

1. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WHERE LIQUOR IS BEING SERVED?

A gentleman asks in sorrow:¹

I am not aware of liquor having been served at the garden party. However, I would have attended it even if I had known it. A banquet was held on the same day. I attended it even though liquor was served there. I was not going to eat anything at either of these two functions. At the dinner a lady was sitting on one side and a gentleman on the other side of me. After the lady had helped herself with the bottle it would come to me. It would have to pass me in order to reach the gentleman. It was my duty to pass it on to the latter. I deliberately performed my duty. I could have easily refused to pass it saying that I would not touch a bottle of liquor. This, however, I considered to be improper.

Two questions arise now. Is it proper for persons like me to go where drinks are served ? If the answer is in the affirmative, is it proper to pass a bottle of liquor from one person to another? So far as I am concerned the answer to both the questions is in the affirmative. It could be otherwise in the case of others. In such matters, I know of no royal road and, if there were any, it would be that one should altogether shun such parties and dinners. If we impose any restrictions with regard to liquor, why not impose them with regard to meat, etc.? If we do so with the latter, why not with regard to other items which we regard as unfeatable? Hence if we look upon attending such parties as harmful in certain circumstances, the best way seems to give up going to all such parties.

Why then did I go? Because I have been doing so for many years now and there was no special reason for not doing so on this occasion. On such occasions I myself eat nothing or only fruit, hence I could satisfy my conscience that the part I had taken did not involve any impropriety. I know that my participation in this manner has resulted in some persons giving up liquor and some others giving up meat. This, however, cannot be an argument in favour of attending such parties. I am stating how I satisfied my own conscience. I would

¹ The letter is not translated here. It referred to a garden party given by the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot on February 17, "where drinks were served".

not be worried in the least if others act exactly as I do. However, I am aware than, in following my example, others would not merely attend but also run the risk of not discriminating between what should be eaten or drunk and what should not. I even know that this has actually happened. Moreover, a third question arises, viz., how long should we be held back by such fears? In brief, such questions are always most difficult. Discretion should be used by each person in finding an answer for himself. My advice is that in such matters where one cannot see one single way that is to be followed and where action contrary to mine is also proper, the best course for anyone who is ready to act as I advise, is to do as I ask him, disregarding what I myself do. There is danger in imitating my acts. Hence it is advisable that people do not go to places where drinks and meat are served, despite the fact that I do so.

There is no connection between my insistence on khadi and my going to a place where liquor was served. It is not a fact that I do not go to any place where khadi is not worn. I am firm with regard to the use of khadi at meetings or organizations over which I exercise control or where my firmness is not misunderstood. In the durbar at Rajkot, not even- yone was clad in khadi; nevertheless I went there. I do not like attending marriages and such other functions. Hence, when anyone insists on my attending them, if possible I put down the wearing of khadi clothes as a condition.

All these are questions which involve discrimination and love. A thing may be proper on one occasion and improper in another. Man is a living being and not an inanimate object like a machine. Hence, among human beings and in the acts of every one of them, there is variation, novelty, apparent contradiction, etc. However, under the divine guidance of truth and love a discriminating observer could but perceive identity in difference, harmony amidst discord and unity in diversity. Love without tolerance is not worth the name. I acquire the right to plead courteously with a Muslim not to slaughter the sacred cow by tolerating such slaughter to begin with. I acquired the right to bring up courteously the subject of prohibition at the Thakore Saheb's gathering by suffer- ing drinks being served there. Would the Thakore Saheb prevent me from bringing up this subject even if I did not attend his party? Someone may ask this question. The answer is that Thakore Saheb would listen to me because he is polite, but while listening to me he would hardly pay any attention to the subject. However, if I talk of prohibition in spite of having attended his

reception, he would give careful consideration to what I say and would not let my tolerance go in vain.

In conclusion, I should say once again that imitating me in this matter may be dangerous. Hence those associating with me should beware of such imitation.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 22-3-1925

2. A TEACHER'S PROBLEM

Khadi is compulsory in schools because its propagation is indispensable for swaraj. A teacher argues as follows against such compulsion.¹

1. A child being attracted by the colourful foreign clothes of the other members of the family and neighbours accepts khadi as something that is being thrust upon him and, in this way, he learns to practise deceit from his childhood. If you claim that such a child would naturally choose khadi in a school where a majority of pupils wear it, rather than make it detested by making it compulsory. . . it would be better to let the child be attracted to khadi naturally after it is admitted to the school and allowing some time for the process.

The word “compulsory” has been misconstrued here. If attending a national school was compulsory and then the rule of wearing khadi was compulsory, perhaps it could be said that khadi was made compulsory in an improper way. I use the word “perhaps” here because even when education becomes compulsory, certain conditions will still be there for admission. It is difficult to say that such compulsion is necessarily improper. Certain subjects will be compulsory for the pupils. Moreover, it will also be required that they should be clean when they come to school, should not wear dirty clothes, nor come naked or with gay, multicoloured clothes. Just because these are compulsory requirements, would anyone dare to say that they are improper?

I have the feeling that the question of compulsion and option arises only in the minds of those who are not firmly convinced about the necessity of khadi. Whether parents approve of it or not, whether the attitude of neighbours is favourable or not, still we cannot but exercise control over children in some matters. For instance, we shall

¹ The arguments are summarized here.

have to clothe a naked child coming from the jungles. Afterwards, when it returns home, it may revert to its naked state. If the child uses foul language, we shall have to stop it from doing so. Every teacher would impose many such unavoidable restrictions, and, none of the arguments of the above- mentioned teacher will hold good against them.

It is not a fact that wearing khadi had to be made compulsory because we did not succeed in making pupils wear it voluntarily. It is because some persons like me think that the necessary atmosphere has not been created for making khadi compulsory, that spinning and khadi are being made compulsory in national schools. Very often society accepts compulsion because although the spirit is willing, the flesh resists. Hence, many difficulties will be solved if we understand the meaning of the word “compulsory”. Compulsion is that which the rulers by virtue of their authority enforce on subjects in the teeth of opposition and under threat of punishment. If this definition is accepted, there is no basis for the issue that the teacher has raised.

2. Khadi which is worn with understanding, love and in a spirit of rivalry will be worn for a greater length of time. . . . Does the method of being patient for a few days rather than making the wearing of khadi compulsory on the first day serve the original purpose any the less?

Understanding, love and rivalry are necessarily involved in our compulsory use of khadi. The burden of making it compulsory lies on the teacher, not on the children. The former will not order them like a policeman, but use whatever skill he has in order to win over the hearts of the children. We are not talking of making them wear khadi on the very first day but of making them wear it after four years [since the establishment of national schools]. The word “compulsory” or “obligatory” governs the action of the teacher. It draws the latter's attention to his obligation. Hence the question does not even arise whether the method of being patient is more or less conducive to the original purpose. Patience is, or at any rate should be, the quality of a teacher.

3. The rule making khadi compulsory proclaims that its voluntary spread was unsuccessful.

This doubt has been resolved above.

4. Will there not be an increase in the number of hypocrites because of this rule of compulsion? . . .

If the fear of hypocrisy is with reference to children, I do not recognize it. Children are not hypocrites. If it is in relation to teachers, the possibility may be there. However, an element of hypocrisy comes in wherever a rule is observed with some vigour.

The remedy for this lies in purifying the atmosphere, not in making the rules flexible.

5. Because of compulsory khadi, national schools would be only for those who have fulfilled the conditions for swaraj; what schools are there for those who have yet to be trained? . . .

There are two reasons for founding national schools. In the first place, it is to provide facilities for those who have been imbued with the spirit of nationalism, and secondly, in order to inspire others by serving as models. The purpose could not possibly be to mislead the latter by diluting the ideal of nationalism. Gradually, as the character of the teachers and pupils in the national schools is formed and becomes apparent, others will not be able to resist the temptation of joining these schools.

6. Rules become a snare. . . .

Whether rules become snares or not depends on those who impose them. Even their voluntary observance depends on the rule-maker. Primary schools are like tender branches and they can be bent as we wish. Let us, however, decide to keep them straight.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 22-3-1925

3. MY NOTES

CRUELTY

I write these notes in Travancore-Cochin. Among many beautiful things that I saw, I cannot forget an intolerable scene that I witnessed on my way to the motor boat for Vykam. The people of Cochin make very little use of horse-drawn carriages and motor cars, but in their place they use human beings. The Japanese type rickshaw is seen everywhere. The sight of rickshaws did not pain me much, as I had seen them often in Durban. However, when I saw three or four persons huddled together in one rickshaw, I felt like getting down from my carriage and going over to help that rickshaw-puller. I was to reach a destination and could not get down. The wound it inflicted on my mind, however, did not heal. This rickshaw is so built that only

one person can sit in it. It is also true that so many persons cannot be huddled in it if the puller protests. The cruelty of the passengers, however, is not the less for that. A human being does a thousand wrong things because of poverty. He even crawls on his stomach, performs many base acts. However, what is to be said of those who witness these things? What of those who compel him to do them? There may even be a law in Cochin that not more than one person can ride in a rickshaw. If this is so, those who thus overload it are doubly guilty. There is a large population of Gujaratis in Cochin; they are influential people. The persons that I saw huddled in the rickshaw were Malayalis. I do not know whether Gujaratis go to this extreme or not. I hope, however, that no Gujarati is so cruel. I would like to request them to serve Cochin. They should educate public opinion there so that no one would misuse rickshaws. I would even advise them to give up using rickshaws. This, by giving them some exercise, would improve their health. Except in case of illness or disability, it seems sinful for a person to be carried by another. How can we put human beings to the same use as animals? How can we make others do what we are not prepared to do ourselves?

