to my ears. It is from Kabul. It seems the Hindus living in Kabul are living there on suffer-ance. They have to wear turbans of a particular colour. It made me very sad to think that people can put up with such indignities for the sake of money. We must live there only if we can safeguard our rights, otherwise we should leave the place. This sort of thing cannot be tolerated. Then Kabul is our home territory. It is the country of the Pathans. The only difference is that on this side there is British rule while on that side there is no British rule. My fight in South Africa was over issues very much similar. It is intolerable that our people should not live as free citizens in Kabul. I am sure the report is exaggerated. I shall find out.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 187-90; and *The Hindu*, 23-6-1947

295. LETTER TO PURNANANDA

NEW DELHI,
June 23, 1947

DEAR PURNANANDA,

Your letter. I do not even understand the pros and cons. Let justice prevail though the heavens weep.

Yours,
BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers, Courtesy: Pyarelal

296. LETTER TO PARASURAM

NEW DELHI,
June 23, 1947

MY DEAR PARASURAM,

Your letter. I am sorry you feel cramped in Ahmedabad.¹ Of course you will go to the Socialist Party in Bombay where you will get greater scope for service according to your notion.

Keep well wherever you are.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 5859. Also C.W. 3037

¹ The addressee had gone to help Jivanji D. Desai in printing and publishing *Harijan*; vide also "Letter to Parasuram", 11-6-1947

297. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

VALMIKI MANDIR

NEW DELHI,

June 23, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI.

The news today is the limit. Look at the Reuters cable.¹ The Bill provides for two nations. What then is the point of the big talks going on here? If there has been no tacit acceptance on our part you people can prevent this crime.

Once the Bill is passed, no one will listen to you.

In my opinion [Ravishankar Shukla]'s² speech was certainly bad. That he said what he did in jest does not take away from the gravity of the lapse. I personally feel that he³ should be asked to resign only if he is also guilty of some other lapse. To dismiss him solely on this ground will be difficult.

I have also written to Jawaharlal about this.

Blessings from

BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

1, AURANGZEB ROAD

NEW DELHI

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 355

298. A LETTER

June 23, 1947

Religion should really unite all hearts. Only then is it truly religion. It is clear to me that violence should be banished not only

¹ It gave a ‘‘colourful description of the grand ceremonial that was scheduled to mark the introduction in Parliament of the Independence Bill, announcing the birth of two nations’’. *Vide* also ‘‘Speech at Prayer Meeting’’, 23-6-1947

² The name is omitted in the source; *vide* however ‘‘Speech at Prayer Meeting, 16-6-1947

³ Dr. Hasan, a minister in the Central Provinces Government

from India but from the whole world and all people, from the youngest to the oldest, should feel a new life both in their bodies and souls. Today, wickedness flourishes in the name of religion. A medicine is good only if it cures the patient of his illness. What is the use of a medicine which aggravates the complaint? Personally, of course, I do not believe in medicines. There is only one never-failing medicine and that is Ramanama. It is a sin to feel proud of one's community or caste. And it is ignorance too.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 196-7

299. A LETTER

June 23, 1947

We should learn to be humble. If we but care, we can learn even from a tree. If you hit with a stone a mango hanging from the branch of a beautiful mango tree the tree will immediately let it fall to the ground. If man will only think, he can learn a great many noble lessons from trees and birds and beasts. That is what I am trying to do and, having succeeded in some measure, sometimes feel like advising others also to do the same. I will, however, go on working as God prompts me and as long as He wants to take service from me.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 197

300. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

NEW DELHI,

June 23, 1947

CHI. JIVANJI,

Has there been any significant difference in circulation since I started writing?

I have gone through the correspondence with Tandonji sent by you. I see no objection to its being published. How did this question arise?

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

I see from Parasuram's letter that he is leaving the office there.¹

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9978. Also C.W. 6952. Courtesy:
Jivanji D. Desai

301. LETTER TO RALIATBEHN²

DELHI,

June 23, 1947

RESPECTED SISTER,

Manu and the others have come just now. Manu says you are bed-ridden. One may say you have more faith than I. So you must be repeating Ramanama. I would say your capacity to bear is also much more. What then is happiness or unhappiness to you ?

Shamaldas³ had come and he assured me that I should not in the least worry about you. He would look after everything. Narandas also is here and so I am not worried.

Nothing is definite about my stay. Here today, where tomorrow, God alone knows!

I hope Phuli⁴ is all right.

Obeisance from
MOHANDAS

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

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Parasuram", 23-6-1947

² Gandhiji's sister

³ Gandhiji's nephew; son of Lakshmidas Gandhi

⁴ Addressee's daughter

302. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
June 23, 1947

CHI. NARANDAS,

Show the accompanying letter¹ to Aunt. What is her complaint? Who is treating her? Ramanama is compatible only with the use of the five elements: water, earth, etc.

How are you affairs? How about khadi, the school, music, Harijan work, etc.?

I didn't like Abha's² falling ill. I write to her regularly. If I could stay at one place, I would keep her with me and hope for her complete recovery.

Jaisukhlal's Manu is fine. The cut has healed.³ I heard that Jamna⁴ and others paid a visit to Bombay. I hope she is all right.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II/526. Also C.W. 8638. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

303. LETTER TO LILAVATI P. ASAR

NEW DELHI,
June 23, 1947

CHI. LILI,

I have you long letter. It is very good that all that effort of yours has borne fruit. Then why complain? It is good if you listen to Shanti Kumar. He gives money. What more should we expect after that?

One thing is certain that you do not have to study if you have to put up with insults. Of course one must learn to know when one is insulted and when one is not insulted.

You are calm at the moment. Remain calm thus and study well and pass the examination.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² Addressee's daughter-in-law

³ She had been operated upon for appendicitis.

⁴ Addressee's wife

304. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 23, 1947

The proposed partition of India and of the provinces is going to be a test for us. Today's newspapers say that the Bill for the partition of India will be introduced in Parliament with much ceremony and India which has so far been one nation will now become two nations. It is a sad occasion and calls for no celebrations. We cherish the hope that although we are separating we are separating as brothers belonging to the same family and that we shall remain friends nevertheless. If what the newspapers say is true Britain intends to divide us into two nations and that with fanfare. Will this be their parting shot? I hope not.

But if the larger part of the country, that is the Indian Union, does its duty, they will be checkmated by their own move. We cannot now escape division however much we may dislike it. But a higher dharma demands that we should pursue straight path and still consider ourselves one nation refusing to treat the Muslim minority as outsiders. India is as much their country as it is ours.

It means, clearly, that we have to bring about revolutionary changes in Hinduism. We are marred with the blot of untouchability. It certainly is our weakness. One reads that Muslim League leaders have been holding out the bait of separate electorates for the untouchables in Pakistan. Is this an invitation to them to join Pakistan and Islam? I do not wish to comment on the recent reports of forcible conversions. I have myself heard things from untouchable brethren. I am full of fears about what is going to happen.

There is only one way of getting rid of this fear and it is that the spectre of untouchability should be exorcised. Let there be no untouchables in India. Let all Hindus be one. Let there be no high and low. Let us show special consideration for those poor sections, such as untouchables and the *adivasis*, whom we have so far ignored. Let us educate them, see to their proper living. All should be listed alike in the voters' roll. The present condition should be changed. It should become vastly better. Will Hinduism rise to such heights or will it cling to false values, copy other in their evil ways and thus commit suicide? That is the question before us.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 190-1

305. LETTER TO VALLABHRAM VAIDYA

NEW DELHI,
June 24, 1947

BHAI VALLABHRAM,

I have your letter, It is 4.55 a.m. just now. I don't like your plan. A plan which costs as much as you say is of no use to a village. You should start by yourself there. Whatever money you need will come without your asking for it. It will not wait for numberless printed explanations.

Even as a ghost finds a *pipal* tree, in the end you too may find your place of work.

Remember what I told you on a previous occasion.

What need for a man like you to bother himself about such things?

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2923. Courtesy: Vallabhram Vaidya

306. LETTER TO DILKHUSH DIWANJI

NEW DELHI,
June 24, 1947

CHI. DILKHUSH DIWANJI,

Parents' blessings do not cease when they die. Though the body perishes, the *atman* inhabiting it certainly does not. You must free yourself from the delusion that it does.

I remember your mother. She was very particular about punctuality. I have passed on the cheque for Rs. 74 for Harijan work.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10432. Courtesy: Dilkhush Diwanji

307. LETTER TO PRAGJI DESAI

DELHI,
June 24, 1947

CHI. PRAGJI,

I have your letter. You seem to be too hasty in coming to conclusions. If you study my speeches, you may find some light.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5040

308. LETTER TO MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

NEW DELHI,
June 24, 1947

CHI. MAGANBHAI,

I just got your letter and am writing the reply.

Mahadev's¹ work will not be carried on by associating his name with an educational institution. Then why bother about the name? If the teachers and students imbibe his spirit, all will be well. Be careful in your work, and know that it will immortalize his name.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

309. TALK WITH SIKH VISITORS

NEW DELHI,
June 24, 1947

So long as we do not realize the importance of limiting the necessities of life, so long as we do not realize the value of will power, we shall remain unhappy. There is nothing impossible in this world for a person who has an iron will. What tremendous progress science has made today. There was a time when if a man wanted to go from one village to another he had to walk the distance. Today in twenty-

¹ Mahadev Desai who died on August 15, 1942

four hours he can with the greatest ease reach another part of the world. There are many other conveniences to make life easy. Why then is man unhappy? The main reason in my view is our shallow mentality. We will never be at peace so long as we have the desire to rule over others, are jealous of others' happiness and find happiness in killing. I have my sympathies with you. You have left your beloved motherland. You have left behind your possessions and your dear ones. All this suffering is not a light matter. However, we should learn a lesson from that. We are lost in sectarian quarrels and are ourselves making our case complicated. Humanism is true religion. *Daivdaranarayan* is the true and the highest God. We are all children of one God. Our lives are very short. Death is inevitable for us all. However long a man may live, if he has not done any good deeds he is as good as dead. A man will still be alive, though his physical body perish, if he had done some good deeds. If, therefore, we learn a lesson from the misery that has overtaken us and make our lives successful, then that misery is not misery but happiness. There are many sad events in a man's life and all of them are like blessings. Had Rama been crowned a king, he would have spent his days in luxury and comfort and the world would hardly have heard of him. But the day he was to be crowned, he had to put on bark clothing and go into exile. Isn't it the limit of unhappiness? But Rama and Sita turned that sorrow into joy and went into exile with smiles on their faces. It is for this reason alone that His name is uttered every morning by millions of people. The unhappy event in His life turned out to be a blessing. If I had been able to bring this home to the people of India, they would have been supremely happy today.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 201-2

310. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 24, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

This *bhajan* dwells on the piteous plight of Rama in the story. Here is Rama, about to be crowned but ordered to go to the forest as an exile! Can there be anything more pitiable? Something similar is now happening before our eyes. There is on the one hand rejoicing

everywhere in the world at the British Government's decision to grant Dominion Status to India. On the other hand we are engaged in a fratricidal strife in the name of defending religion. I receive many letters every day attacking me. Some say I have destroyed the Hindus, some others that I have been appeasing the Muslims. They make no impression on me. I seek to appeal to no one except God, for we are all His creatures, His servants. And why should I allow myself to be annoyed by these letters? How have I offended? I only say that no one can protect his religion by doing sinful things or by committing atrocities on others. This applies to Hindus and Muslims alike. That Pakistan is a bad thing, I agree. What is there to rejoice over it? Our country has been divided. What is there in it to celebrate? For the last sixty years, since I was a schoolboy, I have believed that all Indians, be they Hindus, Muslims, Parsis or Christians, are brothers. Now that our land has been divided, does it mean that we should divide our hearts? How can the people of a country become two peoples? India can have only one people. When I say this they abuse me. Shall I listen to them and become a murderer? By so doing I shall only be harming myself. One is one's own foe as well as one's own friend. Hindus alone can destroy the Hindus and no one else.

Today flames are raging everywhere. Hinduism will be saved only if we can save ourselves from these flames. My physical powers are waning. I am no longer strong enough to put with this heat. It is a permanent law that truth ever triumphs and falsehood perishes. What I say is not addressed to the feeble of heart but to those who are brave and unselfish, those who know how to die defending their mother, their daughter and their religion. The man who can die happily is more courageous than the man who kills. I want the whole of India to rise to this standard of valour.

I shudder to see what is going on everywhere around me. With whom must I argue? We are looking up to the British. How long must we? After the fifteenth of August the British will have left. Whom shall we look up to then? It has been suggested that Punjab should be placed under martial law. I have seen Punjab once placed under martial law. I know what martial law means. It cannot change men's hearts. I shall still say that if Muslims want to save Islam, Hindus Hinduism and the Sikhs their Gurudwaras, they must together resolve

that they will not fight. If there is a dispute over division it should be settled not through resort to force but through arbitration.

Sir C. P. says that Gandhi and the Congress are all too willing to grant independence to N.W.F.P. but not to Travancore. How can a learned man like Sir. C. P. say such a silly thing? If Travancore becomes independent then Hyderabad, Kashmir, Indore and other States will also declare themselves independent and India will be Balkanized. Then Badshah Khan does not want to secede from India. He says that he will not join Pakistan. Must he then be a slave of the Hindus? It is said that the Congress has been bribing him. If the Congress had resorted to bribery to gain support of people it could not have survived. Badshah Khan tells us to frame our constitution first. In the meanwhile he will have come to some decision. But what Sir. C. P. says is something quite different. In N. W. F. P. it is the voice of the people. But in Travancore it is a Maharaja and his Prime Minister speaking on behalf of the Hindus. Sir C. P. cannot throw dust into people's eyes by advancing the example of N.W.F.P. I would suggest to Sir C. P. That Travancore should come into the Constituent Assembly.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 190-4

311. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

NEW DELHI,
June 25, 1947

CHI. PREMA,

I have your letter. I understand about your birthday. How is it that all of you wish to leave before I do? What will be my condition then? What selfishness is this? Thank God, living or dying is not in our hands. All our efforts to that end are in vain. As the saying is, that which we do alone keeps us company.

My future plans are wholly uncertain.

What public statement can I make in connection with the Gen. Shah Nawaz affair?¹ How am I responsible for what someone else may say? I am certainly responsible for what I do or say, but for nothing else.

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Prema Kantak", 15-6-1947

Publication of the correspondence with you will serve no useful purpose. If Deo wishes to publish anything, he will ask me.

If what you say regarding Mridula is true, that is to say, if I have correctly followed your meaning, then you make too subtle distinctions. Reflect over this.

This much is true. If you come and spend a few days with me, you will probably understand the position better. That is, you should come and stay for three or four days at a time at short intervals. Alternatively, go on doing whatever work falls to your share and let the world go its own way.

You are doing your work well.

Sushila Pai has left.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: G. N. 10455. Also C.W. 6894. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

312. A TALK

NEW DELHI,

June 25, 1947

The Interim Government should first of all set about changing the education system. Only if we begin now can we expect to see the results after a certain number of years. As far as possible the Universities should be set up in the village so that they may serve the villagers. Most of our people live in villages and this is the only way to make the city-dwellers take interest in their daily life and necessities. Mere literacy or a smattering of languages should not satisfy us. If I were the Education Minister, I would impart instruction in alphabets only through crafts. For instance I would not make a child trace over and over again a letter of the alphabet but would make them draw the letter as they would draw a crow or a parrot. I would thus instruct them in art. Similarly I would teach history, geography, geometry and arithmetic with the help of a charkha or *takli*. With it the mind, soul and body can also be fully educated. *Takli* is a thing through which we can teach all the subjects to a child. Primary education these days is inordinately expensive and because of their poverty most students are unable to reach High School. If education is imparted through arts

and crafts, it will not only make the students self-reliant but bring in enough money to pay the salaries of the teachers. They will, however, develop self-confidence and an urge to be of help to their parents. Today, so many educated youths are unemployed. There are so many instances of educated youths before me who do not render even a penny's worth of help to their parents. I am becoming more and more convinced that the basic education can be of great help in our economic, political and social advancement.

Here you must also note another thing: one must not depend on the Government for every little thing. When the National Government comes into being a certain amount of assistance will certainly be forthcoming. But if today it is the Congress Government tomorrow some other party may form the Government.

The educationists however should concern themselves solely with providing to the people education that is sound and character-building. We look down upon those who do manual work. In Kathiawad one has to bathe if one happens to touch a weaver. Since all this is being done in the name of religion, we have become complacent. The main reason for all this is that we acquiesced in our slavery and abjectness for so many years. Had we assigned to craftsmen and artisans a place of dignity in society, like other countries we too would have produced many scientists and engineers. But now we must wake up.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 206-7

313. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 25, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

The refugees from N.W. F. P. and the Punjab I met in Hardwar told me that Hindus residing in Kabul are obliged to wear turbans of a particular colour to make them easily distinguishable. In this connection the Afghan Consul¹ has today issued a long statement contradicting the report. He says that there is no such thing in Kabul. He says that the Hindus even have temples in Kabul and they have the right to build temples there. If that is so we can feel proud.

The carnage in Lahore, Amritsar and Gurgaon is a matter of

¹ Ghulam Mohammed

shame for all the three communities—Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. This carnage should be stopped by whatever means and people should be brought together. I saw in the newspapers today that yesterday in Lahore there was a conference of the representatives of the three communities at Nawab Mamdot's house which lasted till midnight and at which it was agreed that the rioting should be stopped. This is good news. After all, is Pakistan to be raised over the ashes of Lahore and Amritsar? And these are no small townships. They have taken generations to build. Amritsar moreover has the Golden Temple of the Sikhs. It is a matter of grief that man can thus forget his humanity and become Satan. These leaders will meet again tomorrow,¹ and if they are successful it will not be necessary for martial law to be imposed in these cities. These leaders therefore deserve our thanks.

I find myself in a dilemma. I feel the urge sometimes to go to Bihar, sometimes to Noakhali. In Noakhali my work was just started and it has given much comfort to the Hindus. I must go to Bihar too. I had intended to be here eight days but I have already been here a month. Where am I to go and what am I to do? I am perplexed. For a devotee of God it is good in a way. A devotee should think only of today and not of tomorrow for tomorrow is in God's hands. There are some who jibe at me for my tall talk about ahimsa and ask why I do not visit Amritsar or Gurgaon. But what shall I gain by going there? I want that you should see me as I am. I have never been a prey to misgivings. But today there is so much confusion in the world and India that it is difficult to see things clearly. The *Gita* says that one must attend to one's present duty. There is large-scale rioting going on in several places and I cannot make up my mind which one to go to. God gives me no guidance here. I ask friends. When the heart is besieged by doubt the best thing is to wait in patience. Throwing a stone may further spoil things. Nawab Mamdot says that the minorities will be given fair treatment in Pakistan. Why should I distrust him? If Hindus can live in Afghanistan as citizens, why should they not in Pakistan?

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 194-6

¹ A security committee consisting of Iftikhar Hussain Khan of Mamdot, Bhimsen Sachar and Swaran Singh was formed for day-to-day review of the law and order condition in the province.

314. A LETTER

NEW DELHI,
June 26, 1947

DEAR RAI SAHIB,

I have you interesting letter. If your daughters are wise girls, they will certainly contribute to the success of my dream. Let them be in touch with the Kasturba work in Gauhati. Hope you are better.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

315. LETTER TO RAMESHWARI NEHRU

NEW DELHI,
June 26, 1947

CHI. RAMESHWARIBEHN,

I got all your letters. I had dictated a postcard. The address was correct.

I am myself in a dilemma. I do not know what to do. I know how things are there. They got Pakistan through conflict. Now everything is sought to be achieved through conflict. My faith is in Ramanama. Let me see what way Rama shows.

My programme is uncertain. for the moment I am here. I shall certainly be doing something. I wish to go everywhere and nowhere. Kashmir is also in my mind. It is well you did not go to Kashmir. If you want to come do come.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 8011. Also C.W. 3111. Courtesy: Rameshwa Nehru

316. LETTER TO RAVI SHANKAR SHUKLA

NEW DELHI,
June 26, 1947

BHAI SHUKLAJI,

I have your letter and all the documents. I have read the ones in Hindi and English. I do not like these opinions. I have expressed my views through the newspapers.

Yes, Hassan's conduct was not at all correct but it will not be proper to ask for his resignation.¹ However, if there is some other complaint, then that can be a reason for demanding his resignation.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I am writing to Dr. Hassan.

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

317. A TALK

NEW DELHI,
June 26, 1947

Khadi activity will not gather momentum if you have the slightest misgivings about making khadi the national dress. As a result unemployment will increase. If you want to give work to the millions khadi alone provides such work. Its various processes right from the growing of the cotton to the weaving of the cloth will provide employment to every member of a peasant family. It indirectly provides employment to the families of carpenters, blacksmiths, weavers and tailors. The National Government will have to give priority to this issue and concentrate attention on it, for a new argument will be pressed before us as to what would be the harm in

¹ Consequent to the addressee's speech on June 16, Dr. Hassan had been reported to have tendered his resignation and also given publicity to it in the papers besides writing to Gandhiji, which was resented by the Premier as well as the Congress Parliamentary Board.

using mill-cloth. It is indigenous, it will be argued, cheap and attractive. However, I have not the slightest use for mill-cloth however attractive and cheap, when there is the question of providing food to the millions. Police, Government officers, peons, Government guest houses and Government offices should as far as possible use only khadi. I use the expression khadi activity in its broadest sense. All the things produced by village industry should be encouraged.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 212

318. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI

NEW DELHI,

June 26, 1947

As against the sins of crores of men, perfect purity of even two persons will certainly have an effect. Yes, there is this that these two persons are very severely tested. For example, a man will buy a brass plate after approving its outward appearance but the same man while buying a gold plate will examine the gold thoroughly to ascertain whether it is genuine or not. Thereafter he will guard the plate as he would his own life. He will have it tested at a thousand places. There is a similar difference between a pure and a sinful soul. God tests the pure soul many times. And after a devotee has passed through the tests God values him more than He does Himself. Does not the *bhajan* “*Gajendramoksha*” say the same thing? We should not commit sins because crores of people do so. If we are pure in all respects we will certainly make an impression and people will strive to become like us, or such persons will be rejected as unwanted grains. Those who work with a pure heart and without any expectation of reward will certainly triumph. There is not the least doubt about it. If all of us learn to be unselfish all the quarrels of the world will end right away. If true love manifests itself in the heart everything will be all right.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 213

319. TALK WITH VISITORS¹

NEW DELHI,
June 26, 1947

Yes, I am not at all satisfied with the kind of freedom we are about to get because the freedom of my imagination is quite different. I did not want mere political freedom. If our non-violence were genuine and of the brave the shameful things which are happening in India today would not have happened. The power to which I have been wedded for the last thirty and more years is certainly genuine. But I, the votary of that power, am imperfect. I have no doubt that we were able to hold out against the British only because of our non-violence. And I have no doubt that only non-violence is going to help us in the communal strife. But I am not able to see how I can convince the people of this. People welcomed my lead because we had no strength to use arms against the British and that was chiefly why we succeeded against them. However, that was the non-violence of the weak. But what is wanted now is the non-violence of the brave. I must also make it clear that a third power has taken advantage of our weakness, sparing no pains to spread poison among us. I am positive that the sooner the foreigners leave our country the better it will be for us. Aren't the British, perhaps, showing their cleverness even while they are leaving?

We have no need for big mills and heavy machinery. If one machine does the work of a hundred men, then where are we to employ those hundred men? In a country with such a huge population proliferation of mechanized industries will surely lead to large-scale unemployment. I have great regard for technologists. I have respect for scientists. But I have no use for machinery if a person owning it becomes a millionaire, spends his life in comforts and luxury, lives in bungalows, moves about in a car, gets milk when he asks for water, and wears soft and expensive clothes, while on the other hand thousands of people do not even have roofs over their heads, have to sweat for bread, have no clothes to cover themselves with and then have their work snatched away by one millionaire. The real India does not live in Bombay, Delhi or Calcutta but in seven lakh villages.

¹ These were two men from Payoda.

If we wish to make those villages self-reliant, the human machines should be activated. If there are riots in India today, the cause is to be found in idleness and unemployment. If everyone ate what he earned by the sweat of his brow, if they had to work eight hours a day for their livelihood, no one would have even a minute to spare. Our best religious book is the *Gita*. In it Lord Krishna says that whoever eats without performing *yajna* eats stolen food.¹ The new meaning of *yajna* is that a man has no right to eat till he has earned his food with hard labour. There is in this world no one happier than a self-reliant man who finds happiness in the accomplishment of his work. Isn't there a saying that 'dependence on others always ends in disappointment'. It is very true. If we look around we find that there is no peace or happiness on the face of anyone. The main reason for it is that people expect help from others even for the smallest things.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 214-5

320. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 26, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I was with the Viceroy for an hour and half today. I had no specific business with him. I had not gone there to give the Viceroy something or take something from him. He has his own way of working. He felt that since I have been fighting for the freedom of India and serving the people, he should summon me also as he has been summoning others. He consults every one and then he does what he has to do. What he has in his heart God alone knows.

I get many letters full of abuse. The abuse has no effect on me for I take the abuse as praise. But people hurl abuses at me not because I take it as praise but because in their eyes I am not what I ought to be. There was a time when these same people used to sing my praises. I have selected two questions contained in a letter I have received today which I shall answer here. The first question is: "You

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, iii. 12

have become so used to the British army. What will happen to you after the British army withdraws from here?" I answered this question when I was in South Africa and again answered it after my return here many years ago. I still say the same thing. We have no use for the British army. It does not increase our strength but reduces it. I am of course a votary of non-violence but this applies even to those who do not believe in non-violence. If everyone becomes a soldier and learns to wield the rifle, what need would there be left for the British army? If the withdrawal of the British army shocks us, then how can we be said to be fit for swaraj? If a man's lungs become diseased, he cannot keep himself alive with another person's lungs. Swaraj constitutes the lungs of India. If we want to survive we cannot do so with others' help. We are today like a man who has spent his life in a dark cellar and, being suddenly let out, is for the time being blinded by sunlight. We do not want the British army or any other army either to suppress us or to defend us.

But the riots in Amritsar, Lahore and other places have made us lose faith in ourselves. We have become so wicked that we have begun to fear each other. The idea has begun to take root in our hearts that if the army is not there people will eat each other up. But the fact is that so long as there is a third party ready to suppress us we cannot hope to be strong ourselves. Swaraj is not for cowards.

The second question is: "What a silly old man you are that you cannot see how your ahimsa stinks. Your ahimsa can save neither the Hindus nor the Muslims. If we suffer you to live it is not for your ahimsa but in consideration of the services you have rendered to the country."

What stinks in my nostrils is not my ahimsa but the blood that is flowing everywhere around me. My ahimsa smells sweet to me. A man who drinks nectar every day does not find it so sweet as when he drinks it after having swallowed a draught of poison. Ahimsa did not always smell as sweet as it does now. For then the atmosphere was permeated with ahimsa. But today when violence is giving out so much stench it is only my ahimsa which acts as an antidote. The letter also asks me why I am repeatedly meeting Mr. Jinnah. He is our enemy and we ought to keep away from him. The Baluchis similarly

are our enemies and the Congress ought to have nothing to do with them. How can the Congress do so? Its mission is to serve all. I agree that Mr. Jinnah has done a disservice to the country in denouncing Hindus, especially *savarna* Hindus as his enemies. If a man acts wickedly one feels sorry but after all he is our brother. Hindus cannot go mad. Although Mr. Jinnah has got Pakistan it does not mean that we should cease to associate with him. There are many disputes which can be settled only if we meet together.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 196-8

321. LETTER TO MAHESH DATT MISHRA

NEW DELHI,

June 26/27, 1947

CHI. MAHESH,

I have your letter. Do what service you can from there. Take care of your health.

My programme has become quite uncertain. I cannot say where I shall be. Now you have to look after things there. It is good if you can write something for *Harijan*.

Whenever you want to send anything you have written, do please send it. Nothing is certain about Kashmir.¹

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6722. Also C.W. 4464. Courtesy: Mahesh Datt Mishra

322. LETTER TO DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR

NEW DELHI,

June 27, 1947

CHI. DEV,

Yesterday Sushila² handed me your letter of the 24th instant. Today at 4.15 after the prayers while sipping warm water I had it read

¹ The reference is to Gandhiji's intended visit to Kashmir in place of Jawaharlal Nehru as the Maharaja objected to the latter's visit; *vide* "Letter to Lord Mountbatten", 27-6-1947

² Dr. Sushila Nayyar, addressee's sister

out to me, and then Mahesh's letter. Now I am dictating the reply. I like your letter, also Mahesh's. I have no idea when I shall be going there. Do understand that I am not staying on here of my own inclination. My desire is to be in Bihar and Noakhali. But we cannot have things all our own way. Knowingly I refrain from doing anything. God can toss me anywhere He chooses; I wish only to be a ball in His hands.

I feel hurt to hear the statement of Ansari Saheb¹. Why did he go to Jharia? Nor did I understand why Shah Nawaz Saheb went. I have sent for him. The matter will be decided after his arrival. Mridulabehn too is here. I shall show your letter to her.

I greatly appreciate your staying on there. You are gaining direct experience. You will find in it the key to adult education. Adult education in my opinion is a very important matter. It puts us to test. Preserve good health, both physical and mental. I notice it every moment that perfect mental health ensures physical health.

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

323. *LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN*

Immediate

NEW DELHI,

June 27, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

Panditji was with me at noon and I gave him the purport of the conversation about Kashmir and he immediately asked whether the letter² you were kindly sending to the Maharaja Saheb was going by wire or post. I could not give him a satisfactory answer and I said it would probably be by post. He said the letter would take some days to reach there and the reply too might be delayed. I share his anxiety that the matter brooks no delay. For him it is one of personal honour.

¹ Abdul Qayyum Ansari, Minister for Rehabilitation, Bihar

² The letter to Hari Singh was dictated by Mountbatten on June 26 in Gandhiji's presence; *vide* "Letter from Lord Mountbatten to Hari Singh", 26-6-1947

I have simply undertaken to replace him to the best of my ability. I would like to free him from anxiety in this matter. I seek your aid.¹

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY

NEW DELHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 269-70

324. LETTER TO KULARANJAN MUKHERJEE

NEW DELHI,

June 27, 1947

DEAR KULARANJAN,

Your letter. Abha is there. It is now for you to convert her to your method. I am anxious for her to gain complete recovery. I am glad her brother is progressing.²

Yours sincerely,

BAPU

[PS.]

What about the phone?

SHRI KULARANJAN MUKHERJEE

114-255-2C HAZRA ROAD

KALIGHAT

CALCUTTA

From a photostat: C.W. 10569

325. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

NEW DELHI,

June 27, 1947

CHI. NARANDAS,

You will have received the letter³ I wrote to you about Abha and Aunt. This is regarding Anna's⁴ Kamala⁵. She wishes to return and

¹ Mountbatten replied that the letter had gone by post but that he was telegraphing to the Resident to inform the Maharaja of the despatch of the letter and its contents.

² *Vide* also "Letter to Amrita Lal Chatterjee", 20-6-1947

³ *Vide* "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 23-6-1947

⁴ Harihar Sharma and his wife

⁵ *ibid*

stay there with her children. I have asked her to write to you and told her that she may go if you agree. Do not think about what I would like. I have no particular wish in the matter. You yourself will have to think and decide. If you don't need any person there, you can say no to her. You ought not to be burdened.

My plans are uncertain.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8639. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

326. *LETTER TO MAHESH DATT MISHRA*

NEW DELHI,

June 27, 1947

CHI. MAHESH,

I have your letter. I have already dictated a letter¹ to you and sent it. This is another I am dictating. Do not harbour the fear that I shall ask you to go. You came of your own accord and you will go when you want to go.

Forget what Mridulabehn said. Do not split hairs. Let us not consider in what light others see us. It will be enough if we can see ourselves as we are. You know the English dictum, "Man, know thyself." It is very apt. When a man fully knows himself, he will certainly not become God but he will be able to realize God.

I had realized that you desired, like so many others, to live near my physical body. This desire I cannot satisfy and do not want to satisfy. I wish for solitude. But this again is a matter of wishing. I do not want to exercise my wish in anything. I want to be a devotee of God. In the words of Mira:

Hari holds me by a fragile thread,

I move as he moves me,

I am pierced by the rapier of love.

It will be very good if you get on with Dev². You would complement each other. You have both imbibed the education devised by the British. You have both seen the terrible inadequacy of that education and you are both with me and perhaps, it may be said,

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Mahesh Datt Mishra", 26/27-6-1947

² Dev Prakash Nayyar

under my discipline. Travel everywhere in Bihar, not together but separately. Compare your experiences and go ahead. I shall then be free from anxiety and my work there will proceed smoothly. Do not both be out of Patna at the same time.

Send me whatever you have written. I have left it for you to find out all that has been written about the Frontier Province.

Make your body as hard as steel.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6725. Also C.W. 4465. Courtesy: Mahesh Datt Mishra

327. LETTER TO SOHANLAL

NEW DELHI,

June 27, 1947

BHAI SOHANLAL,

I have your letter. I have no doubt that we should continue our work. The result is in God's hands. Even so ask Shri Jajuji¹. If you want to send him this postcard do so.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 6865

328. LETTER TO R. D. RANADE

NEW DELHI,

June 27, 1947

BHAI RANADE,

Why should you atone for any error that I may commit? It is totally against Hinduism.

“*Raghupati Raghava*” is not a *bhajan*, it is a *Ramadhun*. This refrain is nobody's monopoly.

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

¹ Shrikrishnadas Jaju

329. TALK WITH RAJENDRA PRASAD

NEW DELHI,

June 27, 1947

I do not know why but I cannot swallow the idea that mechanization should be stepped up in India and that the country should find happiness through it. Either I am in error or I am not able to make myself understood. Have you given thought to the possible consequences of using tractors and pumping machines to water the fields and trucks instead of carts for transport of goods? How many farmers will become unemployed, how many bullocks will become idle? Moreover, I feel that in the long run the land will lose its fertility if it is ploughed with machines and tractors. People will stop keeping cattle and we shall have to import fertilizers. Even the small children get work if a peasant has a plough in his own house and tills his land himself. For example one person can work on the *kos*¹, another channels the water to the fields, one can plough while another does the weeding. In this way each will live on the labour of each. How natural and happy village life is, while life dependent on machinery is unhappy and brings unemployment. Yes, machinery has a place but it has been misused. So far we had been fighting against the British in order to give the village industries their due place. We should be careful that the same thing is not repeated.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 220-1

330. TALK WITH ARUNA ASAF ALI

NEW DELHI,

June 27, 1947

While we are in a foreign country, we should work to spread our culture....² spends too much money. The foreigners will not have any regard for us if even our ambassadors behave in this way.... They are very capable and intelligent. But once they go out they behave as they

¹ A big leather bucket in which water is drawn from a well with the help of a bullock for watering the fields

² Omissions as in the source. The reference presumably is to Asaf Ali who had been serving as India's ambassador in Washington.

like, thinking that there is no one to question what they do. We have ambassadors in every country. If such a large amount is spent on one ambassador, the rest of them would also spend on a similar scale. How can a poor country like India afford that? You do know that you can make plain *chapatis* as well as *laddoos* and other sweets out of wheat flour. But what a great difference there is between the two expenses as well as in digestibility. If we make *laddoos* every day and eat them, we shall become ill physically as well as financially. On the other hand, *rotis* are beneficial in both the respects. If you can understand this thing, you can understand about.... When I see such a great reaction among national servants, and that too so soon, I tell myself that those who had dedicated themselves as such, donned khadi, gone to jail, adopted non-violence and participated in the spiritual programme had not done so with knowledge, that it was merely sheeplike behaviour. Otherwise, how can one change one's way of living so soon and to such an extent?

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 226-7

331. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 27, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today I have received a distressing letter. A friend writes from Delhi that a large number of refugees from the Punjab are on their way to Delhi. They have left their homes because they felt that their lives and property were in danger. But where can they flee? If we hear that there is going to be an earthquake in Delhi tomorrow, shall we flee the place? The brave never run away. Death is one's constant companion. No one is immortal. As for property it is something one is always acquiring and losing. The friend also writes that when the refugees who have come to Delhi want to rent houses, the landlords ask for premium. My advice to those who have houses or land in Delhi is that they should welcome these homeless people to their houses. But even if they cannot do so, at least they should not demand premium but be content with such modest rent as the refugees can pay them. It is their paramount duty to give shelter to the refugees. I take

it that in the case of some of the landlords, rent from their houses is the sole source of income. But even so the rents they charge should be reasonable. The letter suggests that the Interim Government should consider this problem and as far as possible reduce the difficulty faced by the refugees.

I cannot answer all the questions addressed to me through letters and newspapers. But I shall select a few and attend to them. Today I have selected three questions. The first question is that since in the world money has replaced God, what is India to do? My answer is that dependence on money power, physical force or brute force is folly. The mightiest power is God, before whom, as a *bhajan* says, all powers become ineffective. Today the materialist outlook prevails and we have come to feel that there is no such thing as spiritual power or soul-power for it is invisible and intangible. But I am a believer in the power of the spirit and I place no value on brute force. I still say that brute force is transient while soul-force is eternal for it is truth itself.

The second question is: "After the British leave, Dominion status will continue only till the Constituent Assembly has finalized the constitution. Thereafter will you be friends of the British or their enemy?"

The answer is that we have always hoped that we shall continue our association with England. The bad deeds of a bad man are buried with him, only the good is left behind. India today is passing through the agony of child-birth. If the English emerge well out of it, that is if the Viceroy and his English advisers do what will be good for the country, then how can they remain our enemies? Even Dominion Status we have secured by being their friends. We now become partners in Commonwealth. Even when we leave the Commonwealth we shall still have friendship for them. In this lies their good and ours. Jawaharlal Nehru, the Vice-President of the Interim Government, has already said that no one need fear an independent India. India will cultivate friendship with all countries.

The third question is: "Who will be the President of the Indian Republic? Will it be some Englishman, and if it is not to be an Englishman then should we not have Jawaharlal Nehru? For he is a highly educated man, can speak English and French and has large experience of foreign countries." My answer is that if I have my way the President of the Indian Republic will be a chaste and brave Bhangi girl. If an English girl of 17 could become the British Queen and later even Empress of India, there is no reason why a Bhangi girl of robust

love of her people and unimpeachable integrity of character should not become the first President of the Indian Republic.¹ It is not necessary that the President should be a highly educated person knowing many languages. We do not want to display our pride to the world by electing a learned Brahmin or a Kshatriya as the President of India. By electing a Harijan girl to that office we shall demonstrate our soul-force. we shall show to the world that in India there is no one high and no one low. Only the girl should be clean in body and mind. She should be chaste as Sita and her eyes should radiate light. Sita had such radiance that Ravana could not touch her. If I can find such a girl she will be our first President. We shall all salute her and set a new example before the world. After all she does not have to concern herself with running the Government of India. She will have a cabinet of ministers and she will act on its advice. She will merely have to sign papers. All the Indians, be they caste Hindus or Muslims or followers of some other faith, should declare with one voice that whoever may be the President they will all salute him. This is real moral power. All the rest is falsehood. If such a girl of my dreams becomes President, I shall be her servant and I shall not expect from the Government even my upkeep. I shall make Jawaharlal, Sardar Patel and Rajendra Babu her ministers and therefore her servants.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 199-202

332. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

Urgent

NEW DELHI,

June 27/28, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I sent you a note² in the afternoon. The time after the evening prayer and walk I wish to devote to talking to you on certain matters I was able to touch but could not develop when we met.

I told the Parliamentary Delegation that heralded the Cabinet Mission and the Cabinet Mission itself that they had to choose between the two parties or even three. They were doomed to fail if they tried to please all, holding them all to be in the right. I had hoped that you were bravely and honestly trying to extricate yourself from the impossible position. But My eyes were opened when, if I

¹ This sentence is from *The Hindu*, 28-6-1947.

² *Vide* "Letter to Lord Mountbatten", 27-6-1947

understood you correctly, you said that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and the League members were equally in the right with the Congress members and that possibly Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah was more so. I suggested that this is not humanly possible. One must be wholly right in the comparative sense. You have to make your choice at this very critical stage in the history of this country. If you think that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah is, on the whole, more correct and more reasonable than the Congress, you should choose the League as your advisers and in all matters be frankly and openly guided by them.