A HUSBAND'S DUTY

A gentleman asks what a husband should do if his wife does not assist him in practising the dharma of self-control. My experience tells me that one does not require the consent of the other partner in practising self-control. It is enjoyment that requires consent. Renunciation is everyone's prerogative. In these matters, however, a great deal of discrimination is required. Self-control should be genuine. The man should carefully observe his own feelings. He can persuade the wife to accept his idea through gentleness and pure love. It is possible that the wife is not as enlightened as the husband. If so, it is his dharma to share his knowledge with her. There is no difficulty in practising self-control where there is such wisdom in family relationships. It is my experience that the woman is the first to practise self-control. It is the husband who prevents her from doing so. Hence this question appears irrelevant to me; nevertheless, I have answered it with some hesitation because I feel that it required to be answered.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FATHER AND SON

The father is rich and pleasure-loving, while the son loves renunciation and a simple life. The father stands in the way. What

should the son do? In my humble opinion, the son should not give up his desire for renunciation. He should try and gently plead with his father. I believe that, where the son is both courteous and firm, the father does not interfere. Very often the son becomes arrogant and annoys the father by making even renunciation look like indulgence. I do not regard such renunciation as worthy of the name. In its pure form there is so much humility that the father is not even aware of the renunciation. There is no need to make much fuss about it. Renunciation which is natural does not herald its coming by the blowing of trumpets. It comes in imperceptibly without letting anyone notice it. Such renunciation is worthy of its name and enduring. No one considers it excessive and it is infectious.

TEACHER FOR UNTOUCHABLES

The answer to this question¹ is simple. If teachers for the other castes could be engaged at a salary of Rs. 60/- to Rs. 75/-, they could also be so engaged for the untouchables. Much, however, depends on the character of the teacher. I do not think that one deserves this salary only because one has graduated from the Vidyapith. I would wish all of them to be men of character. I know, however, that this is not so. Besides weaving, etc., *Antyajas* could also be trained in carpentry or other crafts. However, I would, if possible, develop weaving more. Many *Antyajas* do weaving. A great deal of time may have to be spent in teaching them the finer points of the art. The *Antyaja* weavers do not weave fine yarn in much quantity, they do not even weave broadcloth, they hardly weave any designs. Our task is to give them complete training in the art of weaving. We do not have the means to do so as our knowledge does not extend so far. Because of this shortcoming on our part, we should not put them to the trouble of learning other crafts, but we should overcome our own shortcoming. The latter is the real tragedy. We are aware of what we should teach but we have not yet acquired the fitness to do so.

I see difficulties in immediately introducing any formula about the teacher pupil ratio in national schools. In ideal schools, the number of teachers will certainly be large. Some time will elapse before students fill them up. Until such time, we cannot fix the ratio.

OUR LIMITATIONS

The same teacher writes to ask:²

¹ The question is not translated here.

² The letter is not translated here.

If the Indian Princes entrust the education department to us we should certainly take it over, but we must lay down our conditions in doing so. Our rules regarding khadi, spinning, etc., must be accepted there. We should regard as untouchable a department which shuns *Antyajas*. If we take over the management of such departments hoping to introduce our reforms gradually, we shall be swallowed up by them. It becomes very difficult to renounce something that has been accepted. Not for a moment can we afford to be indifferent to the rules which we regard as essential.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 22-3-1925

4. LETTER TO KUNVERJI KHETSI

*Phagan Vad 13 [March 22, 1925]*¹

CHI. KUNVERJI,

I have your letters. I have ceased worrying about Chi. Rami² after giving her to you [in marriage]. I have full trust in you. Diseases cling to the body. They will come and go. After your letter there was one from Chi. Bali³ which gave the news that she [Rami] was much better. Require Rami to do physical work according to her capacity. That would keep her fit. I shall reach the Ashram on the 27th. Ask Rami to write to me.

Blessings from

BAPU

CHI. KUNVERJI KHETSI

C/O GOKALDAS TRIBHUVAN PAREKH

MORVI, KATHIAWAR

From a copy of the Gujarati original: C.W. 6108. Courtesy: Navajivan Trust

¹ Gandhiji reached the Ashram on 27th March 1925 after his tour of Vykom, Madras and other places.

² Daughter of Harilal Gandhi

³ Sister-in-law of Harilal Gandhi

5. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Phalgun Krishna 13 [March 22, 1925]¹

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your two letters.

You have taken a load of worry off my mind concerning the Muslim University. I would certainly not wish your donation to be the cause of dispute among your brothers. I shall not disclose your name.

As for the land acquired by you in Chhota Nagpur, I will not advise you to give it up just because of the death of some of your employees. There is not much difference between landed property and property in the shape of bullion; and property is bound to lead to quarrels, even murder. There is only one way out of your dilemma; to give up property altogether. This, you do not wish to do at present. But, as I have said, since property becomes the cause of quarrels and tempts us to do wrong things, we should give it up, and so long as we are not ready to renounce it completely, we should, as its trustees, use it for the good of others and make the minimum use of it for our own enjoyment. There is another possibility. Has an attempt been made to get in touch with the gentleman who is creating trouble? Why does he give this trouble? May- be, it was his foolishness but has his land been acquired for a song? Even a fool would not like to throw away his property. But this is another moral problem I have raised.

Is your wife feeling a little better now?

I shall leave Madras on the 24th.

Yours,

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6107. Courtesy G.D. Birla

6. SPEECH AT SOCIAL SERVICE LEAGUE, MADRAS²

March 22, 1925

It has given me the greatest pleasure to begin this part of my tour in this Presidency with this function. The address that has just

¹ Gandhiji in his letter dated February 21, 1925, had asked the addressee to donate Rs. 50,000 to the National Muslim University of Aligarh. The addressee agreed to pay the sum and thus relieved Gandhiji of his worry.

² In reply to its address of welcome

been read to me thanks me for accepting this invitation. Your thanks are, however, due not to me a prisoner but my jailor, Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar. (Laughter). It was for him to dispose of the whole of my time in this place. He has to his heart the removal of untouchability as much as any of us. You have remarked upon the apathy of the young generation towards social service. To a certain measure, I endorse it. It is true that the young generation requires excitement rather than work. But let me also inform you that there are hundreds of people not known to the world, not known to fame, who display ability in social service of a character infinitely more difficult than the service that you have just now described not me. Here, in Madras you have the amenities of what is called civilization. (Laughter.) The young men of whom I am talking to you, I have got their names in my mind, have devoted the whole of their time to social service in villages. They are barred from all intercourse with the outside world. They do not see the newspaper. Excitement has no place in their diary. They lived in the midst of people and live the same life they are living. I commend their unknown labour to your attention. Let their service, so whole-hearted and so self-sacrificing, be regarded as a penance for the other part of the young people. And let their self-sacrificing service be also a spur to effort for the rest of the younger generation who have not known what real service is.

In my opinion, in that service lies the best part of our education. I am no enemy of the education that is being imparted in our numerous schools. But in my own scheme of life it occupies but a secondary place. I disregard the value of this education if it does not result in mak-ing us servants of the nation. I very much fear that social service that is generally rendered in our towns takes the form, as Gokhale¹ would say, of recreation; whereas, if it should be effective and valuable for the people whom we serve and for the nation, it should be the chief part of our daily business. Social service that savours of patronage is not service.

I sincerely tender my congratulations to you for the great work that you are doing. Only it appears to me to be incomplete and admits of great improvement. In my opinion, regard being had to the conditions of this country, no social service is complete without the foundation of spinning-wheel and khaddar behind it. You may laugh at it,

¹ G. K. Gokhale (1866-1915); educationist and statesman

if you wish to. But a time is coming when it will be the fundamental maxim of social service that no social servant would be worthy of his name if he is clad in anything but khaddar and who does not know how to spin. I shall tell you why. You have begun rightly with the service of the lowest strata of society. May I then remind you of the fact, the indisputable fact, that the lowest strata of our society do not live in towns but in villages? May I also inform you of the fact stated not by a man like me but by historians that one-tenth of India's population lives in semi-starvation? And it is also admitted that they do so because for nearly four months in the year they have no occupation. There must be some universal occupation which will be of a universal character. Such an occupation is only the spinning-wheel.