You threw out a hint that Qaid-e-Azam might not be able to let you quit even by 15th August especially if the Congress members did not adopt a helpful attitude. This was for me a startling statement. I pointed the initial mistake of the British being party to splitting India into two. It is not possible to undo the mistake. But I hold that it is quite possible and necessary not to put a premium upon the mistake. This does not in any way impinge upon the very admirable doctrine of fair play. Fair play demands that I do not help the mistaken party to fancy that the mistake was no mistake but a belated and only a partial discharge of an obligation.

You startled me again by telling me that, if the partition had not been made during British occupation, the Hindus being the major party would have never allowed partition and held the Muslims by force under subjection. I told you that this was a grave mistake. The question of numbers was wholly untenable in this connection. I cited the classic example of less than one hundred thousand British soldiers holding India under utter subjection. You saw no analogy between the two instances. I suggested the difference was only one of degree.

I place the following for your consideration:

(a) The Congress has solemnly declared that it would not hold by force any Province within the Union.

(b) It is physically impossible for millions of caste-ridden Hindus to hold well-knit though fewer millions of Muslims under subjection by force.

(c) It must not be forgotten that Muslim dynasties have progressively subjugated India by exactly the same means as the English conquerors later did.

(d) Already there has been a movement to win over to the Muslim side the so-called scheduled classes and the so-called aboriginal races.

(e) The caste Hindus who are the bugbear are, it can be shown conclusively, a hopeless minority. Of these the armed Rajputs are not yet nationalists as a class. The Brahmins and the Banias are still untrained in the use of arms. Their supremacy where it exists is purely moral. The Sudras count, I am sorry, more as scheduled class than anything else. That such Hindu society by reason of its mere superiority in numbers can crush millions of Muslims is an astounding myth.

This should show you why, even if I am alone, I swear by non-violence and truth together standing for the highest order of courage before which the atom bomb pales into insignificance, what to say of a fleet of Dreadnoughts.

I have not shown this to any of my friends.

If I have misunderstood you in any single particular you have only to correct me and I shall gladly accept the correction. If I am obscure anywhere, I shall try to remove the obscurity either by letter or by meeting according to your wish.

My anxiety to save you from mistakes as I see them is the sole excuse for this letter.¹

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY
NEW DELHI

From the original: India Office Library and Records, London; also *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47*, pp. 250-2

333. LETTER TO DAS

NEW DELHI,
June 28, 1947

DEAR DAS,

I wrote out a note the moment I got Mrs. Sen Gupta's² letter.

¹ In his reply dated June 28, the addressee said: "Thank you for your letter of this morning, which I have read with much interest. I am glad you wrote because after reading your letter I feel that almost from first to last I must have failed to make clear to you my meaning. I am glad that you have not shown your letter to others, since I should be very sorry that views should be attributed to me which I did not, in fact, express. I hope you will agree to discuss these matters again at our next meeting." Lord Mountbatten who read out Gandhiji's letter at his staff meeting that day stated how he had been misinterpreted by Gandhiji. For the minutes of the meeting, *vide* "Extract from Minutes of Viceroy 48th Staff Meeting", 28-6-1947

² Nellie Sen Gupta (1886-1973); widow of Jatindra Mohan Sen Gupta; she was President of Indian National Congress at one of its critical sessions in 1933; after partition in 1947 she settled in Pakistan.

I am averse to multiplying newspapers which crop up like mushrooms.

Mrs. Sen Gupta should not be dragged into this thing.

Despriya's¹ memory would be better served by doing his work silently and selflessly.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

334. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

NEW DELHI,

June 28, 1947

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

Your interpretation is correct but still let me explain the thing a little more. It is only proper that the amount earmarked for the Talimi Sangh in the budget should be handed over to them. We shall see if there are further dues. If Manibhai asks for the whole amount in lump sum it is only right that we should pass on to him what we have decided to give him. I know he has been asking for it although Balkrishna is the moving spirit behind it. Since it is not possible to supervise things from Sevagram, it is better that we hand over the amount earmarked for them so that they manage their affairs as best as they can. Our ship sails on faith and that is how it should be. I can understand that you will not take an independent decision. That burden should be shouldered by me so long as I live and am capable of doing so.

I understand what you say about your health. Don't spare any efforts. Ask me anything you wish regarding your treatment or diet.

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

¹ Jatindra Mohan Sen Gupta (1885-1933), a Congress leader of Bengal who succeeded C.R. Das; he served several terms of imprisonment and died as internee at Ranchi on July 23; was connected with the English daily *Forward* and himself founded the English daily *Advance*.

335. LETTER TO JUSSAWALA

NEW DELHI,
June 28, 1947

BHAI JUSSAWALA,

I did get your letter. I did not send a reply as I had neither the time nor the inclination. Now that another has come I would only say that we cannot gain more from America.

I have quite a few letters from there and I have frankly told them that their prescriptions and equipment are of no use to the Indian masses. For the rich, they are like toys. My views are being confirmed in the opposite direction, that is, towards simplicity. I am therefore not in favour of your going to America. If I had my way I would stop you from going.

The thing for which you intend going to America is no longer to be found anywhere. But this is a different subject. There is another gentleman like you who also has an invitation. I have been able to convince him that there is no point in going. The best thing is frankly to tell them what we think.

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

336. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA

NEW DELHI,
June 28, 1947

CHI. BALVANTSINHA,

I have your letter. I was happy to read about Pandurang. It will be very good if he can be firm in his resolve. There must be no place for clandestine adultery. It is difficult for him to remain an unmarried widower.

May God save him.

You did well in writing about the Goshala. I should advise you clearly to spell out your ideas in writing to Aryanayakumji. You should not be concerned with how others take it. If we are pure and others still think us impure, it only means that we have to be even purer and more determined. You should therefore tell Aryanayakumji frankly. That would be in keeping with true friendship. That the land has been taken from us should not weigh in considering the matter of

the Goshala.

It will be good if Shakaribehn¹ comes. It will give relief to Chimanlal.

The restraints involved in *brahmacharya* also include not living among animals and eunuchs. I have advised against them.²

Why did Kishorelalbhai³ leave Sevagram? Did he give any reason for it or was it that he just came and went.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I am glad to know that Hoshiari⁴ is improving.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 1981

337. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 28, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

What I am going to tell you today will be something very special. I hope you will hear me with attention and try to digest what I say. When someone does something good he makes the whole world partake of the good. When someone does something bad, though he cannot make the world share his action he can certainly cause harm. The Constituent Assembly is discussing the rights of the citizen. That is to say they are deliberating on what the fundamental rights should be. As a matter of fact the proper question is not what the rights of a citizen are, but rather what constitutes the duties of a citizen. Fundamental rights can only be those rights the exercise of which is not only in the interest of the citizen but that of the whole world. Today everyone wants to know what his rights are, but if a man learns to discharge his duties right from childhood and studies the sacred books of his faith he automatically exercises his rights too. I learnt my duties on my mother's lap. She was an unlettered village woman. She was unable even to sign her name. Nobody in those days thought of learning to read and write by employing tutors. I am telling you of

¹ Wife of Chimanlal N. Shah

² Vide "Walls of Protection", 15-6-19 74

³ Kishorelal G. Mashruwala

⁴ Addressee's niece

things seventy years ago. My father was a Diwan, but at that time a Diwan did not have to be particularly well versed in English. He dressed himself in an *angarkha* and wore village-style shoes. He did not even know what trousers were. My mother taught me to repeat Ramanama. She knew my dharma. Thus if from childhood we learn what our dharma is and try to follow it our rights look after themselves. I could live only on condition that I drank the milk that my mother gave me. If I had shirked the obligation to drink milk I would have forfeited my right to live. The beauty of it is that the very performance of a duty secures us our right. Rights cannot be divorced from duties. This is how satyagraha was born, for I was always striving to decide what my duty was.

Today we notice a strange phenomenon. He who is a ruler for a moment gets it into his head that has been created by God solely to rule over people, that he has the right to hang some, to imprison others and to fine some others. He wants that all the duties should be discharged by the people. He says he has derived his right to rule from God. Industrial workers and industrial magnates are demanding their respective rights. The zamindar insists on his rights, the peasant on his. But there are no such two classes here that one of them should exercise only rights and the other discharge only duties. If a ruler shirks his duties while the people do theirs then the people become the ruler. If the ruler does his duty and considers himself the trustee of his people he will survive. But if he becomes authoritarian he cannot survive in this age. Till now we have been sunk in darkness. The rulers have forgotten their duties and so have the ruled. The rajas have only been repeating that they were descended from the sun or the moon. But in truth a sovereign is only the first servant of the people. It is the duty of the servant to surrender all to the master and then live on what is left over. The people similarly should learn to do their duty. They are in millions. If they are so disposed they can kill the ruler. But by so doing they will only harm themselves. If we keep our streets clean and well lighted or do something similar we should do it as a duty. Every one of us should become a scavenger. A man who does not first become a scavenger cannot live, nor has he a right to live and we are all scavengers in some sense or other even if we do not admit it. If the people pay taxes it is not so as to fill the coffers of the ruler but because without that the administration cannot function. The same thing applies to mill-workers and mill-owners. Here at hand and around is squalor in the Harijan quarter. When I see it my heart cries

out at our worthlessness. I live in such beautiful and clean surroundings while they have to wallow in dirt. Mill-owners should similarly first feed the workers and themselves eat only afterwards. But even if the mill-owners do not do their duty, does it mean that the workers should kill them? They can certainly do so. But then the whole structure would collapse. They gain nothing by frightening the mill-owners. They would themselves be behaving as masters then. If they want to improve their lot they must not forget that they will earn their rights only by doing their duty. There are today millions of workers. If they forget their duty anarchy and chaos will result.

Every man is born a debtor. The scripture also says that we are born debtors in the world to which we owe a debt and we are dependent on others right from birth. Man becomes man only by recognizing his dependence on others.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 202-5

338. *LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN*

NEW DELHI,

June 28/29, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I have to inflict another letter on you—this time about the Frontier referendum.

Badshah Khan writes to me to say that he is carrying out the plan I had discussed with you and he with Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah. The plan was to move for free Pathanistan framing its own local constitution and when the Pakistan and the Union constitutions were out, to decide either to belong to one State or the other. In this move he has failed. Therefore the referendum would go on without any interference by his followers, the latter abstaining from voting either way. He fully realizes that in this case the Frontier would probably go to Pakistan.

He wants me also to draw your attention to the fact that Punjab Muslims, men and women, are being freely introduced in the Frontier Province to affect the referendum and that notable non-Frontier Muslims too have been sent to the Frontier Province for the same purpose. This increases the risk of blood-shed and worse.

He also says that the non-Muslim refugees numbering many

thousands will have no chance, so far as he is aware, of taking part in the referendum and they are threatened with dire penalty should they dare to exercise the vote.¹

I see in today's papers that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah contends that if the Pathans abstain from voting, the abstention will constitute a breach of the terms of the referendum. I do not see the force of the contention.

Many thanks for your telegram² to the Resident in Kashmir.

Yours Sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY
NEW DELHI

From the original; India Office Library and records, London: also *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47*, p. 262

339. SOME VALUABLE HINTS

The writer is a student of the country's politics.³ I am not *au fait* with the Congress work. Therefore I have no right to announce any opinion on the foregoing hints which should, therefore, be taken for what they are worth.

NEW DELHI, June 29, 1947

Harijan, 6-7-1947

340. A PERPLEXITY⁴

I give below extract from a letter received from a well-educated Indian in England.

I am in a confused state with regard to the relations between men and

¹ The addressee in his reply said that he was asking the Governor to "take such steps as may be necessary about Punjabi Muslims being introduced into the Frontier...and non-Muslim refugees having no chance to vote."

² *Vide* footnote 2, "Letter to Lord Mountbatten", 27-6-1947

³ The article by "Anonymous" is not reproduced here. Advocating the slogan "Produce or Perish" instead of "Industrialize or Perish", the author suggested; "The Congress should set up a number of committees of experts, one on the defence of India, the second on economic planning, the third on industrial Planning and the fourth on the secretariat planning."

⁴ The Gujarati original appeared under the title "A Difficulty" in *Harijanbandhu* which was published simultaneously with the source. The translation has been revised.

women. I have already written to you that I believe in certain restrictions on these. Yet my situation is very like that of Trishanku. I often feel that if these relations were more natural than they are, there might be less sinfulness. Yet something within me tells me that every touch, be it ever so superficial, is bound to lead to the eruption of animal passion. When one examines the court cases here even about brother and sister or even father and daughter, the beginning seems to have been quite innocent. In my opinion the glow of mere touch drags down inside of a month, even a week, one who is not endowed with extra purity. A good man may take even ten years but he is sure to go down the incline of vice. There is a constant conflict between the habit which we have inherited and the thoughts developed from the study of books by modern writers. The question often arises—can society altogether abjure contact between the sexes? I have not been able to come to a decision. Such in short is my sorry plight.

This is the state of many young men and women. There is only one way for such young people. They have to avoid all contact with the opposite sex. The checks and restraints described in our books were the result of experience gained during those times. They were, no doubt, necessary for the writers and their readers. Today every aspirant has to pick out from them the necessary items and add new ones which experience may make necessary. If we draw a circle round the goal to be reached, we shall find many ways leading to the goal, from which each one may choose according to his needs.

An aspirant who may not know his own mind will certainly fail if he blindly copies another.

Having said so much by way of caution, I must add that to find the true way to *brahmacharya* through a study of court cases and erotic literature is a wild goose chase. The true way is not to be found in English law courts or in the novels. They have their use in their limited field, but they are of no use to the aspirant after *brahmacharya*. English men and women who tread the difficult path are not afflicted by the imaginings of the correspondent quoted above. Those whom I have in mind have their God enthroned in their hearts. They are neither self-deceived nor would they deceive others. To them sisters are sisters and mothers are mothers. All women are to them sisters and mothers. It never occurs to them that every contact with them is sinful or that it is fraught with danger. They see in all women the same God they see in themselves.

It betrays lack of humility to say that such examples do not exist

because we have not come across them. It also amounts to lowering the glory of *brahmacharya*. Rejecting the possibility of perfect *brahmacharya* is like saying that there is no God because we have not seen Him face to face or met men who have had that experience.

NEW DELHI, June 29, 1947

Harijan, 6-7-1947

341. A THOUGHTFUL SUGGESTION

As the originator of the first design, I should say that the three stripes were to represent all the communities and the charkha was the symbol of non-violence.¹

NEW DELHI, June 29, 1947

Harijan, 6-7-1947

342. A LETTER

June 29, 1947

Often it is easier to win independence than to preserve it. Time alone will show whether the goal that the Congress has achieved, the freedom that has been won, will endure. Speeches and discussions are not going to help now. I do believe that if those holding positions of responsibility and power show some restraint in making speeches and pay more attention to work it will have an effect.

And now a new development is taking place. People who believe themselves to be Congress workers, shun members of other parties or criticize them in public as if non-Congressmen had no spirit of patriotism in them. These Congressmen think that they are the only servants of the people. If this state of affairs continues, the atmosphere in the country will become more and more bitter.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 239

¹ This note appeared under an article on the national flag by S. D. Kalelkar, not reproduced here. The author *inter alia* says “our wheel may have three stripes of red, white and green (of the mother earth and her children the tillers) with a wheel with eight spokes superimposed in any suitable colour.”

343. TALK WITH BHIMSEN SACHAR¹

NEW DELHI,
June 29, 1947

I shall be happy if you and your family do not leave Pakistan but all of you bravely sacrifice your lives there. I will not weep. All of you are my fellow soldiers. The strength of an army depends more on the soldiers than on the captain. I am sure that peace will be established in India if I get even twenty-five brave soldiers of my imagination. But I am sorry to say that the local leaders who have some influence are trying at any cost to transfer their property and family to safety. When this is happening, with what face can I advise the poor, the common people not to run away but to die wherever they are? Think over all this is you can.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 239-40

344. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
June 29, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Yesterday I talked to you about duty. However I was not able to say all that I had intended to say. Whenever a person goes anywhere certain duties come to devolve on him. The man who neglects his duty and cares only to safeguard his rights does not know that rights that do not spring from duties done cannot be safeguarded. This applies also to the Hindu-Muslim relations. Whether it is the Hindus living in a place or Muslims or both, they will come to acquire rights if they do their duty. Then they do not have to demand rights. A child feeds at his mother's breast because it is his duty to do so. And this alone gives him the right to live. This is a paramount law and no one can change it. If Hindus consider Muslims their brothers and treat them well, Muslims too will return friendship for friendship. Take a village for example. If there are in it five hundred Hindus and five Muslims, then the five hundred Hindus come to have certain obligations

¹ Leader of the Congress party in the Punjab Assembly

towards the five Muslims which *ipso facto* gives Hindus certain rights. In their arrogance they should not think that they can crush the Muslims and kill them for it cannot be anyone's right to kill. There is no bravery in killing. It is cowardice and a disgrace. The duty of the Hindus is to share with the Muslims in their joys and sorrows even if they wear beards and face towards the West during *namaaz*. They should see whether they are getting enough food and water and whether their other needs are being satisfied. When the five hundred Hindus do their duty, then they earn the right to expect that the five Muslims also would do theirs. If the village catches fire and the Muslims think that they should let it burn and do everything to see that it spreads, then they will not be doing their duty. Fires in villages are a common occurrence. If someone lights a *bidi* and throws away the burning match-stick and it comes into contact with a little dried grass or wisp of cotton, a fire starts. And since villages mostly have thatched roofs just a little wind can make the fire consume the whole village. But as a matter of course in such an eventuality the five Muslims will also want to extinguish the fire and will set about bringing pails of water for the purpose. By thus doing their duty they automatically acquire rights. Today we do not do our duty. The work goes on because God has so made the world that its progress does not stop. But supposing the five Mussalmans are bent on mischief, supposing you give them food and water and treat them well and they still abuse you, what then will be the duty of the five hundred Hindus? It certainly is not their duty to cut them down. It would be bestial, not human, to do so. If a brother of mine has gone mad, shall I then start beating him up? I shall not do so. I shall confine him in a room and stop others from treating him roughly. This is the human way. Similarly if the Muslims in question do not want to behave in a friendly manner and keep on saying that they are a separate nation, that though they are only five, they can summon five crores of Muslims from outside, the Hindus should not let themselves be frightened by such a threat. They should tell the Muslims outside that they want to be friends with the five Muslims, but that they don't reciprocate. That if they want to help them it is their affair, but the Hindus would not be frightened or subdued by force. The world will understand that the five hundred Hindus are good people and want to do their duty. The same thing applies to a village where there are five hundred Muslims and only five Hindus. There are many such villages in Pakistan. Some people from the Jhelam area had been to see me.

They were concerned about their future in their home country. I told them that if the Muslims there were good people, could exercise self-control in doing their duty, then they would have nothing to fear. But if the few Hindus there were wicked, then even if Hindus from all over India went to help them nothing would be gained.

Some Indian Princes are offended. They believe that so long as there are the sun and the moon in the sky, they ought to remain on their thrones. They argue that it was not the people who installed them as the rulers, it was the British or the sun or the moon. This does not show that they are doing their duty. This bespeaks pride and arrogance. So long as they were protected by the British these Princes squandered crores of rupees in England and America. They indulged in wild orgies. Now it cannot continue. Now they can remain rulers only on the sufferance of the people and as their servants. Of course even servants must eat. So long they plundered their people. They should also be allowed to continue in their palaces for they can say that they have been used to live in palaces and have never lived in huts. What can the people lose by letting them do so? But if the Princes refuse to recognize the rights of the people, if they say that they will blow their subjects to bits with cannon, then they will not be doing their duty. What then should the people do? In that eventuality it becomes the duty of the people to fight against the ruler and remove him from the throne. That does not mean that they should set fire to the palaces and destroy everything. That would be wickedness. If the ruler is on the wrong path the duty of the people is not to drag him down. The people should fight against him with courtesy, truth and peace. The people should not merely run after rights. He who runs after rights does not secure them. His plight is that of a dog who sees his reflection in the water and wants to attack it. His right is illusory. When you do your duty the rights will drop into your lap.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 205-8

345. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

NEW DELHI,

June 29/30, 1947

CHI. MIRA,

I have your two wires and two letters giving me a vivid description of your experiences in Uttarkashi. The second letter is disturbing. After I commenced dictating I felt like dozing and I dozed. After the dozing was finished I got your third letter telling me

about your movement to Dhanaulti.¹ I hope that you were able, without any harm to the body, to negotiate the journey in your dilapidated condition. It grieves me to think that even Uttarkashi with all its sacred associations could do no good to your body and that you found the water there to be too heavy and the atmosphere stifling. I hope the new place will treat you better. By going to Uttarkashi you have knocked on the head and on the principle of 'once bitten twice shy'. I shall look upon every Himalayan place with suspicion. However, I am in God's hands. I shall wish neither one way nor the other. Sufficient unto the day is the good thereof. I must not think of the evil. No one knows what is really good or evil. Therefore, let us think of nothing but good. Coming to mundane matters, when I am free from here I must go to Bihar and Noakhali and I might have to go to Kashmir almost immediately. Date will be decided, I hope, inside of a week. To Hardwar I went only for a few hours to see the refugees. The weather was too hot to permit of much movement.

Blessings from

BAPU

SHRI MIRABEHN

C/O SHRI DEVDAS GANDHI

BIRLA HOUSE

MUSSOORIE

[PS.]

So Pandit Jagatram's² wife is dying. She will be well rid of her pain. I have noticed your well-thought-out suggestions.

This was going to Devdas to be forwarded to Dhanaulti. Now I have your fourth letter. I do hope all these changes will result in sending you to a place which will give your mind and body the needed rest.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6530. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9925

¹ She however went instead to Pratapnagar where she settled down to the work of reading through and selecting from Gandhiji's letter to her.

² Pandit Jagatram Bharadwaj

346. *TELEGRAM TO P. SIVASHANMUGHAM PILLAI*¹

[On or before *June 30, 1947*]²

GLAD RAMESWARAM AND OTHER TEMPLES ARE BEING OPENED TO HARIJANS.
HOPE INTERNAL CLEANSING WILL FOLLOW.

The Hindu, 1-7-1947

347. *LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

NEW DELHI,
June 30, 1947

CHI. JAWAHAR³,

Your letter. I have the invitation. I shall be at the Viceroy's house at 10 a. m. tomorrow. You or Vallabhbhai can fetch me, if that will save petrol.

*Blessings from*⁴
BAPU

[PS.]

I spoke at the meeting about B[adshah] Khan.⁵

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

348. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

NEW DELHI,
June 30, 1947

CHI. AMRIT,

Better a p. c. than no letter. Sushila is just off to Wardha to attend to her hospital work. Nothing certain about me. Hope you are better. It is not so oppressive here as when you left. Love to you all.

BAPU

¹ Speaker, Madras Legislative Assembly

² The telegram was reported under the date-line "Rameswaram, June 30". The temples were opened to Harijans on June 30.

³ The superscription and subscription are in Hindi.

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 30-6-1947

[PS.]

When this was going to be posted, your letter was received. How funny. My movement still uncertain.

From the original: C.W. 4194. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7830

349. A LETTER

NEW DELHI,
June 30, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter. I cannot agree. Why should the Harijans not enter when the temples are open to them? Temples are Godless whilst they are closed against Harijans.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

350. LETTER TO TALEYARKHAN

NEW DELHI,
June 30, 1947

DEAR TALEYARKHAN,

Your letter. My advice is 'stop where you are'.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

351. LETTER TO MARJORIE SYKES

June 30, 1947

DEAR MARJORIE,

I have your long tale of woes. I am powerless to guide. If you permit me, I can send it to Ratibaboo. Otherwise be guided by Heaven.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

352. *LETTER TO HOOSENBHAI LALJEE*

June 30, 1947

BHAI HOOSENBHAI,

I have your letter. These days it is no use consulting me; I don't know what is happening. I am buried in my own affairs. I shall now show your letter to friends.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

HOOSENBHAI LALJI

BOMBAY

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

353. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

NEW DELHI,

June 30, 1947

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have already written¹ to you regarding Kamala. Now I am also sending with this the letter I received from her today. Decide as you like and let me know, and write directly to her too.

Abha is really ill and is in Calcutta.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C. W. 8640. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

354. *LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI*

ON THE TRAIN,

June 30, 1947

CHI. MRIDU,

Regarding H[indus]. M[uslims]

1. Keep seeing the Leaguers. If they want to show you anything, go and see it, note down what you see and take their signatures

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 27-6-1947

on your notings.

- 2.A. They are free to do picketing on their own if they wish. They must not ask or expect the Government to lend them support.
- B. If anyone vacates his land or house, the property will be taken over by the Government. If he wishes to retain the possession of the land or the house, he cannot expect to get anything from the Government. He can ask for the damages to the house if any.
- C. Recruitment of Muslims in the Police cannot be demanded. Demand can always be made for good, impartial Police.
- D. The culprits should be brought to book. Mathura Singh must be arrested. If he is not arrested, it will show the bankruptcy of the Government.
- E. Wherever riots have taken place, the Hindus must pay a fine voluntarily or compulsorily.
- F. Repairs in the villages should mean that ideal sanitary conditions will prevail in the villages and streets will be clean without dirt and dust; villagers and school children should do this work on voluntary basis. There should be adequate provision for water.
- G. The Government as well as the people should give up their dependence on the Police. Local Hindus should take up the responsibility. And the Government should pass a legislation that wherever there is destruction of Muslim life and property, the Hindus must pay the damages.
- H. There should be provision for clean water everywhere.
- I. Gen. Shah Nawaz should be appointed advisor and his recommendations should be accepted as far as possible.

MISCELLANEOUS

Ansari was to meet me. I regret he has not done so.

Mahant Bhagwan Das should resign.

It is right to demand surety from confirmed criminals.

It is desirable that relief centres should be controlled by Government. But others cannot be forbidden. Those who are being given help by way of food, etc. should contribute their utmost to work.

Both the Muslim ministers should give their full co-operation in this and they should be included in all negotiations.

Help should be sought from all political parties. There should be no party politics in such matters.

The places where destruction has taken place should be shown in the presence of the Panch, and should be photographed wherever possible and the rubble must be cleared at once.

You may give this to the Ministers after having it translated into Hindi.

You should talk in Hindi with Hindi-knowing persons. This work must be carried out only in Hindi. Both the scripts should be used. Even if you are entertaining different ideas in the matter, you must follow my ideas and methods of working. Then only will you bring credit to it and to yourself and help me in the task.

You are keeping very late hours at night. That is not service but attachment.

REGARDING THE POLICE

Only that much should be done about which Jayaprakash is convinced. I do not want two contradictory voices--mine and his. The actual work has to be done by him. I am in no doubt whatever about the absolute correctness of my policy.

You should meet the prisoners, if that is allowed. The Premier should let you meet them freely. You should not even think that you would work or benefit on behalf of the Socialist or any other party. If the politicians take advantage of the situation, it is the venomous legacy of the British practice, a volunteer has no party.

Let the police release the prisoners as far as possible. The cases of those who have indulged in murders will have to be considered. It is the duty of the Police to remain faithful to the present Government. The present Government should be regarded as popular Government. The question of capital and labour must not be allowed to be raised. That problem must be solved. It is possible to solve it. The Police should keep itself aloof from it. Jayaprakash must fully play his role in this and other matters. He has the spirit of self-sacrifice. He has intelligence. He is brave and courageous. I have a very high opinion of him. I do not want him to do anything for the sake of his position but for the sake of people. Many things about the Socialist Party can find wide acceptance. I believe that the policy by which he has become like a God to the people cannot work today. If he agrees to what I am saying, let him talk in the language of peace and make a public announcement of it.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 11261. Courtesy: Sarabhai Foundation

355. A LETTER

June 30, 1947

Our worst enemies are fear and lethargy. We can become aware of our strength only when we have driven out these two....¹ We should not live on anybody's charity. We should seek help only from ourselves and from God. . . .

A servant of the people should never worry about his livelihood. Anybody who has voluntarily taken up the mission of service comes to command through his service such respect that people will come and offer him one rupee when he needs only half a rupee. But the public servant who renders such effective service must put up with many conditions and restrictions. I am not stating a mere copy-book maxim. I write from my own experience.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 242

356. A LETTER

June 30, 1947

I am surprised and pained to hear that you are marrying again. What you say about how grieved you were at the death of your first wife and how devoted you two had been to each other does not interest me much. Dharma requires that since you worshipped her so much for her virtues you should strive earnestly to imbibe those virtues and fulfil the aspirations which she cherished. I can write more on the subject but there is this conflagration raging around and I must either let myself be consumed in it or discover Truth. So I do not have any time at all. You, who have accepted the path of service and constructive work, do you not know that women's education and uplift is one of the eighteen points I have enumerated? I therefore feel disposed to say that as long as a widow in our society does not have the right to remarry without fear, a widower also should observe the restriction. But perhaps it is too late now. Please reconsider if it is still possible. Otherwise throw this letter into the waste-paper basket.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 242-3

¹ Omissions as in the source

357. A LETTER

June 30, 1947

I was pained to read about your illness. He who wishes to serve must not fall ill. And if one does not want to fall ill, then surely one must not transgress nature's laws! If you had made proper use of nature's gifts, namely, air, sun, earth, water, food and rest and had at the same time kept repeating Ramanama, you would have escaped such serious illness. Drink plenty of water, apply mud-packs, take baths and live only on fruit juice. We look upon a fruit diet as a costly diet, but this is a great error. The truth is that in our lethargy we do not take the necessary trouble to grow vegetables and fruits. If we shed our lethargy and ignorance, we shall find this seemingly costly diet quite inexpensive and be able to maintain perfect health.

In the morning, you should take sun-bath with the whole body, except the head, completely uncovered. You should also take hip-baths in warm and cold water. If you do not pass clear stools, take enema. And take complete rest. The mind also has a great effect on the body.

Therefore, without tiring yourself read some good books or have them read to you in a spirit of devotion, and shut your eyes and meditate on God. I am sure you will get well if you do this much. Dictate a letter to me from time to time. Avoid the labour of writing yourself.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p 243

358. LETTER TO P. C. GHOSH

NEW DELHI,
June 30, 1947

CHI. PROFULLA¹,

Sardar has sent word that there should be a Marwari in your Cabinet, either Badridas Goenka or Khaitan. I think it will be proper to do so, improper not to.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 3787

359. LETTER TO Y. M. PARNERKAR

NEW DELHI,
June 30, 1947

CHI. PARNERKAR²,

I have your letter.

I am strongly against people going abroad. I cannot appreciate the assumption that all knowledge is concentrated abroad and only ignorance abounds at home.

Keep in mind that in the West they experiment on living beings so that the human body may be preserved. In order to extract all that they can from the cow they slaughter her as well as the bull and feed on their flesh. What can we learn from them?

But I am alone although my being alone does not hurt me. What if I am in the wrong? Am I not confining the mistake to myself? Therefore I have only one advice to offer, that you should do what the Goseva Sangh suggests. But no going abroad even if they suggest it. Serving the Goseva Sangh means serving the cow because the former came into being only for the latter's sake. Try to bring round your colleagues by your knowledge.

I have no time or inclination to write more.

I hope Sharad³ is doing well.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

¹ Leader of the West Bengal Assembly Congress party; Chief Minister after partition

² A dairy expert at Sevagram Ashram

³ Addressee's daughter, Sharad P. Machve

360. LETTER TO SIYARAM SHARAN GUPTA¹

June 30, 1947

BHAIJI,

I have your letter. I do not think your flag-salutation [song] can be popular in today's atmosphere. But if it has life, some day it will.

Blessings from

BAPU

SIYARAM SHARAN

JHANSI

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

361. TALK WITH PRABHAVATI AND OTHERS

NEW DELHI,

June 30, 1947

God has sent us here so that we should get rid of our sins, our meanness and narrow-mindedness. There is only one way of doing that and it is prayer. You can pray in any way you like. If you want you can call Him Allah or Rama or Shiva. It is all the same. I feel that if only the leaders would realize it we have a golden opportunity here. If we but make up our minds and come together and calmly, without casting aspersions on one another, consider things and set actively to work, we shall add lustre to truth and non-violence, the power with which we secured our freedom, and the whole world will begin to look up to India for advice. We have no need for any 'isms'. Codes of conduct given in our scriptures are replaced by 'isms' of modern times. That little book *Gita* teaches us that those who eat without doing any work are thieves, that those who eat while their neighbours starve eat sin and that we should look upon everyone with an equal eye.² I do not believe that communism or socialism of Russia, America of England can teach us anything more than this. Our scriptures are full of religion and philosophy. We are heirs of those who wrote such great books. But without caring to see what we have, we run to others. It is not as if those others had achieved perfection.

And it is possible that the experiments which were successful

¹ A Hindi poet

² *Bhagavad Gita*, iii, 12 and 13

there may be quite unsuitable for this country and we may as a result find ourselves in the plight of a washerman's dog¹. If you listen to my advice the best course, and the only course, for all of us is to extend as much co-operation to the National Government as we can. If you are opposed to certain things, if you do not like a particular policy, then you only have to...² They are all very wise men. They will certainly listen to you if you try to explain to them your point of view. Give them as much active help as possible. We are all one body. If there is a thorn in one foot the whole body suffers for it. One feels relieved only when it is taken out. Similarly, we all have to suffer for the mass-slaughter going on in the country. What can Sardar and Nehru alone do? There are only a handful of such wise men in the country today. Do not let your abilities be frittered away when the National Government is about to be formed. Utilize them in useful activities. It is not as if politics were the only field of service. There are so many others which are untrodden. Take up the one in which you are interested. Bear in mind the welfare of the country. I do not wish to say anything more.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 246-9

362. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

June 30, 1947

People are today watching the referendum that is about to be held in the Frontier Province because legally the Frontier Province has been and still is a Congress province. Badshah Khan and his co-workers are being asked to choose between Pakistan and India. The word Hindustan is being misunderstood as if Hindustan is Hindu and Pakistan is Muslim. The problem before Badshah Khan is how to get out of this difficulty. The Congress has pledged its word that after consultation with Dr. Khan Saheb there should be a referendum in the Frontier Province under the direct supervision of His Excellency the Viceroy. The referendum will thus be held on the appointed date.

The Khudai Khidmatgars will not participate in the referendum. This will result in a clear victory for the Muslim League and the

¹ Which belongs neither here nor there

² Omission as in the source

Khudai Khidmatgars will also not have acted in defiance of their inner voice, granting that they have one. How does this violate any conditions of the referendum? The Khudai Khidmatgars who have so long bravely fought the British are not going to be scared by defeat. Various political parties take part in elections knowing full well that they will be defeated and when a party does not take part in an election the defeat is certain.

Badshah Khan is chided for raising a new demand of Pakhtoonistan. As far as I can remember even before the formation of the Congress Ministry Badshah Khan was taken up with this notion of freedom for the Pathans in their homes. Badshah Khan does not want to set up a separate State. If he is only free to make his own constitution he will gladly join one of the two federations. I can see no ground for objection to this demand of Pakhtoonistan. Of course if the idea is to teach the Pathans a lesson and to humble them anyhow it is a different matter. A serious charge levelled against Badshah Khan is that he is playing into the hands of Afghanistan. I am quite sure that Badshah Khan cannot practise deceit against anyone. He will never allow the Frontier Province to be absorbed into Afghanistan.

As a friend of his I know that he has one weakness. He has a suspicious nature and he has always suspected the intentions of the British. I must ask him that he should get over this weakness, which is not peculiar to him. It does not become a leader of his stature. I have called this a weakness on his part and so it is, but it is also in a way his strong point, for even if he wants he cannot hide his opinions.

From the Frontier Province I now take you to Rameswaram where it is said Rama had built a bridge or causeway for his horde to cross into Lanka, which he conquered but did not retain and gave to Vibhishana, the brother of Ravana. The temple at Rameswaram has now been opened to Harijans. Thus except for the temples in Cochin all the famous temples in the South have been opened to the Harijans. The following is the list of the important temples furnished me by Rajaji: Madurai, Tinnevely, Chidambaram, Srirangam, Palni, Triplicane, Tirupati, Kanchi and Guruvayur. The list is not exhaustive. The Harijan Speaker¹ of the Madras Assembly has been going to these temples along with other Harijan and non-Harijan devotees. It may be that educated Harijans and others do not see the great importance of this reform. Let us not however underestimate its import, for this

¹ P. Sivashanmugham Pillai; *vide* "Letter to Jawaharlal Nerhu", 30-6-1947

reform has been brought about without bloodshed. We shall hope that Cochin too, like Travancore, Tamilnadu and British Kerala, will open its temples to Harijans.

The temple-entry reform will remain incomplete so long as temples do not become truly sanctified through internal reform.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 209-10

363. LETTER TO SURENDRA

NEW DELHI,
July 1, 1947

CHI. SURENDRA,

Your letters are too long. Why do you write such long letters to a man like...¹ I have no doubt that he is making a mistake, unless I myself am in error. His mistake lies in the remedy he is adopting and it is as clear as daylight. But only work can correct it, not argument.

My remarks which you cite were true in relation to the problems to which they referred. Now I say what I feel and think today.

I do not interpret the Shastras as you do. I have never said that the body can become immortal. How can a thing which by its nature is perishable become immortal? Old age which is the result of the natural process of living is different from the condition that is brought on by disease. Think over the problem independently of the *Sankhya* doctrine. Does not the *atman* exist independently of the body and survive it? If one realizes it, one may believe—as I do—that one's body will grow old but not the spirit. As regards the other points, I will deal with them if I write to you again. I am extremely busy these days. It is 5 a. m. now.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 249

¹ Omission as in the source

364. LETTER TO ABHA GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
July 1, 1947

CHI. ABHI,

I have your letter. You can be arrogant and obstinate. Whatever be my wishes, what does it matter when I have once given you my permission?

Why should I be angry about your getting treated by Dr. Roy? Have I not myself taken his treatment? It may not have been the same kind as you are taking but that is of no moment. I want you to be completely cured. Am I not also concerned about your illness? Now for my wishes. Even since you fell ill I have always felt how nice it would be if you could remain with me! I certainly wish that you should come and stay with me. The question is whether during my tour you should be running around with me while you are ill. I might be going to Kashmir shortly but nothing is certain. Nevertheless you can come over. I shall do whatever I think best for you. While you stay with me, my treatment will have priority. I take the help of a doctor only when I am defeated as I did in the case of Manu. Understand that yours will be a similar case. In my eyes there is no difference between you and Manu.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

365. LETTER TO AMRITA LAL CHATTERJEE

NEW DELHI,
July, 1, 1947

CHI. AMRITLAL,

Your letter. I have written¹ fully to Abha. You will read my letter.

Hope Ramen is all right. In spite of my letter, if Abha prefers to go to Sevagram, of course she will do so. I am quite prepared to take charge of her in spite of my wanderings.

BAPU

From a photostat: C. W. 10568. Courtesy: Amrita Lal Chatterjee

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

366. LETTER TO KULSUM SAYANI

NEW DELHI,
July 1, 1947

DEAR DAUGHTER KULSUM,

I have received your letter. Convey my blessings to Hamid and Zarina. May they serve the country. There is no mention of the daughter-in-law in the card!

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Begum Kulsum Sayani Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

367. A LETTER

July 1, 1947

There is a perpetual conflict in man's heart between the two opposing forces, darkness and light. If these did not exist there would be no life. I am, therefore, struggling to find light.

A handful of capitalists are ruling over millions with the help of machines. They are impelled solely by self-interest and greed. I am ready to devote all my energies to ending this economic inequality, but only if I emerge safely from this conflagration.

Let us take a warning from the damage we have suffered from the present Hindu-Muslim conflict in the country and the shameful exhibition of ourselves that we have made before the world. If we do not take a similar warning also from the existing economic inequality, we shall suffer the same fate in future that we are doing today. I must admit, however, that today I am alone in thinking as I do. No one has so far paid any attention to the Harijan men, women and children with whom I am staying these days. It remains to be seen how much I can do from here.