Pray do not consider it in terms of the individual but in terms of the nation. And you will find immediately that the sum total of the savings to the nation amounts, not to a few lakhs, but nearly 120 crores of rupees. It is the one indisputable service which carries its own reward. It is impossible to render this service if we go to the people as their patrons. We can render this service to them; we can ask them to wear khaddar when they see us wearing that khaddar ourselves. The spinning-wheel would fail to attract masses unless we begin today spinning ourselves. And since we have lost the cunning of the wheel, it is impossible for us to take the message of the wheel to them unless we master the science of the wheel and the intricacies of that simple instrument. In that service and that service alone there is no waste of efforts. There is no room for despondency. For just as every blade of grass that is grown by the tiller adds to the wealth of the country, so also every yard of cotton spun in the name of the country adds to the wealth of the country and puts it, even if it is a pie, into the pockets of the starving millions. I, therefore, in all humility, venture to hope that you (addressing Mr. T. V. Seshagiri Iyer, as a leader of this band of workers) will endeavour to study this problem in all its bearings and apply your fine imagination and intellect to the solution of the problem, and I have no doubt that after your studies, you will come to the same conclusion that the great P. C. Ray came to, that there is no salvation for the toiling millions apart from the spinning-wheel.

I am working against time today. My jailor has imposed a heavy programme on me—(Laughter.)—somewhat more exacting than the jailor of Yeravad. There are many branches of social service about which I could talk to you. But I wish to end with merely carrying this

message of the spinning-wheel, and I hope that when I have the privilege of meeting you again, I wish to see you all dressed in khaddar, from top to toe. I again tender you my congratulations on the work that has already been done by your league.

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

7. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, MADRAS¹

March 22, 1925

SISTERS AND FRIENDS,

I am obliged to you for this beautiful address and it gives me very great pleasure to have visited this spinning competition. But I cannot withhold from you the distress I feel that so many of the sisters are not clad in khaddar. You, the women of India, keep in the palm of your hands the destiny of your country. The swaraj of my dream is an impossibility unless the women of India play their full part side by side with the men. At women's meetings, I have described swaraj as *Ramarajya* and *Ramarajya* is an impossibility unless we have thousands of Sitas. I assure you that in the days of Rama and Sita there was nothing but khaddar, handspun and hand-woven. When Sita traversed the length and breadth of India she was not dressed, as you are, in foreign cloth. For Sita, what cloth her country produced was quite enough for her decoratoin. It was reserved for the modern women of India to tell me that khaddar is too coarse for them. But do you know that by your ceasing to wear khaddar millions of our sisters and brothers have been reduced to poverty? It is all very well for you, who are fairly well-to-do, to attend functions and to go about in saris of 18 cubits. But remember that your sisters in the villages of India have not only no saris such as you have, but have not even enough food to eat. And I am telling God's truth when I say that I have seen hundreds, if not thousands, of women in India who have no clothes to wear but rags.

I, therefore, ask you for the sake of those sisters, for the sake of your religion, and for the sake of God, to throw away all the foreign cloth that you are using and to wear such khaddar saris as you can procure. I ask you that in order that khaddar might be cheap, and in

¹ In reply to an address of welcome (in Tamil) presented by Mrs. Chinnaswami Iyengar. The speech was translated into Tamil, sentence by sentence, by S. Srinivasa Iyengar.

order that you may have as fine saris as you like, to spin for at least half an hour a day and to make a present of these yarns that you may spin, to the country. It will be possible to cheapen khaddar. I hope all of you have seen the sisters spinning in the hall at the back. If you have not done so, I invite you to inspect the spinning in batches of ten at a time. Not very long ago we had in every home a spinning-wheel as we have today in every home a cooking-stove. In removing this spinning-wheel from its place in our home, we have debarred from ourselves at least a quarter of our source of income. I ask you once more to restore the spinning-wheel to its proper place. Your presence here pleases me. But it will soon become painful and intolerable for me to attend such meetings if sisters continue to besiege these meetings dressed in foreign cloth. I have no desire to hear my own voice, and if I still continue to address meetings, it is because I have still a hope lingering in my breast that some words of mine will penetrate the minds of those that I address. May my words uttered this afternoon produce such an effect upon your minds!

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

8. *SPEECH AT THE "HINDU" OFFICE, MADRAS*¹

March 22, 1925

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

When I received the invitation to unveil this portrait, in my reply I said that I would feel honoured to perform this ceremony. I feel doubly honoured now, first, because you have given me this privilege of unveiling the portrait of the late Mr. Kasturiranga Iyenger, and secondly, because I am doing it under the chairmanship of one whom I love and respect. It shows great wisdom on the part of those who have issued these invitations, that they confined their attention or invitation to no one party, but to all parties.

I had the privilege of knowing Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar for the first time in 1915, I think, and in those days when I could say I was a fairly regular reader of newspapers which I am not today. (Laughter.) Among the newspapers that I read was certainly *The Hindu* and I came to understand the value of that paper from that very moment. I

¹ On the occasion of the unveiling of the portrait of S. Kasturiranga Iyengar. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri presided.

believe that Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar represented some of the best that is to be found in Indian journalism. He had, I know, a style all his own. He commanded a sarcasm which was also peculiarly his own. Whether he wrote as an opponent or as a friend, you could not fail to admire the style in which he wrote. Sometimes, although the home thrusts that he gave to his opponents felt bitter at the time they were delivered, there appeared always to be a great deal of truth in them because he had a most plausible style. I think it can be fairly claimed for him that he never wavered in his faith in his own country. And although he was always a courteous critic, he was also one of the most fearless critics of the Government.

I had on many an occasion to differ from him. But I always valued his decision because I understood thereby wherein lay the weakness of my argument or my position; because, I cannot recall an occasion when there was not something to be said for the argument that he advanced. Very often it appeared to me that he occupied, if I may take such a parallel, about the same position in this Presidency that the editor of the London *Times* occupies in England (Applause.) and it was in this manner. I never thought that Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar was an out and out reformer but he had cultivated journalism for the sake of journalism as it appeared to him. ("Hear, hear.") He felt that if he was to retain that character, he must not lead the country, at least not lead the country too much, but always accurately reflect its opinion.

Those who followed the columns of *The Hindu* cannot fail to recognize that whenever they saw a change in the editorial policy, it was because with an unerring instinct he recognized which way the country was going or which way the wind was blowing. It may be said that this was a defect in him, but I do not consider it to be so. (Mr. C. R. Reddy: "Hear, hear.") If he had taken upon himself, as I venture to say I have, the role of a reformer, then he would have to give expression to his own individual opinion, no matter what the whole country around him thought of it. I think that also is a phase in the country's life; but that is not the peculiar function of a journalist. A journalist's peculiar function is to read the mind of the country and to give definite and fearless expression to that mind. And I think that Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar was almost unrivalled this quality of his. (Applause).

What is more; there was one other thing also I noticed about *The Hindu* and that was that its news columns satisfied the ambition of a most voracious reader (“Hear, hear” and laughter.); because Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar gave everything that was to be given in the shape of the events in the country and he had also cultivated the art—and it is an art as I can tell you from my own experience—of clipping. All his clippings were really admirable; and if a man studied *The Hindu* he would not have to read any other newspaper so far as the news of the world was concerned, because he had a most catholic taste. He went to the whole newspaper world and he made the choicest extracts from all the magazines and all the newspapers and placed them before his readers in an attractive manner. So a man living in the Madras Presidency if he took up *The Hindu*, and as a counterblast, took up the *Madras Mail*, I think he would find that he had all he wanted to know about both sides of the question. That, in my opinion, sums up the journalism of Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar. But when I have said that, I feel that I have paid him all the compliment that I am capable of paying.

I regard *The Hindu* among the very few newspapers, very few daily newspapers—without which really you cannot do (“Hear, hear.”) and whose loss will be felt not merely in this side of India, but in the north as well; because although his influence among the reading public of this Presidency is unrivalled, it was no less so among the public workers all over India. They always wanted to know what *The Hindu* had to say upon a particular question. It was, therefore, a matter of very great regret to me to find in the jail that Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar was no more and I always felt that if I had a proper public occasion, I would give expression to my regret publicly, and it gives me much pleasure that I have been given this privilege of paying a humble tribute to the memory of one whom I regarded with the greatest respect although very often he differed from me and never hesitated to express his differences when he considered that it was his duty to do so. He never considered men and their feelings when he felt that he could not help it and when the interests of the country demanded an emphatic expression of his views. Such was Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar.