I assume that you take sufficient care of your health. 'If the mind is pure, we have the Ganga flowing by the doorstep.' Remember, therefore, that health of the body depends upon that of the mind.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 250

368. A LETTER

July 1, 1947

A man who wishes to be good, to keep himself constantly occupied with work or to devote himself wholly to service of the people, must first of all acquire the virtue of concentration.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 250

369. COMMENTS ON INDIAN INDEPENDENCE BILL¹

July 1, 1947

- 1 (1) Two Dominions
- 3 (b) No province excluded without consent of the dominion concerned.
- 9 & 10
- 15 Legal Proceedings
- 16 (3) Aden
- 19 (3b) Pakistan Assembly to be set up after the Act
1. Some declaration should be made, if it cannot be included in the Statute, that Dominion Status would be temporary.
2. That it would be equal treatment for the two.
3. There is nothing to show that Pakistan is a seceder and that entity of India is retained in spite.
4. No province can go over to the other Dominion without consent.
5. Pakistan Assembly will not meet before the appointed date.
6. The States' position is uncomfortably weak. May 1946 statement would not be used to block progress.

From a facsimile: *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, between pp. 288 and 289

¹ The Viceroy wrote to Gandhiji on June 30 saying that Nehru, Patel and he felt that Gandhiji should 'unquestionably be shown' the Indian Independence Bill and invited him to the Viceroy's house for the purpose at 10. a. m. the following day. Gandhiji scribbled his comments partly in pencil, partly in ink.

370. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 1, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You will have understood the *bhajan* that has been sung. It was composed by Tukdoji Maharaj of the Central Provinces. Its language is Hindustani—not the Hindustani crammed with Arabic and Persian words but the Hindustani of Delhi. It has beauty and sweetness. It says that Rama is accessible to one who has suffered loss of home and property, the loss of friends and companions or suffers from bodily disease. If a person in spite of such misfortune does not leave Rama then he finds Rama.

A friend complains that I have been saying at prayer meetings that the division of India has somehow to be undone. But I have never said this. When something has been agreed upon between the Congress and the League and the country has been divided, what can be gained by opposing it? After all the hearts have not been divided. The Congress has accepted Pakistan and we must let it go at that.

A Sikh youth asks me what I, claiming to love the Sikhs, am doing to prove it. Hindus and Muslims have both gained something. But what have the Sikhs gained? I can only say that if the Punjab has been divided I can do nothing about it. I have not the power in my hands. To me there is no difference between Sikhism and Hinduism. I have read the *Granth Saheb*. What it contains is also contained in the Vedic dharma. But today they are treated as a separate community. It is a small community but well known for its valour. I had visits from two friends who have settled in Canada. They say Canada has a large number of Sikhs and they are doing good work there. There are Sikhs also in Africa. One finds Sikhs everywhere one goes. They are farmers, engineers, railway mechanics, motor-car drivers. Today the Sikhs live in great material comfort.

I had today a wire from the Muslim League at Mathura. They say that the Hindus there are ill-treating them. I do not know how far this is true. But if it is true it is not good. We should not display the cruelty of numbers. The arrogance that comes from the strength of numbers can only destroy us.

You must be eager to know the result of my meeting with the Viceroy today. I had been to see the Viceroy with Nehru and the

Sardar. I must ask the Press correspondents not to indulge in guess work but wait for an authoritative announcement from the Viceroy's House. They should do nothing at the present juncture that may harm the country.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 211-3

371. LETTER TO K. KELAPPAN¹

[Before July 2, 1947]²

It is very good that all temples have been opened. I agree that opening of temples in Cochin also is now necessary. Now there ought to be reform of temples, as in every way the condition of Harijans will be exactly like that of *savarna* Hindus. For this work why should Pracharakas be sent from this side? They may be prepared there only. Why not you yourself?

BAPU

The Hindu, 4-7-1947

372. LETTER TO MOHAMMED HUSSAIN KHAN

July 2, 1947

Must I despair of converting you to the use, whenever you can, of Urdu language in place of English? Thus your letter . . .³ is a case in point. You will then probably have avoided exaggerations into which you have been betrayed.

There was certainly no compulsion against Bihar Government in regard to the acceptance of your demand nor could there be any demand by a member of the public upon his Government, nor was your proposal for the payment of Rs. 1,500 per family of Bihar refugees accepted. So much about what you state as facts within my knowledge. Though I cannot speak from knowledge, I am quite sure that there was no connection whatsoever between what happened⁴ on

¹ President of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee

² The letter was reported under the dateline "Calicut, July 2, 1947".

³ Omissions as in the source

⁴ The reference is to the opening of fire by the police on Khaksars who in violation of the order banning processions, etc., had taken out a procession and violence had broken out.

the 10th June last and the rehabilitation scheme.

I also told you when we met...that Pandit Nehru should be ruled out of the discussion of your proposals. I do not see how he could intervene as a member of the Central Government.

Further, is not your statement that the Bihar Government's action "surpasses in cruelty and arrogance all human imagination" somewhat extravagant? I suggest that the use of such language and statements as cannot be supported by evidence is not the way to attain a peaceful end... Nevertheless . . . I am sending . . . (your letter)¹ to the Chief Minister of Bihar, I note that you were good enough to send me an extra copy of your letter.

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last: Phase, Vol. I, Book II, p. 331

373. LETTER TO SUSHILA GANDHI

NEW DELHI,
July 2, 1947

CHI. SUSHILA,

I got your letter today. Why do you worry? It is very likely that Krishna Kumar goes to the movies. Manu reminds me that she had told me about it. I don't remember such things, but I believe Manu. She didn't see anything objectionable in that. Who doesn't go to the movies these days? Manu did. She herself has not come under the bad influence of movies. I am sure Sita² also must have done so. And I know that Manilal³ at any rate goes. Probably you also must have gone occasionally. So far as I know, I am the only person who has never seen a movie. But no, I did go once, not knowing what the thing was about, and saw a film⁴ about the exile of Janaki and Ramachandra. It was a depressing experience and I felt like running away from the place, but could not do so. It was sheer waste of time. This incident occurred in Shantikumar's⁵ house. But now that you write to me I will make further inquiries if an opportunity offers itself. I cannot say that Brij Krishna has done justice to Kr. Kumar. The latter didn't impress

¹ In addition to throwing the blame for the incident on Congress, the addressee had made some demands: "(1) Rs. 20,000 for each Khaksar martyr, (2) unconditional release of Khaksar prisoners (3) rehabilitation of the Bihar Muslim refugees... with further assurance that such acts of arrogance and cruelty will not be repeated again."

² Addressee's daughter and husband

³ *ibid*

⁴ The movie was 'Ram Rajya' which Gandhiji saw in Bombay on June 2, 1944.

⁵ Shantikumar N. Morarjee

me as a shallow youth. I would be pained if Sita selected a shallow person. However, there is no question of engagement just yet. You may, therefore, leave for South Africa without least worry.

I have discovered, however, that I have much less strength to bear pain or hardship that I thought I had. What is happening today in the country and the Congress in connection with independence and Pakistan fills me with agony. And moreover the weather is bad. I have therefore given up counting on my being alive very much longer. And if, after you have left, I pass away, you will feel unhappy. You wouldn't be able to bear the thought of Sita's present condition while Manilal and you were far away from her. Because I put all my trust in God nothing will happen to me. But I mentioned this because I thought it my duty to do so.

I have replied to the letter which you have received regarding Sita's college. See it yourself and show it to Sita. My letter was dispatched today. I shall let you know immediately I receive a reply to it.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5006

374. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

DELHI,

July 2, 1947

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have read your letter regarding the *Rentia Jayanti*. I am sending on the statement¹ as revised by me. I am sending a copy to you. We are thus quite in time. I am forwarding Balasaheb's letter to you. I spin daily without fail for half an hour at least. But as regards the number, it is all confusion, for I am drawing two threads at a time and then combining them into one, so that I cannot keep count of the number. However, I will see what I can do. I don't think there will be any harm in counting 75 rounds a day.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro-9: Narandas Gandhine-II, p. 316

¹ Addressee's appeal for celebration of Gandhiji's birthday; vide "Statement on Rentia Jayanti", footnote 1, "Statement on Rentia Jayanti", 12-7-1947

375. A LETTER

July 2, 1947

He who has chosen the path of truth and ahimsa has not the slightest cause to fear anybody. He need not worry what will happen if the British play false with us.

As for me, I must do or die. But I do not yet see my way to either course. I am still groping in the dark all alone. When I see my way clear either way, then alone will the country, it seems to me, have new light. My faith in God is daily becoming stronger so that even though I am wrestling with my thoughts all alone in this intolerable heat of Delhi, my physical strength has not suffered. How merciful is Rama!

Why do you write to me in English? Though we have not achieved the swaraj of my conception, why should we not make good use of what we have got? How long shall we remain slaves of the English language? Since your mother tongue is Urdu, you should write to me in Urdu or Hindustani. I feel ashamed to have to preach his sermon to a nationalist Muslim like you.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 257

376. A LETTER¹

July 2, 1947

You did a good thing in sending to me the money you received as present on the occasion of your birthday. I will spend it on poor Hindu and Muslim children. However, this money which you sent me was given to you by somebody else. I want money earned by your own labour. I hope you understand what I mean by such money.

Spin for half an hour daily for *yajna* and wear the khadi made from that yarn. If there is any surplus, send it to me for being distributed to poor children like you. If you do that, I will bless you that you may live up to a hundred and twenty-five years, on condition, however, that you promise to devote your whole life to service. My

¹ According to the source this was addressed to a child.

blessings to mother. Learn Hindustani well. Sanskrit, of course, you must learn. And you must be as strong as a tough.

Blessings from
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 257-8

377. A LETTER

July 2, 1947

If we follow the same policies as Pakistan what will be the difference between them and us? Even if somebody has done us an ill turn, we should wish to do him a good turn. If I cannot convince people like you or inmates of the Ashram that love alone can prevail against anger, whom else can I hope to convince?

God is humbling my pride. I am being severely tested. But still my heart is full of joy.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 258

378. LETTER TO UDESHI

NEW DELHI,
July 2, 1947

BHAI UDESHI,

Why did you have to take the trouble of writing to me in English? How far does your knowledge of English go? You may be trying to say that those who read *Harijan* are more intelligent than those who read *Harijanbandhu*. God knows! From your name, you appear to be a Gujarati and still you write to a Gujarati like me in English. It seems you have not the least suspicion how utterly absurd this is. I am sorry.

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

379. LETTER TO VASANTLAL

NEW DELHI,
July 2, 1947

BHAI VASANTLAL,

I have your letter. I am rather surprised that you have to recommend Sheth Husainbhai to me. And who am I to write to Sardar

Vallabhbhai? Perhaps he knows Husainbhai better than I.

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

380. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

NEW DELHI,
July 2, 1947

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter. At the moment it is 50 minutes past 4 o'clock. I am dictating this letter while sipping fruit juice. I had your letter read out to me at a quarter past four, soon after the prayers. My earlier advice stands. You should give up worrying about mundane matters. You are ripe for meditating upon the eternal. I am going to dictate as much as I can in a few minutes.

America is not India. America worships gold. The golden calf is her god. She is almost like Australia. The only difference is that Australia is peopled by those who are considered the scum of England whereas America is peopled by that of Europe. However, sometimes one does come across a diamond in a coal-mine. In modern parlance they constitute the New World; India is an ancient land. India will never be considered primarily a worshipper of the golden calf. I do not think so and also never heard anyone saying so. Still if what you say is true, then I have missed the truth right from my childhood.

Pride of language, village and religion have long been coexisting and they still do. Now it is five o'clock and I must go for my walk with Rajendra Babu. What more can one say to the wise?

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

381. LETTER TO RAMASWAMI

NEW DELHI,
July 2, 1947

BHAI RAMASWAMI,

I have your letter. I do not remember you. I have forwarded your letter to Bhai Ramachandran. You may see him.¹

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

¹ *Vide* also "Letter to Ramaswami", 10-7-1947

*382. SPEECH AT DELHI PROVINCIAL
POLITICAL CONFERENCE*

DELHI,
July 2, 1947

If you want to hear the few things that I have come to tell you please maintain silence.

Yesterday your Vice-President came and invited me to this conference. I had not known till then that Jayaprakash was the President of the conference. When people persisted I was in a fix. It would not be right to refuse. Drawn by your love, I was forced to come. The police tie us up in iron chains, but the bond of love, in the words of Mirabai, though fragile and tenuous, is stronger than any iron chain. And drawn by this bond I came here punctually at a quarter past eight. Here I shall speak out a few things. It has become a fashion these days to call oneself a socialist. It is a mistaken notion that one can serve only if one carries a label of some 'ism'. I have been studying the question since the time when Jayaprakash perhaps had not even been born.

Some fifty years ago when I used to practise law in South Africa there were many people there who called themselves socialists but in fact they were less socialist than I was. I used to work among the coolies. I had made this work my life's mission and I lived as the coolies lived. I have always considered myself a servant of the workers and peasants but I have never found it necessary to call myself a socialist. My socialism is of a different kind.

Even if everyone forsakes me I shall not be worried. I am your friend and, therefore, I tell you that if a cripple cannot obtain something he needs we should ourselves give up that something. I shall first watch the cripple's life and his food and only then shall I think of doing something for myself. This is my socialism. If you want to bring about this kind of socialism, then I shall be the first to come forward to help. It is my firm belief that even a king can become a socialist by being a servant of his people.

If we want to make the king as well as the people socialist, how shall we set about it? We can convert others to socialism by setting an example ourselves. It is said that there are two ways of changing the king. Either by cutting off his head or by depriving him of his throne. My method is to make the king a socialist through love. It is heinous to kill. If you teach thousands of people to kill, the order that you will

bring about will not be a socialistic order but an order of murderers. The Viceroy can call himself a Congressman as the speaker calls himself a Congressman. But would the Viceroy be ready to give up his powers if he were asked to do so? Similarly there are many people who call themselves Congressmen but are they indeed Congressmen? Are they true socialists? There are many who have drowned themselves in their wealth and in the pleasures which wealth can buy.

I firmly hold to truth and love. By love I do not mean the kind of bond that binds husband and wife or father and son, for this depends on self-interest. By love I mean that bond which binds the devotee to God.

In South Africa although the Whites treated me as an enemy, nevertheless many of them came to me as friends. If socialism means turning enemies into friends I should be considered a genuine socialist. This idea of socialism is my own. All the socialists should learn socialism from me. Only then shall we be able to produce dedicated workers and bring about peasants' rule. I do not believe in the kind of socialism that the Socialist Party preaches. Maybe my preaching to you is a cry in the wilderness, maybe you will not listen to me. There are people who call me names and treat me as a madman. I cannot teach you violence because I do not believe in violence. I can only teach you not to bow your head even if you should lose your life. Therein lies true courage. Nobody can take away this courage from me. When I die you will all admit that Gandhi was a true socialist.

When I talk of trusteeship people call me mad. But there is something in that madness. If you think a little deeply you will understand it. Today I can say with conviction that if there is anyone among all these people who is a socialist it is I. And this gives me the right to say what I am saying. The public life and the private life of a public servant are interrelated. Socialism cannot be established without moral purity. Socialism has been in vogue ever since the time of Lord Krishna. He played with the cowherds. He lived with them, ate with them; he went along with Sudama to cut firewood in the forest for the wife of his preceptor. There are many such instances. He even became the charioteer of Arjuna to show that there was no one high or low for him. He comported with the cowherd maidens freely for there was no impurity in his eyes. Thus what you call socialism, the thing which you think you should learn from Russia or America or England, has

been there in our country for a very long time.

Jayaprakash is like a son to me and the other leaders of the Socialist Party are all my friends. I humbly want to tell them that if they adopt the kind of socialism I have described the whole country will be with them. I regret I cannot support the theory of socialism you accept, for I know that those who advocate it do not conform to it in their lives. Their precepts and practice vary. It will not do merely to preach. Rama spent fourteen years in exile in the forest and we worship him. But if he had not done so and merely contented himself with saying that a son should obey his father, who would have remembered him today? Today there is murder, plunder and rape in the air. My voice is not heard. People consider me mad. I am expected to teach how to return two blows for one but I cannot do so. All I can say is: 'Friend, if you want to kill me you may do so, but I will kill no one.' I pray to God that He may keep me filled with this courage to the end. One who has cultivated such courage cannot be plundered. When Gandhi is dead you will all say Gandhi was a socialist. I say it humbly but with conviction because I have full sixty years' experience to back it.

[From Hindi]

Gandhijiki Delhi Diary—III, pp. 188-90

383. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 2, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

A friend writes to me: "There are things in the world which people like and things which people do not like. To do things which people do not like is the limit of folly. You used to give some guidance to the people. You should do so now and support the people in the path they may choose."

But I do not like this. What is the good of supporting something that is already popular? One must do something which is not so popular. One loses nothing by being alone. One has a right to do what one likes, whether people are pleased or displeased. If someone wants to make a rope out of grains of sand he will not succeed.¹ For ropes

¹ According to *The Hindustan Times*, 3-7-1947, Gandhiji said that he was told by way of illustration that he was trying to twist a rope of sand in trying to popularize Hindustani with the two scripts Nagari and Urdu, especially when Pakistan had become an established fact.

can be made only from fibre. One should do things which it is reasonable to do.

People say when I was in the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan I used to praise that languages sky-high. I used to propagate Hindi in the South where people spoke Tamil. It was all the good. But why Hindustani? My answer is that Hindustani has been born from Hindi. I attended to the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Indore.¹ I also went to the Marwari Sammelan out of love for Jamnalalji. I had no desire to go there. It was love that drew me. I made it clear there that my Hindi was of a special kind. It was a language spoken by the Hindus, Muslims and others. It could be written either in Persian or in Devanagari. My Hindi is the Hindi that every illiterate man can speak. I speak such rudimentary Hindi but I do make myself understood. I have read Tulsidas but I have not been educated in Hindi. I have not been educated in Urdu either. I have not the time. Since the Hindi I advocated was not popular with the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, I left² that body. Hindi today has become Sanskritized and Urdu is of a kind that only Maulana Saheb³ or Sapru Saheb⁴ can speak and understand. I have therefore said that I do not want either Hindi for Urdu. I want the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna. But the people call me a fool. Where there are Anjuman Tarakki-e-Urdu working of Urdu and the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan working for Hindi, I can never succeed. Then there would be no Pakistan. This renders my striving for Hindustani a futile exercise. But my heart rebels. Why should I leave Hindustani? Why should I leave a good thing? When we go to Prayag and take a dip where the Ganga and the Yamuna meet, we become purified. Similarly I wish to become purified in the confluence of Hindi and Urdu.

The Muslims today consider me the greatest enemy of Islam. But I say that if I remain alive, one day they are going to turn to me. Everyone is behind me. Only my fear is that the madness that has inundated India may carry us away. even if I am the only one left to say so, I shall still say the Hindustani is the national language. Both India and Pakistan are my country. Nobody can stop me. Even Mr.

¹ Gandhiji presided over the Sammelan which was held on April 20-22, 1935; *vide* "Speech at Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Indore", 23-4-1935

² On July 25, 1945; *vide* "Letter to Purushottamdas Tandon", 25-7-1945

³ Abul Kalam Azad

⁴ Tej Bahadur Sapru

Jinnah cannot stop me. I have not become a foreign national so that Mr. Jinnah may imprison me. I am not going to take out a passport for going to Pakistan. You should all have the same courage. Mother India whose flag we have been carrying all this time has made so many sacrifices. Shall we now take it that she has been decapitated? Let no one make the mistake of taking up Hindi at the cost of Urdu. What one person does many persons will take up. As for me, I am not going to budge from my position even if I should die.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 213-5

384. *LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

NEW DELHI,
July 3, 1947

CHI. LILI,

I got your postcard and also the telegram. You are born for service. Don't worry. Do to the best of your ability whatever work comes to you unsought. I don't like your relations calling on you for help. But you cannot escape such requests. If your brother recovers soon and you can be free, you will be able to devote yourself to study. Even now I suppose you are not kept busy the whole day looking after him. What is necessary is that the mind should form the habit of study. Sushila is at Wardha.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 10436. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

385. *A LETTER*

July 3, 1947

A man harbouring a sense of guilt is a coward. Every man makes mistakes. I have made many in my life. But he who realizes his mistakes will be saved. Understand your mistake properly and then it will no longer give you a feeling of guilt, but will become a blessing.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 265-6

386. A LETTER

July 3, 1947

A true *brahmachari* will have no imperfection in him, no pretension and no fear. If you are such a *brahmachari*, why need you be afraid to talk to women? You will be afraid only if there is some impurity hidden in you somewhere. Think over this.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 266

387. LETTER TO DHIRU

NEW DELHI,
July 3, 1947

CHI. DHIRU,

I have your letter. You have travelled quite a lot. In my opinion, you need not go anywhere for studies. Learn whatever you can from experience and books. Inner purity has much more value than outer behaviour. Now calm down and render such service as you can. I have hardly time to write this much. If I don't surely it would never get done. I have Dr. Pranjivandas's¹ speech. Why should he have spoken in English where people understand [Gujarati].