I have not been able, as I have told you, to follow the newspapers lately for several years; but I have heard that Editor and Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar’s son are following closely the policy and the traditions they have inherited from their illustrious chief. I hope

that *The Hindu* will prosper. I hope that it will continue to render the same service that Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar for such a long time rendered to the country. Journalism has a distinct place in familiarizing and expressing public opinion. We are yet cultivating or we have yet to cultivate the best of journalism among us. We have many wonderfully able journalists to copy. We have also patriots who lived long ago like Kristodas Pal¹. When it was difficult to speak or write fearlessly he led public opinion and he never hesitated to say what the country wanted or what he himself felt. We have those wonderfully good traditions therefore to follow; yet, from whatever little I know of journalism, I realize that there is still a great deal to be done. In our march towards our goal, I knew that journalism will play a most important part in shaping the destinies of our country.

I have, therefore, never been tired of reiterating to journalists whom I know that journalism should never be prostituted for selfish ends or for the sake of merely earning a livelihood or, worse still, for amassing money. Journalism, to be useful and serviceable to the country, will take its definite place only when it becomes unselfish and when it devotes its best for the service of the country and, whatever happens to the editors or to the journal itself, editors would express the views of the country irrespective of consequences. I think that we have in our midst the making of journalism of that character. *The Hindu* is one of those few newspapers which can do so. It has acquired a prestige which is all its own. Let me therefore hope that the present managers and the editorial staff of *The Hindu* will continue to follow the best traditions and may I also add that the best way of glorifying one's inheritance is not merely to keep it intact but to add to it.

I think there is always room for adding; there is always room for new thought and may I hope, therefore, that the editorial staff will recognize that there is a new class of readers rapidly rising in India which requires a different character of thought, a different character of deed, and perhaps even a different character of news. That rising class is derived from the masses. You will perhaps take my evidence when I tell you that throughout all my wanderings I noticed a definite, conscious longing on the part of the masses for something better for our India, for something better for themselves, and if journalists want to penetrate the hearts of these great masses of people of India who

¹ 1834-1884; editor of *The Hindu Patriot*

have not hitherto been served by journalists, then, I think they will have to strike a different path and a different line also. You will not expect me to say what that line is. If I had my own choice, you know what that line will be or should be. I simply leave these thoughts with you.

With these words, once more, I thank the editor and Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar's sons for giving me this unique honour—because I regard it as unique honour—of being able to unveil this portrait. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

9. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MADRAS¹

March 22, 1925

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I am obliged to all the people or associations who have presented these addresses to me. You, Mr. President, have dealt with the Hindu-Muslim question at some length. I endorse the sentiments expressed by you. If the Hindus and Mussalmans do not unite reasonably, they will unite forcibly, because one party cannot lead this country; and so long as there are some Hindus and some Mussalmans with whom unity of all the races is an article of faith. I have every hope that we shall unite and unite whole-heartedly. I for one do not object to the Congress being described as a social organization or a spinning association. For, if we neglect what may be called social and economic matters, it is impossible—he who runs may see—to attain swaraj. But the Congress is also a political organization, in that the Swaraj Party is an integral part of the Congress and the Congress enables you, every one of the Congressmen who wants to realize political ambition, to realize that ambition to the highest degree through the Swaraj Party. But for me, at any rate for the time being, my politics do not go beyond the spinning-wheel. Its revolutions are so rapid and so certain that in their sweep they take in every other activity. It is, together with the unity between all the races and the removal of untouchability, the foundation on which you may erect any political or other national structure. Without the removal of

¹ In reply to addresses of welcome presented by the Gujarati Sevak Mandir, Amarabala Vilasini Sabha and the Naoroji-Gokhale Union at Tilak Ghat (Triplicane Beach). Yakub Hasan presided.

untouchability, any structure you may seek to build will topple like a house on sand. I, therefore, offer no apology for engaging your attention for a while on the Vykam satyagraha.

Those of you who read newspapers have perhaps followed my movement throughout Travancore. I have every hope that, before consolidated and organized public opinion, the wall of prejudice that surrounds orthodoxy will go. I am of opinion that the Government of Travancore is not against reform. Untouchability is a curse which every Hindu is bound to remove at the earliest opportunity. I have seen it in its worst form, not only as unapproachability but also as invisibility. Mere sight of a certain man is considered by blind orthodoxy as a sin. *Nayadis* are expected to remain invisible. I saw two men belonging to that caste in Trichur. Except for the human form I saw nothing of humanness about them. (Laughter.) My friends, it is not a matter for laughter but it is a matter for shedding tears of blood. They had no eyes, but two openings in which eyes might have been if they had been treated as human beings. There was no lustre in their eyes that I see in yours. They were supposed to bring addresses to me, but they had to be lifted up to the carriage and they were holding those addresses in their shaking hands. I tried to wake them up and excite a little bit of cheer in their faces. I failed miserably. They could not hand over the addresses to me. I had to take them from them. They had to be lifted back as they had to be lifted towards me. If we had sufficient imagination and if we had sufficient love for our country or our religion, we would refuse to be satisfied until this curse was blotted out of this land. I reject the Shastras if I am told that the Shastras countenance any such evil. But I am positive, as I am positive that we are sitting here together, than our Shastras enjoin or countenance no such devilry. To say that a single human being, because of his birth, becomes an untouchable, unapproachable or invisible, is to deny God. I, therefore, ask you to support the brave struggle that the satyagrahis are carrying on in Travancore by holding public meetings and by cultivating public opinion in every legitimate manner. If I could, I would organize the Hindu opinion on this one point from the Punjab to Kanyakumari and from Assam to Sind.

A gentleman has just now handed me a note containing some questions on this matter.

I will gladly answer. He asks if the untouchables are allowed the use of roads you would support their further claim to enter Hindu temples like any other Hindu. I am surprised at this question at this

time of the day. My answer is emphatically in the affirmative. I claim that to the untouchables, not only public roads should be open but also all temples which are open to non-Brahmins, and all public schools where non-Brahmins and others are admitted and all public places such as public wells or travellers' bungalows, or anything which is supposed to belong to the public at large, should be open to the untouchables as they are to us. Not till this simple elementary, primary human right is guaranteed to every single human being on this piece of God's earth will I consider that the claim in regard to untouchability is vindicated. It is not so much a right that belongs to the untouchables as it is the duty which we, the caste Hindus, owe to them. It is the least penance that we owe to the untouchables and to the world at large. But let me not be misunderstood. I do not want at this stage to vindicate the whole of this right by way of satyagraha. Vykom satyagraha will stop immediately the roads in question are thrown open. I recognize that, wrongly though it is, there is opposed to us a tremendous wall of prejudice in connection with temples. I for one would be no party to any violence in any shape or form being used even in order to eradicate this root evil which is eating into the vitals of the Hindu community. But there is no mistaking the fact that it is the bounden duty of every Hindu not to rest satisfied until full right is guaranteed to the untouchables and until the very word "untouchables", or "invisibles" is blotted out of our dictionary.

The friend next asked me for a definition of a *sanatani* Hindu and say: "Could a *sanatani* Hindu Brahmin inter-dine with a Hindu non-Brahmin although the latter may be a non-vegetarian?" My definition of a *sanatani* Brahmin is: He who believes in the fundamental principles of Hinduism is a *sanatani* Hindu. And the fundamental principles of Hinduism are absolute believe in truth (*satya*) and ahimsa (non-violence). The Upanishads proclaim, the *Mahabharata* proclaims from the housetop: "Put in one scale all your *rajasuyas*¹, all your *ashvamedhas*² and all your merits and put truth in the other scale, the scale in which truth is thrown will outweigh everything else." Therefore use truth as your anvil, non-violence as your hammer and anything that does not stand the test when it is brought to the anvil of truth and hammered with ahimsa, reject as

¹ Sacrifices performed at the time of the coronation of Hindu kings in ancient times

² Horse sacrifices performed by emperors to establish their supremacy

non-Hindu. For a fuller definition of *sanatani* Hindu I must refer the friends and those who have similar doubts to the pages of *Young India*. I have said repeatedly that inter-dining and intermarriage have no connection whatsoever with the removal of untouchability, for inter-dining or intermarrying is a matter of choice and should be so too with every human being. It is an indulgence, whereas untouchability is a refusal to serve our fellowbeings. And truth and ahimsa demand that no human being may debar himself from serving any other human being, no matter how sinful he may be.

My friend asks me my views on *varnashramadharma*. I believe in the four *varnas* and the four *ashramas*. We have created confusion in these four *varnas* and instead of treating them as we ought to, we have arrogated to ourselves superiority, one over another. And to our humiliation and degradation we have blotted out three *ashramas* and retained an apology for *grihasthashrama*. All the four stages in a man's life are devised by the seers in Hinduism for imposing discipline and self-restraint. *Grihasthashrama* is the fair fruit of *brahmacharya* in life for a series of years. We have grown into the habit of straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. It was the first *ashrama* that gave a stability to Hinduism which has survived many an age and has witnessed the fall of many civilizations and which still remains secure. And if we would resume the other two *ashramas*—*vanaprastha* and *sannyasa*—and become wholesale national workers devoting our whole time and attention to national service, we would not then have witnessed the farce, the degradation and tragedy of infant marriages and infant widows. And if we but follow *varnashramadharma* in its spirit, we shall cease to be puny individuals and we shall walk in the fear of God and never fear a single human being. Today we are afraid of one another, we are afraid of Mussalmans and we are afraid of Englishmen. We have lost the nerve force that we had inherited from our forefathers and we have become a bundle of nerves.

The friend lastly asks—rather it is the first question—“What is the duty of the voters in the coming elections to the Legislative Council? Do you advise me to abstain from voting?” It is a fall from the sublime to the ridiculous. If I were a voter and if I exercise the right to vote, I shall tell you what I should do. I will first of all scan the candidates from top to bottom and if I find that among all the candidates there is not one man who is dressed from top to toe in khaddar, I will retain my vote in my pocket absolutely sealed. And if I

am satisfied that there is at least one man who is dressed from top to toe in khaddar, I will go to him in all humility and ask him if he is dressed in this style for the occasion or if he habitually at home and out of home wears hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. If he returns an answer in the negative, I should again retain my vote in my pocket. I would next ask him: "It is extremely good that you always wear khaddar. Do you also spin for the sake of the masses at least for half an hour?" And if I am entirely satisfied on this question, my next question will be: "Do you believe in Hindu-Muslim-Parsi-Christian-Jewish unity?" And if I am still satisfied with the answer, my next question will be, if he is a Hindu and if there is a general electorate in which I can vote for Hindus, Mussalmans and others: "Do you believe in the removal of untouchability in the sense in which I have put it before you?" I am an ambitious and a zealous voter. Therefore, I would further ask: "Do you favour temperance reform? And do you favour total immediate prohibition even though everyone of our schools will have to be closed for want of revenue?" And if he says "Yes", I would take heart and immediately ask him a few questions to see that he is as sound on the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question and I shall vote for him. That is what I would do. You may ask fifty other questions. But I would ask you never to be satisfied until you have asked all these questions and added many more.

One word about the thing which is uppermost in my mind at the present moment. There are 10,000 charkhas going on at Tiruppur and 1,000 looms. Over Rs. 3 lakhs are distributed amongst those weavers, weaving sisters of ours. Mr. Santhanam, Tamil Nad Congress Secretary, complains that you do not buy khaddar which is supplied to you and therefore he has to turn away hundreds of women who would gladly spin for 8 hours a day for a few pies. He tells me that it is possible to manufacture khaddar in one year to the extent of Rs. 50 lakhs in that single district. The same thing is true of many other places in the Presidency. Let me throw in the information for doubting non-Brahmins, if there are any, that all these weavers and spinners are non-Brahmins. There is Rs. 75,000 worth of khaddar stored in Tirupur alone. One of your general secretaries, Mr. Bharucha has come today in order to preach that you should spin and wear khaddar for the sake of your countrymen. With a bundle of khaddar on his shoulder he will move from place to place and from door to door to ask you to engage your attention on behalf of your countrymen. For God's sake do not idle away your time, do not argue

whether khaddar can solve this great problem of the rapidly growing pauperism of India. Believe me that in the proper and full solution of that one problem lies the solution of thousands of problems that today defy solution. Do not hesitate to give at least half an hour of your time to spinning in order that khaddar may be cheap for the masses. God willing I hope to return within three months' time. (Cheers.) Do not let me come to witness a tragedy that even during those three months you are no further than you are to-day. Let me hope and pray you will see to it that the several yards of khaddar now lying in the various national stores will be used up by you and in three months' time you will have so organized yourselves that those who are in charge of khaddar manufacture are never henceforth able to say that they cannot feed hungry mouths for want of patronage of khaddar. Let it not be said of this great city that it was weighed in the balance and found wanting.

I thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me.

Mahatma Gandhi asked the audience not to leave the meeting until he reached the beach road.

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

10. SPEECH AT STUDENTS' MEETING, MADRAS'

March 22, 1925

I am grateful to you for this beautiful address. I have, throughout my wanderings, come across thousands of students representing every variety of opinion. I have had discussion with them on all sorts of matters, not merely political. I carry on constant correspondence with them to the present day and therefore I understand the aspirations of the student world. I realize their difficulties and I know their ambitions. You have asked me not to lose faith in the students. How can I ? I have been a student and it was at Madras, I think, at a meeting, that I addressed them as "fellow-students", but that in a different sense. It is a true I claim to be a student and, therefore, I can realize my identity with them. A student is a searcher after truth. I do not talk here of the student in the restricted sense, who learns or studies a few books, memorizes some of them, attends lectures and passes the examinations. All that, in my opinion, is the least part of a

¹ At the Gokhale Hall where members of the Madras Inter-Hostel Debating Society presented a welcome address

student's work or a student's duty. But a student is he who continuously uses his faculty of observation, puts two and two together and carves out for himself a path in life. He must first think of duty in life more than of securing rights. If you do your duty, the rights will follow as day follows night. The students should lay greater stress upon this aspect of life than on any other. I have been urging the students all through India that whatever they may do in the colleges and schools, let them not forget that they are the chosen representative of the nation, that our schools and colleges represent an infinitesimal portion of the youth of the country and that our villagers do not come in contact with the student world at all as education is at present arranged. So long as education remains in that condition, it is, I believe, the duty of the students to understand the mass mind and to serve the masses. In order to serve the masses and to prepare themselves for it, let me recall the beautiful story that Mr. C. F. Andrews wrote for *Young India* about the students of Santiniketan.

Continuing, Mahatmaji next narrated how a batch of students of the Santiniketan Ashram went to some villages near by in order to render service. But this party of students went to the villagers as patrons but not as servants. At first they were disappointed because the villagers did not respond to them. They asked the villagers to do something and when they returned to the village the next day to see what the villages had turned out, they found nothing was done. The students at once found out the difference when they themselves took up the spade and shovel and bent their backs. Mahatmaji, proceeding, pointed out how those students introduced the spinning-wheel in the villages and how the villagers co-operated with the party in all their endeavours to do service. He next referred to Dr. Dev of the Servants of India Society who was sent on a medical mission to some of the villages near Champaran where Mahatmaji was then helping the villagers in removing some of their grievances. Dr. Dev, he said, was endeavouring to establish model villages by bringing forward reforms in sanitation and removal of dirt and disease. He next described the way in which Dr. Dev with the co-operation of the villagers and others, introduced sanitary principles in the village by themselves cleaning the wells, and removing dirt and filth from the houses. Dr. Dev and his co-workers soon found a ready response from the villagers in such kinds of social service, and the villagers out of their own shame came forward not only to help Dr. Dev and others but to learn how they themselves could do the work.

Proceeding, Mahatmaji exhorted the students in these words to equip themselves for rendering social service:

Your real education begins after you leave your colleges and schools. You learn things there from day to day, but you should know how to apply what you have learnt there. Very often what you have learnt there has to be unlearned by you, viz., those ideas of false economics which have been dinned into your ears and ideas of false history that are given to you. You have, therefore, to use the faculty of observation and see beneath the surface of things, rather scratch the surface and see what is hidden underneath it. The foundation of service to the nation and the foundation of your education is to be laid not by reading Shakespeare, Milton and other poets or prose writers in English or by reading Sanskrit works of Kalidasa or Bhavabhuti. The foundation of service and your real training lie in spinning khaddar. Why do I say that? Because you have to deal with millions of people and you have to make two blades of grass grow where only one blade is growing today. If you want to add to the wealth of the country and its output, then believe me that the spinning-wheel is the only salvation. The classes alone read the *shlokas* of Kalidasa or even of Rabindranath Tagore. I know the life of Bengal and can say that these things are read only in the classes. How to link the classes with the masses is for me one of the greatest problems. I have hundreds and thousands of students in the Gujarat Vidyapith for whose welfare I am supposed to be one of the trustees. This problem puzzles me. But I consider that their real work lies not in the big cities where they receive education, but in going out to villages after finishing their education and in spreading the message that they have learnt into the villages, thereby establishing a living relationship with the villagers. I defy anybody to say how that can be established except on their own terms. The villagers want bread—and not butter—and disciplined work, some work that will supplement their agricultural avocations which do not go on for all the 12 months. My friends, if you will seriously consider your avocation in life, let this be the foundation of your work and I am sure you will do it. (Loud cheers.)