Blessings from
BAPU

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

388. A LETTER

July 3, 1947

I want to see *Ramarajya* established but how is it to be brought about? I will be possible only if we become brave, give up fear and have faith in God.

[From Hindi]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 265

¹ Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta of Jamnagar

389. TALK WITH RADHAKANT MALAVIYA
AND GOVIND MALAVIYA

NEW DELHI,
July 3, 1947

We have so many big institutions. Some of them are even good. But sometimes the entire institution goes to pieces because of the mutual bickerings among its workers. In most cases bickerings arise out of rivalry for an office. The teachers and the managers in their selfishness do not realize how much harm they are doing to the students and to the institutions on the establishment of which so much money was spent. In ancient times the gurus always lived in the forests and the children of both kings and paupers had to go there for study. The guru had to worry only about his food and the students saw to that.

There were therefore no bickerings. But we in our wisdom improved upon this. to save the children the arduous journey into the forest we established institutions with all the conveniences, thus making ourselves unhappy rather than happy and squandering public money. In Kathiawad there was a very good institution by the name of Dakshinamurti, but it was not self-supporting and ultimately it became a burden. That was owing to quarrels among the workers.

I do not understand why the educational institutions cannot become self-supporting. Sometimes an institution becomes morally depraved. I blame the teachers and managers more than the boys and girls. In some way they are guilty of some lapse...¹ A similar incident concerning... had once come before me. Educationists are a menace to society if their character is not perfect. That is why I have been advising everyone to think twice before opening an institution. I do not know whether you know... I have just given an example. Generally all such things do happen in educational institutions in India.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 268

¹ Omissions as in the source

390. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 3, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You have heard the *bhajan*. It says that it makes one laugh to think that a fish in water should remain thirsty. We are in the world of God and we do not know God. It is our ill-luck, for God is always with us. As nails are not apart from fingers, God is not apart from us. If a nail gets broken it causes pain; similarly when one breaks from God, it is painful.

India today is in pain. But the pain is in the cities. The seven lakh villages of India do not revolve round the cities. India is a country 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad. The division of India does not change the map of India. It remains as it was.

A friend writes to me that the Brahmins in India are like a rock in sea. Their number is infinitesimal. I am in a minority if I am all by myself. The rock is in a minority if it stands aloof from the sea. Then it shrivels up. But when it is in the sea it is a part of the sea. How can then the Brahmins be a minority in the sea that is the Hindu community.

There was a time when only Brahmin boys went to school. Since they have been given to learning from the very beginning, they also learnt wherever there was something new to be learnt. Today of course even those who are not Brahmins get education. Why should then the Brahmins complain about their sons not getting admission? I have been talking to you about rights. There is no such thing as a right. If a Brahmin claims education as a matter of right, I may ask him how he came to acquire the right. I do not believe in birthright. Rights are a result of the duties done. You will agree that a sinner has the right to reap the harvest of his sins. I say that one who does noble deeds has a right to the fruits of those deeds. If someone asks me what the rights of the Brahmin are I shall say it is his right to know the Brahman. A Brahmin has only two duties—to know the science of the Brahman and to teach it to others. A Brahmin who fulfils these duties earns the right to live as a Brahmin. Formerly people used to give grains and other things to a Brahmin to enable him to live. The Brahmins on their part took only as much as they needed and returned the rest. A Brahmin's right thus is to teach the science of the Brahman. Why

should they cry that their sons are not able to go to college? How can everyone go to college? How many boys and girls in the seven lakh villages of India go to college? That is possible on under Nai Talim, of which I shall not talk today.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 215-7

391. LETTER TO UTTIMCHAND GANGARAM

NEW DELHI,
July 4, 1947

MY DEAR UTTIMCHAND,

Your note and cheque for Rs. 500 for the A. I. S. A., the latter being sent to be used as per your instructions.

I am surprised that Rs. 350 have not been acknowledged. Nothing remains unacknowledged. I am inquiring. Owing to my wanderings it is difficult to carry all records.

Of course I would have accepted the prize money with pleasure if the perplexity had been solved by me or my friends. It is quite clear that we are unfit to cope with your puzzles. And now we are all scattered.

Jairamdas¹ is here. I know about the loss of his brother. I shall see that your note reaches him.

You are right. People are often wise after the event.

I almost despair of seeing peace in my lifetime. But man proposes and God disposes. Who can fathom His ways?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

392. A LETTER

July 4, 1947

I know that people have no faith in ahimsa. If they bravely employed violence, though I would not co-operate with them I would not oppose them either. But the violence which has broken out is the violence of cowards.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 270

¹ Jairamdas Doulatram

393. A LETTER

July 4, 1947

I was surprised to learn about your civil marriage. Personally I do not believe in this form of marriage. In the marriages I arranged in the Ashram, there was nothing beyond the religious rites and today the parties are all living happily. If we thus introduce law in the sphere of human relationships, there will be little purity and dignity left in our lives. For the rest, everybody is his or her own judge in such matters. I for one believe that more numerous the laws the more the harm done to the people. But I suppose I am an old man now. How can I convince others that I have not grown senile? I regret that I do not have much time to do written exercises in Bengali. You should write to me in Bengali instead of in English. I shall be able to read it slowly.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 271

394. MESSAGE TO STUDENTS FROM THE PUNJAB

NEW DELHI,

July 4, 1947

The country's most priceless possession are its students. We are old now. Today we are here, tomorrow we may be gone. You are the true leaders of the country. Students' role in satyagraha movement was by no means insignificant. Many young students sacrificed themselves for the sake of swaraj. If I find that this valuable wealth is being wasted anywhere I feel very hurt. I use the word "wasted" because the students become instruments in the hands of others. I feel unhappy when people take undue advantage of you and incite you to go on strikes, drag you into politics and you do all that without using your discrimination.

Do not entertain any communal feelings. Put your powers to good use and treat all the women as your sisters whether they are Hindus or Muslims. To the men and women who have come here, teach rules of sanitation; give those who are ignorant knowledge of the alphabets, maintain the accounts of the camps with great honesty, arrange religious discourses or *kirtans* at night so that the afflicted souls may be comforted. If you can do all this, then the calamity that

has befallen us will have become a blessing, you will gain experience and learn something new from it.

As far as possible give up the fondness for English. I find it is somewhat more in this part of the country. English is a great and rich language. But we can't set fire to our hut at the sight of someone's place. Can we? Do learn that language as a pastime if you want but never at the cost of our national language and the mother tongue.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 272-3

395. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

NEW DELHI,
July 4, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Some people ask me if what has happened and what is happening and the Dominion Status that we are about to get will lead to *Ramarajya*. Those who put the question are usually sarcastic and I have to admit that I cannot say that all this will lead to *Ramarajya*. All the signs I see are against it. The country has been divided and there will be two Dominions and, if they are hostile to each other, how can we expect the establishment of *Ramarajya*? Of course Dominion Status does not imply subservience to the British. It is as good as independence. But the other Dominions in the British Commonwealth are more or less of the same race. Since India is an Asian country, how can it remain a Dominion? If all the countries of the world were to become such Dominions, that would be a different matter and then *Ramarajya* could be brought about. But what has come about cannot lead to *Ramarajya* or the Kingdom of God. The British Government had originally intended to transfer power to Indian hands by June 30, 1948. But now they have decided that the sooner they get out the better it would be. But how can they do that? So they came to the conclusion that if Dominion Status were granted to the divided India there would be no risks because then they would still have links with us.

I do not want India to be a frog in the well, unaware of what happens outside the well. Jawaharlal and other leaders have said that we will not be hostile to any country. We shall have friendship for all

including the British. Do they then want a world federation? As I said at the Asian Relations Conference,¹ a world federation is possible of realization and in that case it would not be necessary for countries to maintain armed forces. Some countries today describe themselves as democratic but of course one does not become a democrat by simply saying so. What is the need for an army where there is rule by the people? Where the army rules the people cannot rule.

There can be no world federation of countries ruled by armies. The military dictatorships of Germany and Japan had tried to inveigle various countries into friendship with them. But the deception did not last long. Today I look around and find *Ramarajya* nowhere.

People ask me if the rule of the sword and the bullet that prevails today is not the result of my teaching of truth and non-violence for thirty-two years. But does this then mean that for thirty-two years I have prevailed through lies and hypocrisy? Does it mean that the millions of people who imbibed the lesson of ahimsa from me have after thirty-two years suddenly become liars and murderers? I have admitted that our ahimsa was the ahimsa of the weak. But in reality weakness and ahimsa cannot go together. It should therefore be described not as ahimsa but as passive resistance. But the ahimsa I advocated was not the ahimsa of the weak while passive resistance is only for the weak. Then passive resistance is a preparation for active and armed resistance. As a result the violence the people had been harbouring in their hearts has now suddenly erupted.

Our passive resistance has not been a complete failure. We have all but won our freedom. The violence we see today is the violence of cowards. There is also such a thing as the violence of the brave. If four or five men enter into a fight and die by the sword, there is violence in it but it is the violence of the brave. But when ten thousand armed men attack a village of unarmed people and slaughter them along with their wives and children it is the violence of cowards. America unleashed its atom bomb over Japan. That was the violence of the cowards. The non-violence of the brave is a thing worth seeing. I want to see that non-violence before I die. For this we should have

¹ For Gandhiji's two speeches at the Conference, *vide* "Discussion at Inter-Asian Relations Conference", 1-4-1947 and "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 3-4-1947

inner strength. It is a unique weapon. If people had realized its beauty all the life and property that have been lost would never have been lost.

If people had learnt the lesson of ahimsa which I had been trying to impart to them over the last 32 years, there would have been no need at present for rationing of food and cloth. If we are thoughtful in consuming food and cloth, there can be no scarcity of either in India. If people learnt to live truthfully and help each other there would be no need for us to look towards the Civil Service. The late Mr. Montagu had described the Civil Service as a wooden structure. Civil servants do not consider themselves servants of the people nor are they employed for the service of the people. They are here somehow to keep the foreign rule going. Ensnared in their offices they issue orders through peons. If we could learn to stand on our feet and give up dependence on Civil Service there would be no need in India either for rationing or for the Civil Service today. Some kind of civil service no doubt will be needed for running the administration. If civil servants could change with the times and run the administration to serve the people, then a truly democratic regime could be brought about.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 217–20

396. *LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN*

BHANGI COLONY,
NEW DELHI,
July 5, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter¹ which came into my hands after the evening prayer.

¹ Dated July 4, it *inter alia* said: "It is reported to me from the Frontier that Red Shirts are now "persuading" people not to vote. I think you will agree that any action of this sort is likely to lead to...violence.... I trust that if the reports are true, in view of the policy stated in your letter you will be able to persuade Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan to implement that policy."

Agitation is undoubtedly being carried on today by Badshah Khan and his lieutenants to tell the voters that it is wrong for them to take part in the voting. There should be no demonstration during the voting days and there should be no approach to the voters during the voting time. If this is what you mean I shall be glad to refer to the matter in those terms at the evening prayer. I am quite prepared to adopt quicker means of reaching Badshah Khan, if you suggest any.

If you have any other thing in view, you will please let me know.¹

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY

NEW DELHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 264

397. LETTER TO ABDUL GHAFAR KHAN

BHANGI COLONY,

NEW DELHI,

July 5, 1947

DEAR BADSHAH,

Khudai Khidmatgar Alam Khan saw me before 12 o'clock and he said that he was leaving for Peshawar tonight. I did not send any letter through him. But I told him that there should be no demonstration against the Muslim League, that it should be enough that in the present state of tension and misrepresentation Khudai Khidmatgars should not vote at all one way or the other, that they were entitled so far as internal affairs were concerned to claim and to have complete autonomy without any interference from Pakistan or the Union, and that they could come to a decision as to the choice between the Union or Pakistan when the constitutions of the two were promulgated and when the Frontier Province had fashioned its own autonomous constitution. Above all, every occasion for clash with the Muslim League members was to be avoided. Real Pathan bravery was now on its trial. It was to be shown by cheerfully meeting blows or

¹ Replying on the same day, the addressee requested Gandhiji "to deprecate any agitation before the polling days" and to send a letter to Badshah Khan "as soon as possible".

even meeting death at the hands of the opponents without the slightest sort of retaliation. Boycott would certainly result in a legal victory for Pakistanis, but it would be a moral defeat if without the slightest fear of violence from your side the bulk of Pathans refrained in a dignified manner from participating in the referendum. There should be no fuss, no processions, and no disobedience of any orders from the authority.

I had acted promptly on receipt of your letter. I wrote a long letter¹ to His Excellency on which he took action. You must have seen also how I had dealt with the question of the Frontier Province in one of my post-prayer speeches.² I send you herewith a copy of my letter to the Viceroy and of my post-prayer speech. This letter is also in answer to a complaint received by the Viceroy that it was reported that there was fear of disturbance to be caused by the Khudai Khidmatgars.

I hope the strain under which you are working is not telling upon your health.

Love.

BAPU

Abdul Ghaffar Khan, p. 445. Also *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government*, 1944-47, pp. 266-7

398. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN

NEW DELHI,
July 5, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

I received your kind letter of even date just after I had finished my prayer speech and was going out for my walk. Fortunately about noon I had a visit from a Pathan whom I had known to be a Khudai Khidmatgar. He was going to Peshawar and so I gave him the message which I have reproduced in the letter³ I enclose herewith. You may read the letter and if you think that it covers the new point you have raised you may send the letter by special messenger as suggested by you. I am hoping that there will be no disturbance on the part of

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Lord Mountbatten", 28/29-6-1947 and "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 30-6-1947

² *ibid*

³ *Vide* the preceding item.

Badshah Khan and his followers. In the message that I sent through the Pathan Khudai Khidmatgar I covered much more ground than mentioned in me letter to Badshah Khan.

I thank you for giving me the purport of the telegram received by you from the Resident in Kashmir.¹

I hope Her Excellency was none the worse for her visit to the Bhangi Basti.

It is open to you not to send the enclosed if it does not merit your approval.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY

NEW DELHI

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 265

399. LETTER TO MECMANAGE

NEW DELHI,

July 5, 1947

DEAR MECMANAGE,

Your letter. You should earn your own salvation. Forget Dr. Mehta. Let God be your sole Guide. You have my blessings in whatever good you may do.

Yours sincerely,

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers, Courtesy: Pyarelal

400. A LETTER

July 5, 1947

Seeing God does not mean seeing a being like man, with two hands and two feet and holding a conch, disc and mace. Seeing God means getting an opportunity of serving humanity, it means serving the poor and making ourselves blessed through service.

Though we cannot see God, we can feel His compassion and His goodness everywhere, and this cannot but have its effect on us. For

¹ The Resident acknowledged the receipt of the addressee's letters to himself and the Maharaja and said he was meeting the Maharaja as soon as possible.

instance, imagine a beautiful picture drawn by a great painter. We may not know the painter, but from the painting you can certainly form an idea of his artistic ability. Likewise, we do feel the presence of a Divine power behind the creations of nature and this infinite universe.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 276

401. LETTER TO A JOURNALIST

July 5, 1947

Newspapers are a very important means of education and spread of knowledge. But how far is this ideal pursued by journalists?

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 276

402. LETTER TO GAJANAN NAIK

NEW DELHI,
July 5, 1947

CHI. GAJANAN,

Who is bothered about principles these days? One does what one can. I think it is useless to involve me in this.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

403. LETTER TO JAYACHANDRA VIDYALANKAR

NEW DELHI,
July 5, 1947

BHAI JAYACHANDRAJI,

I have your letter. My energy is depleted now. I cannot take up any new venture. There is also no time to look after everything. I am also no use in respect of the Oza¹ Memorial. Moreover my stay here is uncertain.

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

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

¹ Prof. Gourishankar H. Oza

404. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 5, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Lady Mountbatten has been to see me today. She had no particular business with me. I even told her on the telephone not to take the trouble to come and see me. But she said that since I had gone and seen them so many times she felt bound to return the visit. I pointed out that I only went to see the Viceroy on business. But she was firm and she came. She has simple ways. She came and squatted down as we are squatting here, and inquired after everything. She asked how we find it here and listened with interest. I told her that I lived here among the sweepers. I also told her that I lived in a temple which was clean as it ought to be. If she wanted to see the living conditions of the sweepers she should visit their quarters which were nearby. She visited the sweepers' quarters and inspected the condition there with much interest. I did not go with her because crowds might have collected. Then she went to Harijan Nivas where Harijan boys are given training. She was very happy to see it.

I have today received a letter which I had not intended to deal with here.¹ But now I feel that I should not keep it over till tomorrow. What has happened among the Sikhs on the issue of division of the Punjab is distressing. Formerly there was no distinction between the Hindus and Sikhs. All the poison was spread by Macauliff who wrote the *History of the Sikhs*. Since Macauliff was a well-known historian, everyone swallowed what he said. The *Granth Saheb* of the Sikhs is actually based on the Hindu scriptures. Sikhs are a brave community. But their number is small. If the Punjab is divided Sikhs must be divided too. The letter says that the Sikhs who have now come over to East Punjab will be all right. But what will happen to the Sikhs in West Punjab, he asks. Will the Congress help if they find themselves in trouble? I can only say that those who are brave do not need anyone's help. They should only look to God for help. And why must you assume that the Sikhs in West Punjab will find themselves in trouble? If something happens to them, do you imagine that the vast masses of people in India will look on indifferently and do nothing? The Sikhs

¹ It was from the editor of *Ajit*, an Akali daily of Lahore.

therefore should not worry.

The Bill that has been introduced in the British Parliament will very soon be enacted into law. India will then be divided into two Dominions, that is to say, the British Commonwealth will have two new members. The Bill has 20 clauses which I have read. I cannot say that it has any ambiguity or that the English have used a language which can bear different interpretations.

No Englishman wants to deceive us. But the Bill certainly contains the poison. That poison we have drunk and so has the Congress. The British carried on their rule in India for 150 years and the British Government accepted the fact that politically India was one nation. They also tried to develop it as a nation and to some extent they succeeded also. Before them the Moguls had made a similar effort but they were less successful.

Having first unified the country, it is not a very becoming thing for them to divide it. I do not say that was their intention. The Cabinet Mission too had treated India as one single country and had produced arguments in support of this assumption. Today those arguments have become irrelevant. Thus the Bill in creating two Dominions gives us poison. It is true that both the Congress and the Muslim League gave their assent to the Bill. But accepting a bad thing does not make it good.

What the Quid-e-Azam used to say has come to pass. I think one can say that he has won complete victory. In my view the Bill puts to test all the three parties including the British. It makes us a Dominion but that is only a temporary phase. The Governor-General will have to put his signature to the Constitution that the Constituent Assembly has framed. He cannot change even a comma of that document. The same thing will happen in Pakistan. If after the constitution comes into being the two Dominions proclaim their independence from the British Commonwealth, nobody can stop them. It seems to me that that is what they will do. Of course all these things belong to the future and nothing definite can be said at present. What is clear at the moment is that India is now broken up into two self-governing Dominions.

The British have also given rise to a situation which will be yet another test of their *bonafides*. All the various Princely States in India ought to have been brought within the Indian Union. The present dangerous situation should not have been allowed to remain.

The supporters of Pakistan have now got what they wanted. It

may not be very much in terms of land area but they have been brought on a footing of equality. Till recently when the fight for Pakistan was on I was unable to understand what Pakistan meant. Even today I cannot understand it. The outline of Pakistan will emerge after its Constituent Assembly gives shape to its Constitution. But the real test of Pakistan will be the way it treats the nationalist Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Hindus in Pakistan. Then Muslims themselves have various sects; there are Shias and Sunnis and various others. It is to be seen how these various sects are treated. Will they be friends with the Hindus or will they declare war against them? Will they perhaps take it into their heads that they are masters and all the rest are slaves? They will have to furnish answers to these questions in their Constituent Assembly.

India too has to show whether the Muslims in India will be treated as friends or as enemies. To me all religions are one. They are branches of the same tree. All religions worship the same God. Formerly there used to be wars over religion in Europe too. But now there is a new climate in the making. People have got so fed up with such strife that they are even giving up God. If this is the way the world is moving, how long can India be kept behind ?

To those who consider India one nation the question of majority or minority does not arise at all. This Bill in a way is a test for all the parties. If we pass the test, we can accept it as a godsend. If not it will act as a noose for us.

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan-I, pp. 220-4

405. *LETTER TO MOHAMMED HUSAIN KHAN*

[After July 5, 1947]¹

I have your two letters. As I have intimated to you, I sent your letter, written in English, to the Bihar Government the moment it came. I shall write to you when I get the reply. If it is found necessary to see you, I shall trouble you.

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

¹ This was in reply to the addressee's letter dated July 5, 1947.

406. WHO IS A SOCIALIST?¹

Socialism is a beautiful word and so far as I am aware in socialism all the members of society are equal—none low, none high. In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are the soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. That is socialism.

In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level. In terms of religion there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity.

Looking at society all the world over there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence. This man is high, that one is low, that one is a Hindu, that one a Muslim, third a Christian, fourth a Parsi, fifth a Sikh, sixth a Jew. Even among these there are sub-divisions. In the unity of my conception there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs.

In order to reach this state we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our life we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawk-like seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the further it must recede from us.

Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.

This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means insult in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employee. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. Non-violence is embedded in truth and *vice versa*. Hence has it been said that they are

¹ The Gujarati original appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, which was published simultaneously with the source.

faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you.

Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge there is no country in the world which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above the existence of such a society is impossible.

NEW DELHI, July 6, 1947

Harijan, 13-7-1947

407. LETTER TO DINSHAW K. MEHTA

4.30 a. m., July 6, 1947

CHI. DINSHAW,

The relations between us remain the same as before. How can we go on if you don't express your views freely to me? And should I hide my thoughts from you? Could we in that case remain close? I don't like your worrying all the time. I would certainly like to help you out of your anguish. How can he who has chosen to be a guru guide others if he himself is in the dark? Can one blind man lead another? What will you do when I die? I shall lead you to light as soon as I see it. I am what I am. I have just shown you my limitations.

My stay also is not certain. I may go to Kashmir or to Bihar or to Noakhali or God knows where.

Why did you have to undertake the fast?

Calm down. Engage yourself in whatever work you know.

I would send for you if I could settle down somewhere.

Blessings to all the four of you from,

BAPU

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

408. A LETTER

July 6, 1947

It was and still is my aspiration to live up to 125 years. But I have lost my place among the people. If it were not so, why would

they suddenly forsake the ahimsa to which they had clung for nearly 32 years? But I shall be satisfied if I can show that I can die bravely.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 284

409. A LETTER

July 6, 1947

There is certainly power in Ramanama. But the person who utters it may possibly be imperfect.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 285

410. A LETTER

July 6, 1947

We shall never be able to raise the standard of public life through laws. We are not mad that way. Only if the lives of the leaders, both private and public, are perfect, will they be able to produce any effect on the people. Mere preaching will have no effect.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, p. 285

411. TALK TO HINDUS

NEW DELHI,

July 6, 1947

If you have finished saying what you wanted me to hear I will say a few words. I am a Hindu, by birth and up-bringing, by practice and faith. In addition to the Hindu scriptures, I have read the holy books of almost all the other religions. I wish to raise my Hinduism higher and that is the reason why I respect other religions. Can an old man like me all of a sudden become an apostate? Calmly seek an answer to this question from your heart. I do not want your testimonial. I do not live by anyone's testimonials. I live by a testimonial from God alone. And if I have to die in obtaining that, I shall die bravely. If at that moment I get the fruits of my last sixty years' penance for truth and non-violence, I shall feel more than rewarded. I shall regard it as a grace of God. I am not at all angry with you for

venting your anger on me. You have the right to do so and it is only for that that you have come here. I only say that I feel sorry for all of you. You do not know what is true religion. How can we blame a child if he throws away a glass utensil? He does not know that it will break. Similarly in spite of the fact that you are very angry with me I feel sorry for you.

[From Gujarati]

Bihar Pachhi Dilhi, pp. 287–8

412. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,
July 6, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I believe that the N. W. F. P. referendum will begin from tomorrow. I have advised Badshah Khan and his ministers not to cast their votes either way. I have offered similar advice to the League. It is of course left to them to accept or reject it. I shall advise the Khudai Khidmatgars to cease this mutual strife.

With the division of the country our army also is to be divided. Does it follow that the two sections of the army should engage in mutual warfare? The Congress has a long history of anti-militarism. Ever since the Congress was formed, ever since the time of Dadabhai Naoroji, the G.O.M. of India, Hume, Ferozeshah Mehta and Tilak, we had been complaining that while the expenditure on education was insignificant, huge sums were being spent on the army. The army in fact had been created so as to keep the 40 crores of India under subjection. Then there were the French in a part of the country and the Portuguese in another part. Clive was worried about the danger posed by the French and the Portuguese settlements and he created an army to keep himself safe from the danger. There was also a further fear. Afghanistan was a conglomeration of tribes and Russia might launch an invasion across Afghanistan.

Notwithstanding the army we were able to hold our own against the British. But our ahimsa was not the ahimsa of the strong but of the weak. I showed the way of passive resistance and we did not prepare ourselves for armed resistance. But the army still remains. Why? It is a matter of shame. The way things are today it looks as if both the countries would be increasing their armed forces. If one country

increases the army the other will do the same. The Pakistanis will say that they must increase their armed forces to defend themselves against India. India will repeat the argument. The result will be war. The question is, shall we spend our resources on the education of our children or on gunpowder and guns, and give our youth military education?

Pakistan does not believe in peace. They say the Koran does not say anything about it. But I ask you, what are you going to do? Will you do the same?

If we are given Dominion Status we remain two countries. If we become independent we still remain two countries. But have we become two countries in order to fight? What the British have done gives me no cause for satisfaction or for pride. To me the future appears dismal. When I think about it I shudder. If India and Pakistan go to war and one defeats the other what good does that do? I am in the dark. May God show us light. "From darkness lead us to light."

[From Hindi]

Prarthana Pravachan—I, pp. 224–6

413. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

[Before July 7, 1947]¹

CHI. AMTUSSALAAM,

Will the loom be given free? If not, how will the money be realized? Do you want the khaddar for clothing? Do you want more than what has been sent? Will they pay for the yarn? How will they pay?

You must take rice from the relief officer.

Give the conch-shell bangles, vermilion and the beadstrings only to those who wear them. Satis Babu and Vishvambharnath should be shown this.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 720; also *Bapuke Patra*—8; *Bibi Amtussalaamke Nam*, p. 280

¹ In *Bapuke Patra*—8: *Bibi Amtussalaamke Nam*, the letter precedes the letters of July 7.

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW WITH LORD MOUNTBATTEN¹

Top Secret

Sunday, May 4, 1947, 1605 to 1730 hrs.

I thanked him for the strong and courageous statement he made rebuking the Press in general, and his own in particular, for their uncalled for attack on me.

He said that he thought that the Press in India was very immature and had only just been released from censorship and did not realize the harm they were doing by the methods they adopt.

I outlined the plan which Lord Ismay had taken to London and asked Mr. Gandhi if he agreed that the method I was proposing to adopt, whereby the people of India would decide how they wished power to be transferred, was not a good one. He replied that he did not agree that we were leaving the people of India a free choice since we were practically imposing partition on them.

I then asked him what his plan was and he returned to his original idea and reiterated that if I believed in it firmly I could put it through.

In fact, he finally invited me to turn over power either to the Muslim League or, if they would not take it, to Congress for the whole of India, and give them immediate Dominion Status and then remain as Governor-General for 13 months and then leave them to their own devices. When I pointed out that this would lead to a civil war and a blood bath, he replied "not if Mr. Jinnah means what he has signed with me."

I told him Jinnah signed in good faith when he thought I was going to give a fair decision and that I did not for one moment suppose the Muslims would not immediately go to war if I attempted to betray them in this matter. In any case, I pointed out that H. M. C. would never allow me to hand over a colossal minority like the Muslims into the power of Congress and I much regretted therefore that his plan was not acceptable. I did, however, say I would report it to London.

From a photostat: C. W. 11025. Lord Mountbatten Papers. Courtesy: Broadlands Archives Trust. Also *The Transfer of Power*, Vol X, pp. 610-1

¹ As recorded by Lord Mountbatten. *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 4-5-1947

APPENDIX II

*M. A. JINNAH'S STATEMENT TO THE PRESS*¹

May 6, 1947

We discussed two matters. One was the question of division of India into Pakistan and Hindustan and Mr. Gandhi does not accept the principle of division. He thinks division is not inevitable, whereas, in my opinion, not only is Pakistan inevitable but this is the only practical solution of India's political problem.

The second matter which we discussed was a letter² which we both have signed jointly appealing to the people to maintain peace and we both have come to the conclusion that we must do our best in our respective spheres to see that that appeal of ours is carried out and we will make every effort for this purpose.³

The Hindu, 7-5-1947

APPENDIX III

*BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT*⁴

June 3, 1947

1. On February 20th, 1947, His Majesty's Government announced their intention of transferring Power in British India to Indian hands by June 1948. His Majesty's Government had hoped that it would be possible for the major parties to co-operate in the working out of the Cabinet Mission's Plan of May 16, 1946, and evolve for India a constitution acceptable to all concerned. This hope has not been fulfilled.

2. The majority of the representatives of the Provinces of Madras, Bombay, the United Provinces, Bihar, Central Provinces and Berar, Assam, Orissa and the North-West Frontier Provinces, and the representatives of Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara and Coorg have already made progress in the task of evolving a new constitution. On the other hand, the Muslim League Party, including in it a majority of the representatives of Bengal, the Punjab and Sind as also the representative of British Baluchistan, has decided not to participate in the Constituent Assembly.

3. It has always been the desire of His Majesty's Government that power

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 7-5-1947

² *Vide* "Talk with Sikhs", 12-4-1947

³ Asked whether there would be any further meeting with M. A. Jinnah Gandhiji replied that no further meeting was likely. M. A. Jinnah however declined to answer.

⁴ *Vide* "Speech at Congress Working Committee Meeting", 2-6-1947

should be transferred in accordance with the wishes of the Indian people themselves. This task would have been greatly facilitated if there had been agreement among the Indian political parties. In the absence of such agreement, the task of devising a method by which the wishes of the Indian people can be ascertained has devolved upon His Majesty's Government. After full consultation with political leaders in India, His Majesty's Government have decided to adopt for this purpose the plan set out below. His Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that they have no intention of attempting to frame any ultimate Constitution for India; this is a matter for the Indians themselves. Nor is there anything in this plan to preclude negotiations between communities for a united India.

4. It is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to interrupt the work of the existing Constituent Assembly. Now that provision is made for certain provinces specified below, His Majesty's Government trust that, as a consequence of this announcement, the Muslim League representatives of those provinces, a majority of whose representatives are already participating in it, will now take their due share in its labours. At the same time it is clear that any constitution framed by this Assembly cannot apply to those parts of the country which are unwilling to accept it. His Majesty's Government are satisfied that the procedure outlined below embodies the best method of ascertaining the wishes of the people of such areas on the issue whether their constitution is to be framed:—

(a) in the existing Constituent Assembly; or

(b) in a new and separate constituent Assembly consisting of the representatives of those areas which decide not to participate in the existing Constituent Assembly.

When this has been done, it will be possible to determine the authority or authorities to whom power should be transferred.

5. The Provincial Legislative Assemblies of Bengal and the Punjab (excluding the European members) will, therefore, each be asked to meet in two parts, one representing the Muslim majority districts and the rest of the province. For the purpose of determining the population of districts, the 1941 census figures will be taken as authoritative. The Muslim majority districts in these two provinces are set out in the Appendix to this announcement.

6. The members of the two parts of each Legislative Assembly sitting separately will be empowered to vote whether or not the province should be partitioned. If a simple majority of either part decides in favour of partition, division will take place and arrangements will be made accordingly.

7. Before the question as to the partition is decided, it is desirable that the representatives of each part should know in advance which Constituent Assembly the Province as a whole would join in the event of the two parts subsequently deciding to remain united. Therefore, if any member of either Legislative Assembly so demands,

there shall be held a meeting of all members of the Legislative Assembly (other than European) at which a decision will be taken on the issue as to which Constituent Assembly the Province as a whole would join if it were decided by the two parts to remain united.

8. In the event of partition being decided upon, each part of the Legislative Assembly will, on behalf of the areas they represent, decide which of the alternatives in paragraph 4 above to adopt.

9. For the immediate purpose of deciding on the issue of partition, the members of the legislative assemblies of Bengal and the Punjab will sit in two parts according to Muslim majority districts (as laid down in the Appendix) and non-Muslim majority districts. This is only a preliminary step of a purely temporary nature as it is evident that for the purposes of final partition of these provinces a detailed investigation of boundary question will be needed; and as soon as a decision involving partition has been taken for either province a boundary commission will be set up by the Governor-General, the membership and terms of reference of which will be settled in consultation with those concerned. It will be instructed to demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of the Punjab on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non-Muslims. It will also be instructed to take into account other factors. Similar instructions will be given to the Bengal Boundary Commission. Until the report of a boundary commission has been put into effect, the provisional boundaries indicated in the Appendix will be used.

10. The Legislative Assembly of Sind (excluding the European members) will at a special meeting also take its own decision on the alternatives in paragraph 4 above.

11. The position of the North-West Frontier Province is exceptional. Two of the three representatives of this province are already participating in the existing Constituent Assembly. But it is clear, in view of its geographical situation and other considerations, that if the whole or any part of the Punjab decides not to join the existing Constituent Assembly, it will be necessary to give the North-West Frontier Province an opportunity to reconsider its position. Accordingly, in such an event, a referendum will be made to the electors of the present Legislative Assembly in the North-West Frontier Province to choose which of the alternatives mentioned in paragraph 4 above they wish to adopt. The referendum will be held under the aegis of the Governor-General and in consultation with the provincial Government.

12. British Baluchistan has elected a member, but he has not taken his seat in the existing Constituent Assembly. In view of its geographical situation, this province will also be given an opportunity to reconsider its position and to choose which of the alternatives in paragraph 4 above to adopt. His Excellency the Governor-General is examining how this can most appropriately be done.

13. Though Assam is predominantly a non-Muslim province, the district of Sylhet which is contiguous to Bengal is predominantly Muslim. There has been a demand that, in the event of the partition of Bengal, Sylhet should be amalgamated with the Muslim part of Bengal. Accordingly, if it is decided that Bengal should be partitioned, a referendum will be held in Sylhet District under the aegis of the Governor-General and in consultation with the Assam provincial Government to decide whether the district of Sylhet should continue to form part of Assam Province or should be amalgamated with the new province of Eastern Bengal, if that province agrees. If the referendum results in favour of amalgamation with Eastern Bengal, a boundary commission with terms of reference similar to those for the Punjab and Bengal will be set up to demarcate the Muslim majority areas of Sylhet District and contiguous Muslim majority areas of adjoining districts, which will then be transferred to Eastern Bengal. The rest of the Assam Province will in any case continue to participate in the proceedings of the existing Constituent Assembly.

14. If it is decided that Bengal and the Punjab should be partitioned, it will be necessary to hold fresh elections to choose their representatives on the scale of one for every million of population according to the principle contained in the Cabinet Mission's Plan of May 16, 1946. Similar elections will also have to be held for Sylhet in the event of it being decided that this district should form part of East Bengal. The number of representatives to which each area would be entitled is as follows:—

Provinces	General	Muslims	Sikhs	Total
Sylhet District	1	2	nil	3
West Bengal	15	4	nil	19
East Bengal	12	29	nil	41
West Punjab	3	12	2	17
East Punjab	6	4	2	12

15. In accordance with the mandates given to them, the representatives of the various areas will either join the existing Constituent Assembly or form the new Constituent Assembly.

16. Negotiations will have to be initiated as soon as possible on the administrative consequences of any partition that may have been decided upon :

(a) Between the representatives and the respective successor authorities about all subjects now dealt with by the Central Government including defence, finance and communications.

(b) Between different successor authorities and His Majesty's Government for treaties in regard to matters arising out of the transfer of power.

(c) In the case of provinces that may be partitioned, as to the administration

of all provincial subjects, such as the division of assets and liabilities, the police and other services, the high courts, provincial institutions, etc.

17. Agreements with tribes of the North-West Frontier of India will have to be negotiated by the appropriate successor authority.

18. His Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that the decisions announced above relate only to British India and that their policy towards Indian States contained in the Cabinet Mission's memorandum of 12th May, 1946, remains unchanged.

19. In order that the successor authorities may have time to prepare themselves to take over power, it is important that all the above processes should be completed as quickly as possible. To avoid delay, the different provinces or parts of provinces will proceed independently as far as practicable within the conditions of this plan. The existing Constituent Assembly and the new Constituent Assembly (if formed) will proceed to frame constitutions for their respective territories; they will, of course, be free to frame their own rules.

20. The major political parties have repeatedly emphasized their desire that there should be the earliest possible transfer of power in India. With this desire His Majesty's Government are in full sympathy and they are willing to anticipate the date of June, 1948, for the handing over of power by the setting up of an Independent Indian Government or Governments at an even earlier date. Accordingly, as the most expeditious, and indeed the only practicable way of meeting this desire, his Majesty's Government propose to introduce legislation during the current session for the transfer of power this year on a Dominion Status basis to one or two successor authorities according to the decisions taken as a result of this announcement. This will be without prejudice to the right of the Indian Constituent Assemblies to decide in due course whether or not the part of India in respect of which they have authority will remain within the British Commonwealth.

His Excellency the Governor-General will from time to time make such further announcements as may be necessary in regard to procedure or any other matters for carrying out the above arrangements.

The Muslim majority districts of Punjab and Bengal according to 1941 (census):—

1. THE PUNJAB

Lahore Division—Gujranwala, Gurdaspur, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Sialkot.

Rawalpindi Division—Attock, Gujrat, Jhelum, Mianwali, Rawalpindi, Shahpur.

Multan Division—Dera Ghazi Khan, Jhang, Lyallpur, Montgomery, Multan, Muzaffargarh.

2. BENGAL

Chittagong Division—Chittagong, Noakhali, Tipperah.

Dacca Division—Bakerganj, Dacca, Faridpur, Mymensingh.

Presidency Division—Jessore, Murshidabad, Nadia.

Rajshahi Division—Bogra, Dinajpur, Malda, Pabna, Rajshahi. Rangpur.

The Indian Annual Register, 1947, Vol. I, pp. 143-6

APPENDIX IV

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU'S LETTER TO VICEROY¹

6 JANTAR MANTAR ROAD,

NEW DELHI,

June 2, 1947

1. The Congress Working Committee have considered the statement which H. M. G. propose to make tomorrow and a copy of which you were good enough to give me this morning.

2. The proposals contained in this statement are of far-reaching importance and affect the whole future of India. These envisage the possibility of certain parts of India seceding from the rest.

3. As you know, the Congress has consistently upheld that the unity of India should be maintained. Ever since its inception, the Congress has worked towards the realization of a free and united India. Any proposal, therefore, which might bring about separation of a part of India from the rest is painful to contemplate and, in the opinion of the Congress, is harmful to all the parties concerned. Such a proposal would normally have to be considered by the All-India Congress Committee. The Working Committee would make its recommendations to that Committee, but the final decision would rest with the All-India Congress Committee, or the full session of the Congress itself.

4. We have realized, however, that in the peculiar and abnormal situation of today it is not possible to delay matters and decisions have to be reached rapidly. There has been far too much uncertainty in the country and this has led to instability and to violence on a large scale. We have also appreciated that the negotiations that have been going on for some time between you and [the] Indian leaders had of necessity to be secret.