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

11. SPEECH AT LABOURERS' MEETING, MADRAS¹

March 22, 1925

FRIENDS AND FELLOW LABOURERS,

I thank you for the address that you have presented to me. I thank also the Madras Literary Academy for its address. I call you fellow-labourers, that is, I call myself a labourer because I take pride in calling myself a spinner, weaver, farmer and scavenger. I have thrown in my lot with you so far as a man like me could do, and I have done so because I feel that India's salvation lies through you. I have done so also because I feel that India's salvation lies in labour, in manual labour, which is not to be had by reading books or mental gymnastics. I have realized and I am realizing it day after day that man is born to labour with his own body for his bodily sustenance. In mixing with a spinner, weaver and other labourers, I insistently tell them never to cease to be labourers but to add to their bodily labour mental education. But I know that the joy that I can derive from labour is not your lot. Labour to most of you is painful toil without pleasure. It is so, and it is painful toil, partly because your labour is exploited by moneyed men but mostly because of your own defects and limitations. The third reason, therefore, why I have become a labourer is to be able to draw, from the same level that you occupy, your attention to these limitations and defects. You know that I am practically living with thousands of labourers in Ahmedabad. I know the whole of their life and I do not suppose that you are very different from them. There I have observed that these labourers, and probably you also, are given to the drink habit. Many of you gamble away your money. You do not live at peace with your neighbour but quarrel with one another. You are often jealous of one another. You often do not do the work allotted to you in an honest manner. You often place yourselves under the guidance of those who do not lead you in the proper channel and, I know, become impatient of any wrong that is done to you. You sometimes think that you can remove that wrong by using violence. Those of you who do not belong to the *Panchama* classes regard your *Panchama* brethren with despite and contempt. If night-schools are opened for you, you will not attend them. If schools

¹ Addresses of welcome were presented at the meeting by the Choolai Congress and the Madras Literary Academy. Gandhiji's speech was translated into Tamil, sentence by sentence, by M. S. Subramania Iyer.

are opened for your little children, you will not send your children to those schools. You do not very often know what a nation is. Instead of living for the nation, very often you are satisfied with living merely for yourself. That is not the kind of labourer I call myself or want to be. You do not even think of your still poorer countrymen and women and, therefore, do not use hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. Therefore, I am never tired of speaking, when I speak to labour gatherings such as these, of drawing the attention of the labourers to their own limitations.

I want you, therefore, to recognize and realize that you are not and you should be in no way inferior to any other class of people in this country. I want you to be able to develop the capacity for understanding national affairs. If you will do all these things, you must give up drink. You should give up insanitation and filth. Whether you are living in houses for which you are paying rent and whether you are living in houses built for you by your employers, you should decline positively to live in dirty houses where there is no sunshine and where there is no air. You must keep your houses and yards absolutely clean of all dirt, of insanitation. You must keep your own bodies clean by washing them properly every day, and as your bodies and surroundings must be absolutely clean so should your life be chaste. You must never gamble. Send your children to schools that may be started or made by you, not so that your children may become clerks and cease to be labourers, but that they may remain labourers and be able to use their intelligence also. If you have no temples, if you are Hindus, if you have no mosques, if you are Mohammedans, you should lay by a certain sum and build these places of worship for yourselves. Those of you who are Hindus should not regard any body of Hindus as untouchables, *Panchamas* or Pariahs. No man dare cast his lustful eyes upon another's woman and lastly, as to your wearings—I know many of you are wearing foreign clothes, whether it comes from Manchester or Japan or even from Bombay and Ahmedabad, you must cease to wear them and wear only hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. I ask you to wear khaddar because every yard of khaddar that you buy means a few annash, two or three anna, into the pockets of labourers like yourselves.

I am asking every labourer of India to learn and practise everybody hand-spinning, carding and, if possible, even weaving. There is a special reason for my asking the labourers to do so. In 1918, when the first strike of mill-hands took place in Ahmedabad, I

refused to lead that strike upon public subscription. But I called upon them to labour elsewhere in order to be able to bring the strike to a successful end, without troubling the public. Since then, I have learned better and now I ask the labourers to learn these so that if they have to embark upon strikes they can live to an indefinite length of time upon spinning, carding and weaving. If you are sufficiently industrious, you can weave your own cloth. I hope you will take in all that I have said to you tonight. You should endeavour to do everything that I have told you. Early in the morning, getting up at four o'clock, ask God, before you do anything else, to help you to do the things that I have referred to this evening.

I thank you for coming to this meeting and listening to me with so much patience. May God bless you and enable you to lead pure and good lives ! (Loud and prolonged cheers.)

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

12. IS BOMBAY ASLEEP ?

[MADRAS,
Monday, March 23, 1925]¹

I constantly hear complaints to the effect that spinning-wheels do not ply in Bombay, no one buys khadi, the people are not found wearing it, black caps are again as common as in 1920, national schools are closing down, etc., etc. Bombay is being served by two khadi bhandars² and the All-India Khadi Board. Together, their sales do not exceed Rs. 30,000. Shri Jerajani³ has published the figures for four years, which throw some useful light. It is now the fifth year since the bhandar started working under his management. Its sales during January 1923 amounted to Rs. 22,299 and during January 1924 to Rs. 22,516, whereas last January they amounted to only Rs. 14,401. In those years, for the month of February they amounted to Rs. 15,747 and Rs. 21,664, respectively, as compared to which this February they amounted to Rs. 13,524 only. Thus I find that instead of rising, the sales are on the decline. I have also come to know that since my release from prison there has been a fall in the sale of khadi in the

¹ From Gandhiji's reference to the date and place of writing in the last paragraph

entire country, as compared to what it was when I was still in prison. Although this is something that makes me ashamed, nevertheless I can understand it. So long as I was in prison, people were concerned for me and believed that the spread of khadi was a way of securing my release before my term expired and that, on my release, I would immediately secure swaraj. As for the first consideration, it was meaningless to feel concern for me. I was not unhappy in prison either mentally or physically. I liked living there. I still wonder whether I can be of the same service outside prison as I was in it. The second consideration needs to be further examined. For all out propagation of khadi would certainly have secured my early release. The consideration, however, that I would secure swaraj immediately on my release, was one which should make the people feel ashamed of themselves. Who am I to give them swaraj? Swaraj has to be won, who can give it and to whom? Moreover, I have been released but swaraj seems to be preceding farther. According to me, it is coming nearer. I believe further that the speed with which it approaches us is in direct proportion to the number of yards of yarn that we spin and the number of yards of khadi that we make and use.

This does not, of course, mean that we have to give up our other obligations. But it does mean that, in spite of fulfilling all other tasks, there can be no swaraj without khadi and no khadi without the spinning-wheel.

Hence, I am pained when I hear reports that the sale of khadi in Bombay has declined. The sale at the second bhandar which is in Kalbadevi is relatively good, but its figures for last year are not available as its very existence was uncertain. It has now been placed on a sound footing. Nevertheless, even though the total monthly sale at the two bhandars may amount to Rs. 30,000, it is nothing much for a city like Bombay! It would not cause surprise if five or even ten such bhandars thrive there. Not a single street in Bombay is without a shop selling foreign cloth. On one road, at every step, there are many such shops. A shop selling khadi appears to be something foreign, strange there, while one selling foreign goods seems like swadeshi—our own. What kind of swaraj would it be which the owners of those shops and their customers hope for? Would it not be foreign rule mistakenly termed swaraj? Alternatively, would it not be a rule of selfishness? What place would the poor have in this trade amounting to crores of

rupees? Where could the poor turn for relief under such a government? I regard it as impossible even to understand the sentiment of swaraj so long as khadi is not fully accepted—and foreign cloth is not totally boycotted. How can anyone who has no teeth know the joy of chewing? How can anyone who has no tongue realize what it means to speak? How can anyone who hesitates to wear the cloth that is spun and woven by the poor of his country know what it means to serve the poor? What does he know of swaraj? What could India's freedom mean to anyone who does not like Indian villages, Indian customs and Indian food? What part of the country would be served by his plan of swaraj?

Hence the khadi bhandars are the instruments for measuring how far the citizens of Bombay are eager to win swaraj. The readings on this instrument give a depressing picture of Bombay.

Let us now examine the condition of the *Antyajas*.

How very strange it is that the *Antyajas* cannot get any living accommodation? Many of them have to vacate even the dilapidated municipal buildings, those who live there do so with difficulty, Hindu landlords do not rent out buildings to them. In such circumstances, what could swaraj mean to the *Antyajas*? Supposing Bombay had a Hindu Governor, his chief minister, a man who regarded untouchability as his dharma, his minister, a person who would not rent out his building to the *Antyajas*; in such a swaraj set-up, what freedom will the *Antyajas* taste? Bombay, it seems, would fail even in this test.

Let us now examine the remaining problem, namely, Hindu-Muslim unity. Although it cannot be said that the problem is as acute in Bombay as it is elsewhere, something like a wrestling bout goes on even there. Things may appear smooth on the surface; God alone, however, knows what is hidden beneath. I frequently hear reports that the members of either community are smouldering within. The fellow-feeling which existed in 1921 no longer exists. Instead, there is certainly sourness if not bitterness. The abscess of suspicion has appeared. Each community has practically lost faith in the other.