5. My Committee considered the principles underlying the present proposals about a month ago and generally accepted them. This acceptance was conveyed to you in paragraph 12 of the letter dated 1st May, 1947, which Shri

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Congress Working Committee Meeting", 2-6-1947

Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to you.

6. As we have stated on many occasions, we accepted in its entirety the Cabinet Mission's Statement of 16th May, 1946 as well as the sub-sequent interpretation thereof dated 6th December, 1946. We have indeed been acting in accordance with it and the Constituent Assembly which was formed in terms of the Cabinet Mission's Plan has been functioning for nearly six months. We are still prepared to adhere to that Plan. In view, however, of subsequent events and the situation today, we are willing to accept as a variation of that Plan the proposals now being made.

7. I do not wish to enter into any detailed examination of the proposed statement of H. M. G. It has been produced after considerable consultation and I am desirous to say by my Committee that we are prepared to accept it and to recommend to the All-India Congress Committee to do likewise. We do so in the earnest hope that this will mean a settlement. We feel that the situation in India, political and economic, as well as communal, demands more than ever a peaceful approach to all our problems. These problems cannot be solved by methods of violence, and there can be no submission to such methods.

8. While we are willing to accept the proposals made by H. M. G., my Committee desire to emphasize that they are doing so in order to achieve a final settlement. This is dependent on the acceptance of the proposals by the Muslim League and a clear understanding that no further claims will be put forward. There has been enough misunderstanding in the past and in order to avoid this in the future it is necessary to have explicit statements in writing in regard to these proposals.

9. We believe as fully as ever in a united India. The unity we aim at is not that of compulsion but of friendship and co-operation. We earnestly trust that when present passions have subsided our problems will be viewed in their proper perspective and a willing union of all parts of India will result therefrom.

10. There are some matters, however, to which I should like to draw your attention. My Committee realize that the proposals being put forward may result in injury to the Sikhs unless great care is taken and their peculiar position in the Punjab is fully appreciated. We are aware that H. M. G. and you are anxious to protect all legitimate Sikh interests. The matter will have to be considered by the Boundary Commission provided for and we earnestly trust that all other factors, apart from population, will be taken fully into consideration. The Sikhs have played a vital role in developing a considerable part of the Punjab. They have been pioneers in the canal areas and have converted by their labours the desert into the richest part of the Punjab. It has been made clear in the document that the national partition is of a purely temporary character and the final boundaries will be determined by the Boundary Commission.

11. In the last sentence of paragraph 9 it is stated that “until the report of the Boundary Commission has been put into effect, the provisional boundary as indicated in the Appendix will be used.” It is not quite clear to what this refers and what the use will be. It is well known that the notional division ignores other important factors and that the Sikhs are distressed by it. If any further use is made of this notional division for administrative or other purposes, this will inevitably affect the final division and will give rise to a great deal of apprehension in the minds of the Sikhs. We would, therefore, urge you not to apply that notional division for any administrative purpose during the interim period. This would be in keeping with the spirit of the document and with what you conveyed to us this morning.

12. In paragraph 11 of the statement reference is made to a referendum in the N. W. F. Province. There has been a growing demand in the Province for independence and subsequent decision as to their relation with the rest of India. The referendum should also provide for this.

13. In paragraph 20 of the statement, which, we are told, is an addition to the original draft, the last sentence refers to the right of the Constituent Assemblies to decide in due course whether or not India or any part of it will remain within the British Commonwealth. It seems to us extremely undesirable and likely to lead to friction if the relations of Britain with the Indian Union and the seceding parts of it are on differential basis. We should, therefore, like to make it clear that we cannot be consenting parties to any such development.

14. In view of the importance of the proposals and decisions being made, my Committee intend to convene a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at an early date. They propose to recommend the acceptance generally of the statement of H.M.G. as a settlement of our political and communal problems.

HIS EXCELLENCY VISCOUNT MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA

VICEROY'S HOUSE

NEW DELHI

A. I. C. C. File No. 1499-I, 1947. courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

APPENDIX V

LORD MOUNTBATTEN'S NOTE ON INTERVIEW WITH GANDHI¹

June 4, 1947

In connection with the last sentence in Paragraph 20 of His Majesty's Government's statement², Mr. Gandhi suggested the possibility of a tripartite

¹ *Vide* “Speech at Prayer Meeting”, 4-6-1947

² *Vide* “British Government's Statement”, 3-6-1947

agreement between Great Britain and the two new Dominions—or two bilateral agreements.

Mr. Gandhi also spoke to me of “you and your magic tricks” in getting Congress and the Muslim League to agree on anything.

Mr. Gandhi said that he was very keen on going to Kashmir. I pointed out that Pandit Nehru had also declared such an intention and suggested that perhaps the best course might be for me myself to go.

From a photostat: C. W. 11027. Lord Mountbatten Papers. Courtesy: Broadlands Archives Trust

APPENDIX VI

LORD MOUNTBATTEN'S NOTE ON INTERVIEW WITH GANDHI¹

June 6, 1947

I had received an urgent letter from Krishna Menon warning me that Mr. Gandhi was in a very unhappy and emotional mood, and that some of the Congress leaders feared he might denounce the plan and its acceptance at his prayer meeting that evening.

I immediately sent a message inviting Mr. Gandhi to come and see me at any time before the prayer meeting. He arrived at 6 with the prayer meeting due at 7 p. m.

He was indeed in a very upset mood and began by saying how unhappy he was.

I replied immediately that whilst I could quite understand and indeed shared his upset feelings at seeing the united India he had worked for all his life apparently destroyed by the new plan, I hoped to convince him that this plan was nevertheless the only possible course.

I told him that although many newspapers had christened it “The Mountbatten Plan”, they should really have christened it “The Gandhi Plan”, since all the salient ingredients were suggested to me by him. I enumerated these as follows:

(a) Mr. Gandhi advised me to try and get the Cabinet Mission Plan or any other plan retaining the unity of India accepted by all the leaders provided it did not involve coercion or violence. I had bent every effort to follow the first part of his advice; but when no agreement could be reached I had followed the second part of his advice and not insisted on a plan which would involve coercion with its attendant risk of violence.

(b) Mr. Gandhi had advised me to leave the choice of their own future to the Indian people. It was therefore he who gave me the idea for letting the Provinces choose, and the method proposed seemed the simplest and fairest way of carrying out

¹ *Vide* “Speech at Prayer Meeting”, 6-6-1947

his suggestion.

(c) Mr. Gandhi had told me that the British should quit India and transfer power as soon as possible and not later than the end of this year. I told him¹ that this had been the most difficult of all of his ideas to carry out, and I was very proud to have found a solution.

(d) I told him that I had understood that in his earlier days he had not been averse to Dominion Status. Mr. Gandhi was kind enough to say that this was indeed so, and that even during the war he had expressed himself as not being against it; and he later sent me an extract from *Harijan* dated 16th December 1939, in which appeared the words: "Similarly, I have said to a friend that if Dominion Status was offered, I should take it, and expect to carry India with me."

Note: I subsequently reported this conversation to both Mr. Krishna and Mr. V. P. Menon, and asked them to work on similar lines in talking to Mr. Gandhi. Both reported that the line I had taken had been remarkably successful, since Mr. Gandhi now felt that I had honestly tried to follow his advice, and that he had taken a far greater part in shaping the future of India than had at first sight appeared to him from the way the plan was worded.

From a photostat: C. W. 11029. Lord Mountbatten Papers. Courtesy: Broadlands Archives Trust.

APPENDIX VII

EXCERPTS FROM JAWAHARLAL NEHRU'S NOTE²

June 8, 1947

"There is no doubt that the Governor and many of the Frontier officials have not only not co-operated with the Provincial Government but have actually sometimes obstructed its work. . . . In any event they are nearly all leaving the Frontier soon and we must proceed on that basis. There is no particular point in our raising this issue of *en masse* withdrawal now."

The question of referendum... came up "not exactly on the Pakistan issue" but in view of certain changes and developments in the all-India situation. . . . it was . . . stated that in view of this new situation it would be advisable to have a referendum in the Frontier in order to determine to which Constituent Assembly the N. W. F. P. desired to belong. The proposal, therefore, was not just meant for the N. W. F. P., but became part of a larger plan which provided for referendum in the N. W. F. P., Baluchistan and Sylhet. It seemed a logical and reasonable proposal apart from the particular circumstances prevailing. . . ."

¹ The source has 'me'

² *Vide* "Foreword to "Charles Freer Andrews", Draft", 9--6-1947

“But in all likelihood parts of Bengal and the Punjab will decide in favour of secession and so we may take it as almost granted that the question will arise for decision in the N. W. F. P. The present position is that the British Government and the Viceroy are definitely committed to this referendum. Some of us are also more or less committed.... The question of referendum, therefore, appears to be a settled one and it is not quite clear how we can get out of it. For the Viceroy it is still more difficult. Any change in the plan... may even lead to conflict on a bit scale. We may, therefore, take it as a settled fact that a referendum will take place.”

In order to ensure peaceful conditions during the referendum, Pandit Nehru explained, it was proposed that “it should be organized by British military officers to be imported from outside.... The Provincial Government would be closely associated with the machinery for this referendum”. Normally speaking, Pandit Nehru did not think that there was much chance of “any big violent conflict”.

The proposal that the people of the Frontier should be allowed to vote for sovereign independence raised certain difficulties: “The Viceroy said he can only agree if the parties agree.... It may also introduce an element of confusion in the voting when there issues are before the voter.... Votes may well be split.”

As for the suggestion that the Frontier Congress should keep out of the referendum, Pandit Nehru argued that it would mean “accepting the Muslim League’s dominance in the N. W. F. P.—in effect a surrender to the Muslim League agitation”.

“Whether it will lead to peaceful conditions or not, it is difficult to say. But I imagine that any such waiver or surrender is even more likely to lead to conflict and bloodshed because the Muslim League would celebrate this surrender as a great victory for the League. . . . They would be justified then in claiming that the present Ministry does not represent the bulk of the population. . . . It seems difficult for the Provincial Ministry to continue after a decision has been given against them by a referendum or by a waiver of referendum. . . . Possibly, the question would immediately arise of another election to the Provincial Legislature. Having avoided the referendum . . . we do not avoid trouble and difficulty and the Provincial Ministry cannot continue. The election takes place anyhow with all its possible evil consequences. . . . The only other course is a peaceful submission to the Pakistan idea, and I doubt very much if most of the Pathans will agree to it.”

. . . Pandit Nehru concluded . . . to keep away from the referendum “would be to ensure a wrong decision” and that too “not by the ordinary democratic process but by private arrangement”.

“This seems to me a very dangerous procedure to follow both in regard to avoidance of violence and regarding our own future in the N. W. F. P. To fight democratically and to be defeated does not weaken us for long and we can renew the struggle in other ways later. But to give up without a struggle means a certain lack of

integrity through fear of consequences and leads to the collapse of the organization which was unable to face the issue.

In view of all these circumstances, it seems to me that the only right course is for us to accept the referendum and to prepare for it with all our strength. We have a good chance of winning it. . . . We should go to the referendum on the cry that we want the largest measure of freedom and independence in the Frontier. . . . This is not a straight issue of sovereign independence but a slight variation of that theme which should prove helpful. . . . In effect, after Pakistan comes into being in Western Punjab, and the Frontier is cut off from India, the N. W. F. P. will inevitably have, because of this cutting off and other reasons, a very great deal of autonomy and independence. . . .”

“ . . . If there is risk in this course, there are far greater risks of bloodshed in other courses. The course suggested is a brave, frank course of accepting battle peacefully. To give up the battle, when final decisions are being taken, will result in deep psychological injury to our people.”

“ . . . To some extent he (Mountbatten) is naturally bound by the past and the present set-up; but he is trying his best to go ahead in the right direction. He realizes the difficulties of the Frontier problem and wants to do everything in his power to solve them. I think he will prove helpful. He is convinced, however, that in the peculiar conditions that are arising in India now owing to possible secession of some parts, a chance must be given to the Frontier people to decide themselves by means of a referendum. He is definitely committed himself to this and he cannot get out of it without grave injury to his own prestige and impartiality. He would probably prefer to resign than to face such a situation.”

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 269-72

APPENDIX VIII

TELEGRAM FROM C. P. RAMASWAMY IYER¹

Will you allow me to protest against erroneous statements made by you at your prayer meeting yesterday relying on inaccurate reports. There was no banning of meetings in Travancore except where breaches of peace were apprehended and a number of meetings have been actually held. Fourteen persons alone have been arrested throughout the State, of whom eight have been ordered to be released. Those who were arrested were dealt with for defying the Magistrate’s orders in places where breach of peace was apprehended. There was no lathi-charge anywhere.

You have asked the Indian States not to rely on the British. It is not Indian States that are now relying on the British Government, but the Congress and I am

¹ *Vide* “Speech at Prayer Meeting”, 14-6-1947

aware that the British Government are more anxious to secure the consent of the Congress to Dominion Status than to befriend the States. I wish to assure you that we are at least as conscious of our need for self-reliance as you are. You will find out for yourself that the people of Travancore are, as an overwhelming majority, in favour of the stand for independence. May I also make it clear that this independence is wholly consistent with close relations as regards defence, foreign affairs and all matters of common concern with the rest of India.

The needless threats indulged in by Pandit Nehru are really uncalled for because no Indian State wishes to enter into any relations with foreign and hostile powers against the interest of India. I hope you will persuade yourself and your followers to credit those who differ from you with as much patriotism as you claim for yourself. With regard to the audacity attributed to Indian States by you, I may invite your attention to the statement of Sir Stafford Cripps at the Press Conference on May 16, 1946, in which he said: "It is not necessary for me to state that a contract or arrangement of this kind cannot be handed over to a third party without the consent of the States. They will, therefore, become wholly independent." On July 18, 1946, both Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Sir Stafford Cripps have stated: "As for States, they need have no anxiety. It is for them to agree to come in or not as they choose" Lastly the present Secretary of State on June 3, 1947, stated that after the transfer of power, States should be free to choose their own future and that British Paramountcy would end. The course left open to them would be autonomy or affiliation with either Pakistan or Hindustan.

The audacity, if any, is on the part of those statesmen under whose aegis the Congress is now embarking on Dominion Status. The threats of Pandit Nehru and his reliance on world powers, including Britain, to help him to implement those threats will no doubt be considered by Lord Listowel and Sir Stafford Cripps, but it is difficult to see how they can go behind their own statements. I note with intense regret that you have not yet withdrawn the false allegation that I have asked Travancoreans who do not agree to independence to quit the State in spite of my denial and the telegram addressed to you by twelve journalists who attended the Press Conference. The B. B. C. has repeated the calumny this morning evidently taking shelter under your statements.

The Hindu, 17-6-1947

APPENDIX IX
*LORD MOUNTBATTEN'S NOTE ON INTERVIEW WITH GANDHIJI
AND M. A. JINNAH*

June 17, 1947

I saw Mr. Gandhi from 10 to 11 a. m. The main topic of the discussions was the referendum. He still wanted Mr. Jinnah to go and see the N. W. F. P. Government leaders to [talk to] them as suggested in the statement he had prepared with Lord Ismay.

He was most dissatisfied at Mr. Jinnah's stipulation about no Congress interference; and he still wanted me to urge Mr. Jinnah to go, as their correspondence had come to a full stop.

I asked him whether he would agree to see Mr. Jinnah right away, and on obtaining his agreement, sent a telephone message to Mr. Jinnah asking if he would come earlier than his original time, to see Mr. Gandhi. Mr. Jinnah came at 11.0 a . m. and joined the meeting until 12 noon.

Both these great men spoke in such low voices that they could not hear each other, so I had to move their chairs close together. After a good deal of mutual recrimination about their correspondence, I finally solved the problem by suggesting that since Abdul Ghaffar Khan had been invested with plenary authority by the Frontier Ministry, Mr Jinnah should take advantage of his presence in Delhi to meet him here.

Both leaders seemed to think this a good idea, but Mr. Gandhi said that Abdul Ghaffar Khan was most mistrustful of Mr. Jinnah and would not come unless he received a written invitation. Mr. Jinnah said he had frequently extended verbal invitations, and that if Abdul Ghaffar Khan was not prepared to accept these, the certainly had no intention of sending him a written invitation.

After this wrangle had gone on for some time, I solved the difficulty by offering to invite all concerned to meet me at 7.45 the same evening. Both accepted and honour was satisfied.

Unfortunately, Abdul Ghaffar Khan had an engagement 100 miles outside Delhi, and although he was due back between 6.0 p. m. and 7.0 p. m., he did not get back in time for the meeting. I personally telephoned Mr. Jinnah and Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, Mr. Gandhi's secretary, and got them to agree to a meeting with Abdul Ghaffar Khan at the Viceroy's House the following day, under the chairmanship of Lord Ismay.

Before Mr. Jinnah's arrival, I mentioned to Mr. Gandhi that I believed a question was likely to be asked in the House concerning the position of those Indian States who declared their independence. I informed him that on being asked this

question, in my Press Conference, I had replied to the effect that States would not be allowed Dominion Status and that the question of separate negotiations with States was a hypothetical question which had not yet arisen. If I received such a request, I would refer it to H. M. G. I pointed out that Hyderabad had a Trade Commissioner in London, and I was sure that H.M.G. could not be expected to cut off trade relations with Hyderabad.

Mr. Gandhi begged me on no account to make any statement in Delhi, and, if possible, to make no statement about this question until he returned. Since he wished to continue the discussion with me and I was unable to do so, I invited him to see Lord Ismay and arrange for an immediate meeting.

MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA

17-6-1947

From a photostat: C. W. 11031. Lord Mountbatten Papers. Courtesy: Broadlands Archives Trust

APPENDIX X

LETTER FROM LORD MOUNTBATTEN TO HARI SINGH¹

June 26, 1947

I am writing to tell Your Highness that I have had a talk with both Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru, who are both still anxious to visit Kashmir. I pointed out to them that any visit from a big Congress leader in which speeches were made could not fail to cause the League to send speakers of the order of Mr. Jinnah to counter their propaganda. This would in effect produce the electioneering atmosphere which you so rightly wish to avoid, since, as you pointed out to me, there has been no bloodshed up to date and only violent political speeches could now bring about the bloodshed.

Mr. Gandhi tells me that Pandit Nehru is prepared to forgo his visit if he (Mr. Gandhi) goes instead.

I am therefore writing this at Mr. Gandhi's request...to suggest that you should agree to his visit in the near future and make things as easy as possible for him. He has given me his firm assurance that he will make no political speeches or carry out any form of propaganda. The object of his visit would be to see Madame Abdullah; and, if you granted permission (but only if you did grant him permission), he would like to see Sheikh Abdullah. He would like to meet the people in general way, but has no desire to address them or to collect large crowds.

May I suggest that Your Highness or your Prime Minister should communicate direct with him to save time.

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, p. 269

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Lord Mountbatten", 27-6-1947

APPENDIX XI

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF VICEROY'S 48TH STAFF MEETING¹

June 28, 1947

His Excellency The Viceroy read out a letter which he had received that morning from Mr. Gandhi. He stated that throughout this letter Mr. Gandhi had completely misinterpreted what he had said at his meeting two days previously. In fact, he had told Mr. Gandhi that he was finding increasing difficulty in helping to get matters connected with Partition settled. He had pointed out that it was for Congress not a question of fair play to ensure that the various issues were settled speedily, but of sheer expediency. If Congress took the line that they were not going to help, Mr. Jinnah would point out to the world at large the Congress's acceptance of the Statement of 3rd June had not been honest. He had told Mr. Gandhi that it would be very foolish of Congress to give Mr. Jinnah any excuse for not being ready to take over power on 15th August. He had assured Mr. Gandhi that he intended in any event to hand over power on that date, but had explained that Congress would be put in a very poor position in the eyes of the world if they made it difficult for Mr. Jinnah to take over. Mr. Gandhi had stated that the words "fair play" did not exist in any Hindustani dialect. He (The Viceroy) had reiterated that he was not expecting or demanding fair play; all that he was requesting was a degree of common sense so that Congress would not put themselves in the position of wrecking an agreement which had been honourably reached.

His Excellency the Viceroy directed P. S. V. to draft, for his approval, a reply to Mr. Gandhi's letter.

From a copy: India Office Library and Records

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Lord Mountbatten", 27/28-6-1947