Bombay, which is the first city of India, which was the capital of Pherozshah Mehta's empire, the field of Dadabhai's activity, the place where Ranade¹, Badruddin and others achieved fame, appears to be

¹ Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901); judge, social reformer and author; one of the founders of the Indian National Congress.

asleep today!

I am writing this article in Madras on Monday the 23rd in the serenity of my silence day. On Friday² the 26th, I have to meet the Bombay Provincial Committee. I shall then know more of the real state of affairs. After that, we shall review once again the situation there.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-3-1925

13. LETTER TO KRISHNADAS

March 23, 1925

MY DEAR KRISHNADAS,

This is an idle letter merely to tell you that I have always thought of you and Guruji. I wonder if he has still the same doubt he had about the pact. I hope he is keeping well.

You seem to be keeping better. You *must* know that whenever you feel like travelling with me, you are free to do so. Do not expect me to take the initiative. For, I can get your service best where you feel most happy and keep good health. I have or should have no likes and dislikes. We are all soldiers fighting the same battle. I am a general requiring the best soldiers to tell me where they can serve most. When I feel that I want to make dispositions myself, I will not hesitate for a single moment.

Here is a cutting you gave me months ago and which I have carried with me all these months. I reach there 27th.

With blessings,

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 5599

² 26th was a Thursday.

14. TELEGRAM TO C. R. DAS

MADRAS,
March 24, 1925

DESHBANDHU DAS
RENIER ROAD
CALCUTTA

CONGRATULATIONS Y[OU]R VICTORY. HOPE YOU ARE RESTORED.
GOING AHMEDABAD TODAY .

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft : S.N.2456

15. TELEGRAM TO W. H. PITT¹

MADRAS,
March 24, 1925

POLICE COMMISSIONER
TRIVANDRUM

THANKS WIRE. AM WIRING VYKOM COMPLETION AGREEMENT IN
TERMS MY LETTER OF 18TH AND INSTRUCTING OBSERVANCE. TRUST
WITHDRAWAL ORDER WILL BE FOLLOWED UP BY OTHER MEASURES
CONTEMPLATED MY LETTER.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft : S.N.2456

¹ In reply to the addressee's telegram dated March 23, 1925 (S.N.13268 M) which read: "Reference your letter 18th instant. Prohibitory order will be withdrawn from Tuesday 7th April on your telegraphing acceptance. Kindly instruct Vykom satyagrahis to observe agreement from that date."

16. TELEGRAM TO K. KELAPPAN NAIR

Via MADRAS,
March 24, 1925

KELAPPAN NAIR
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
VYKOM

RECEIVED WIRE FROM GOVERNMENT ACCEPTING LETTER 18TH
INSTANT. ORDER WILL BE WITHDRAWN 7TH APRIL AND BARRICADES
AND PICKETS TOO WILL BE REMOVED . PRESENT NUMBER
SATYAGRAHIS SHOULD CONTINUE SPIN OR STAND WHERE THEY
ARE BUT ON NO ACCOUNT CROSS BOUNDARY LINE NOTWITHSTANDING
REMOVAL ORDER BARRICADES AND PICKETS. LEAVING TODAY FOR
AHMEDABAD WHERE WIRE PROGRESS.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft : S.N. 2456

17. LETTER TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

March 24, 1925

In handing the above correspondence¹ for publication, it is only necessary for me to point out that the agreement embodied therein marks a step forward in the movement now going on at Vykom. The satyagrahis respecting the boundary line, in spite of the removal of the barrier and removal also of the order of prohibition, would, on the one hand, show the completely non-violent nature of the struggle and, on the other, prove the *bona fides* of the Government declaration that they favour the reform for which the satyagrahis are fighting. I am hoping that the opponents of the reform will reciprocate the gesture made by the satyagrahis.

The Hindu, 24-3-1925

¹ Vide "Letter to W. H. Pitt", 18-3-1925 and "Telegram to W. H. Pitt", 24-3-1925.

18. SPEECH AT CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, MADRAS ¹

March 24, 1925

FRIENDS,

I am obliged to you for having invited me to meet you. I am obliged to you also for your address. I appreciate and understand your sentiments; the more so, as you may not admit it, but some day even you will admit that I am engaged in running the greatest co-operative society that the world has ever seen. I may fail miserably and if I fail it will be because of your weakness or want of response. I am engaged in running a cooperative society in which 300 millions of people of this earth may become willing members, men, women and children, lepers and men—men who are in perfect health and lepers in mind, body and soul. So you see that at least here there is a desire to follow literally the maxim that you have got, viz., “Each shall live for all and all shall live for each.” If you really measure the value of that teaching, you will find the hidden meaning of that truth and understand the deep and hidden meaning of the spinning wheel. Therefore, I invite you, the co-operators, to join the greatest co-operative society in the world. You cannot begin to do that unless you make up your minds to spin for at least half an hour per day, and unless you adopt khaddar as your costume.

The Hindu, 24-3-1925

19. SPEECH AT AYURVEDIC PHARMACY, MADRAS ²

March 24, 1925

Mahatamaji said that perhaps those responsible for the function did not realize that he seemed to be entirely out of tune there. They did not know that he made these remarks even when he performed the opening ceremony of a medical college with which his esteemed friend Hakim Ajmal Khan, was connected. From his chair on that occasion he had to dissociate himself from much that went under the name of Unani, Ayurvedic or European medicine. He was opposed to indiscriminate use of drugs. It did not give any pleasure to him to hear that Dr. Sri Ramacharlu was able to distribute his medicines amongst two lakhs of people or twenty lakhs of people. He could not

¹ In reply to a welcome address presented by the Triplicane Urban Cooperative Society at Big Street

² In reply to its welcome address at Mount Road

congratulate the doctor on his successful advertisement of makaradhwaja¹. What was wanted among their physicians was a real touch of humility. It was a matter of good fortune to him to have friends among both allopathic doctors and Ayurvedic and Unani physicians; but they all knew his mind thoroughly that he could not possibly endorse their activities in the distribution of drugs.

He wished the physicians of the modern day took the role of the physicians of old, when they gave their lifetime to make researches and distribute relief among the people without taking a single farthing. That was unfortunately not the case today. What he noticed at present was that the Ayurvedic physicians were trying to live on the past glories of Ayurveda. The system of diagnosis was still in the primitive stage and it could not be in any measure compared with that prevailing under the Western system. Whatever might be said of the Western system—he had said a great deal on that subject—one thing must be said in its favour, that it had got humility and it had got research; and there were physicians and surgeons who gave their whole time to this work, the world not knowing them. He wished that spirit would fire the Ayurvedic physicians. But unfortunately what he noticed today was hunger for wealth and renown and hunger for coming to the top. That was not the way in which they would be able to serve Ayurveda. He knew there were most potent and efficacious drugs in Ayurveda. But today because they had forgotten the art, they had really lost the use of that. He had discussed these things with many physicians and they had nodded assent to all that he had been saying.

You would not call me a dear friend of yours, when you have purposely invited me to come here, if I do not utter this truth that is lying deeply rooted in me. And it is a result not of a day's thought or a hurried thought; but it is the result of nearly 40 years of observation and also experiments in hygiene and sanitation. As a result of these things, I have come to the deliberate conclusion that the best physician is one who administers the least number of drugs. The surgeon who performed the operation on the late King Edward and so successfully performed it, has said that in his pharmacopoeia there were but two or three drugs that he used. Otherwise he left nature to do its own work. I trust that our physicians understand the secret that nature is the sweetest, the quickest and the best restorer of health, whereas what I find is that all kinds of experiments are being made, arousing the basest passions of humanity. The advertisements that I see of medicines made me sick. I feel that physicians are rendering no service to

¹ An Ayurvedic medicinal preparation

humanity whatsoever but the greatest disservice by claiming every medicine as the panacea for all ills of life. I plead for humility, simplicity and truth.

The Hindu, 24-3-1925

20. SPEECH ON PROHIBITION, MADRAS¹

March 24, 1925

It is a very great pleasure that I am able today to speak to you on the matter of temperance and it is a matter of great honour that I am doing so under the chairmanship of one whom I revere for her long, great and continuous services to the motherland. The cause of temperance I have handled now, I think, for 30 years, if not longer. The horror of drink I have inherited from my revered mother when she gave me her permission to proceed to England. Some of you may know she imposed upon me three vows or obligations, one of which was that I should abstain from drinking. I may tell you that she did not know what a great curse the drink evil was. She had no knowledge of the masses and the destruction that the drink evil was bringing into their homes. In the place where I was brought up and at the time of which I am now speaking to you there was probably very little drinking going on in that beautiful little city, Rajkot. However, the fact that she imposed this obligation on me, naturally, put me upon my guard and set me thinking also why it was that rather than imposing other vows she had imposed these three vows of which this was one. I set sail and I met several people on board. I was a duffer and could not carry on a sustained conversation with my fellow-passengers in English. One of them was from Kutch, a district in Kathiawar, and he told me that after we had crossed the Bay of Biscay I would be compelled to drink. I said I would wait. He asked what I would do if my doctors advised drink. I said I would die if that were the only condition on which I could live, rather than break a sacred promise deliberately made to my mother.

So I proceeded to London. I saw everything that was going on before my eyes whenever I stood in front of those great palaces called public houses, where people went in as sober men and came out of

¹ At a meeting of temperance workers at the Gokhale Hall. Dr. Besant presided.

these so-called palaces dead drunk. I had absolutely no opportunity to do any work in England. It filled one with a great desire for working in the cause of temperance and a great desire for rescuing Indians from this curse. I may also inform you that the time when I went to London was the time when some of the students and teachers were infatuated with everything Western and so they drank on the liner and it was supposed to be a fashionable thing to do so. So when I observed this in London, I felt that I should work in order to wean away the youths of our country from indulging in drink in this land.

Little did I know that I would find myself within two years of my return to India in South Africa and amidst some of the poorest of our land, all of whom were given not only to drinking but drinking to excess. But such was my good fortune or misfortune, whichever you may call it, that I witnessed the ruin, in Natal, among the indentured Indians, of hundreds of helpless women as well as men who were given to drinking. I tried—and in those days I was not a non-co-operator; although I was fighting the Government in different parts of South Africa, I was closely co-operating with them in all humility wherever they accepted the co-operation so tendered—I tried to persuade them to prohibit drinking among our own countrymen. You will be painfully surprised to know that I had to face opposition from our own countrymen and they set up the question of rights and privileges and they said that where Europeans could drink freely, Indians must also have that right. (Laughter.) It was not possible for me and, I must confess, it was to my shame that the majority of them I was really unable to convince, even after 20 years' stay in South Africa, that was a question which admitted of no privilege and competition. If I had time I could give pictures of captains who were dead drunk, when sailing under them was really a dangerous thing; not that they wanted to drink to excess but that they forgot themselves. Some of them had become my friends but when they took to these things I saw what a curse it proved to them; what a danger they were to the community which was at that time under their absolute charge. I told my friends that it was not a matter of right, that if we at least for ourselves could secure prohibition, we could save these families. And ever since that time it has been a question with me and some of my friends who were against me on the matter of prohibition *versus* purely taking the gospel of temperance to the

homes of the people.

I have definitely come to the conclusion that merely preaching amongst the masses will not do, for they do not know what they are doing. I was, just before I came to this Presidency, travelling as you are aware, in Kathiawar. It is a place which contains numerous small principalities. In one of these places the families of men who were given to this wretched habit pleaded that they should be saved from themselves. How could I save them from themselves except by prohibiting distillation altogether, except for medicinal purposes? I would apply absolutely the same formula to drink as the opium leagues in America are applying to opium. I do not know whether opium is a greater evil than drink. Possibly there is not much to choose, but from a purely moral point of view I am inclined to think that if I had to give a decided opinion, I would vote against drinking because drinking saps the moral foundations. I know thousands of men who consider themselves moderate drinkers but they have not trained themselves to be moderate in their habits. I have bosom friends who knew no distinction between wife, mother and sister, but when they revive and regain their senses, they do not understand what an evil it was, and go to it again and again. I recall the instance of a friend, an English friend from Australia. He was earning £40 a month. It is a good income. He was a fine engineer and, I may tell you, Madam, that he was a good theosophist because he really wanted to be helped against himself. He asked me whether I knew anything because he knew my inclination in this direction that I was a dietician and reformer about diet and that I had dabbled in these things. So we became friends through that small theosophical circle which often used to invite me to attend their meetings. His name was Patterson. I don't know what he is doing today. He struggled against the heaviest odds. So long as he was with me and under my roof, he kept himself under restraint. Immediately we were separated, a few days later I received a letter from him saying, "I have gone back again." Such is the mastery that it gets over men. Opium does likewise, it stupefies and it deadens us but drink excites and stimulates so much that from the lap of God we find ourselves in the lap of Satan.

Therefore, I feel that if we could persuade our legislators to give up this income from opium and drink, I would do so today. I would sacrifice the education of all our children, If we could not educate them without this revenue. But I do not want to speak to you this morning about his revenue that we are deriving from our unfortunate

countrymen. Better it is or me that I should place before you some of my experiences and tell you how it is possible to work amongst the people because legislation is a matter not given to all of us. It is for the legislators and it is given to the Government. But to reach these homes and take a little bit of comfort to them is given to everyone of us. I have found by experience that it is not preaching that will serve the purpose at all. We must go into these homes and study their lives. I fully endorse your remarks, Madam, that it would be no solution of the problem unless we probe into the causes. Our countrymen, I say, people all over the world, do not drink for the sake of drinking. Those who have drunk or tasted liquor tell me that the taste of it was not fine. There is no delicacy about it unless there may be delicacy about wines a hundred or two hundred years old. That was not what millions of the people drink or can possibly drink. I am inclined to think that it was an acquired taste. I am talking of ordinary liquors. They tell me that they take it more for the after-effects, the delirium that it produces, the momentary pleasure that they have when they forget themselves. All of us perhaps at some time of our lives have to forget ourselves. We can recall some pleasures which are no pleasures but are really painful, I was going to use a stronger expression, "hell fire". So if we want to do temperance work we should go to the homes, not [look down] from our lofty superior heights and not treat these countrymen of ours with contempt, not consider ourselves angels coming from heaven because we do not drink and they drink. We must ask ourselves when we go there whether we would not have done exactly the same thing that they do. Do you know what the labourers in Bombay are doing? They are in boxes miscalled houses. There is no ventilation; not one family but many families live in the same room, which these wretched people often sublet, many times contrary to regulations; because they spend their all on drink and they have to feed their starving children. For the sake of those children not only do they sublet but they gamble and indulge in all conceivable vices.

Why do they drink? Living in pestilential dens, they are suffocated. You don't go to their places. They work for 8 or 10 hours under overseers who are goading them to the task. You do not go there and return from one den to another much worse. You do not serve under these conditions. When you cannot get good and clean rice, when you get *atta* (flour) putrefied and fermented and when even for their babies they cannot get milk, you will understand their condition. Even some of the richest gentlemen in Bombay cannot get

pure and unadulterated milk, unless they keep cows or buffaloes in their homes. It is very difficult for even a millionaire to keep cows or buffaloes in Bombay which is horribly over-crowded. Then what are these people to do? They have no homes as you can see. Their workshop is a hell. They have no friends to give them advice. They have no God because they have forgotten God, they almost fancy there is no God because if there was a God they would not be so forsaken. Such is their miserable condition.

What can we do for them? Let some of you go to those places and try to live in those dens and then see whether you do not also want to drink. With my own hands I have given rum to the people in the Boer War, in the forced march we had to make under the sultry sun. One of the wounded soldiers that we carried was the late General Woodgate. Among the stretcher-bearers who did valiant work there were some who were given to drink. They said: "You must get us at least some rum, if you want work from us tomorrow, for those who do hard work". I pleaded with them: "I have marched with you and rum was allowed as a ration. Especially with others who don't want rum, must you have it?" They said, "Yes". I went to the officer in charge of the rations and signed a memorandum, as I was in charge of the Ambulance Corps. I had the greatest pleasure to give them the rum, not without compunction, mind you. I can feel so if I was in the midst of labourers and under these trying circumstances I would feel tempted to give rum, whisky, brandy, whatever it was, to these men so that they might forget their sorrow. That is the origin of this curse. Men and women helplessly go to it and, if you want to redeem them, you can never do it by speeches. We shall do it by going down to them and by stooping to conquer, by trying to understand their difficulties and trying to remove them. In the attempt to remove those difficulties you must remain firm, and if you remained untouched and free there is hope for you and hope for them. Otherwise there is no other hope. I thought I could give you a bit of my experience and I would engage your attention upon scores of such instances drawn from life, everyone of them; not merely in one part of India but almost from every part of India, not from one stratum of society but from all strata and not merely in South Africa but also in England. But, I think, I have told you enough at least to fire the ambition of some of you to make researches in that direction. You have got in the slums of Madras many men and women who do not think of the severe nature of the problem. If you will think of the whole problem

you will be baffled. It is not one man's work. It is not given to all to compass this magnificent work. But like every drop in the ocean which singly will not enable a great steamer to sail but will do so if all drops stand, let all stand in their places resolute so that they could perform the Herculean task. If we regard ourselves as the drops in the sea, a miserable drop, and will be true to ourselves, I have no doubt that a day will dawn upon India when the drink curse will have vanished. (Loud applauses.)

The Hindu, 24-3-1925

21. SPEECH AT HINDI PRACHAR KARYALAYA, MADRAS¹

March 24, 1925

FRIENDS,

It is a strange thing for me to have to speak to you in English although this is a place where Hindi is supposed to be under-stood. As a majority of those present just now do not know Hindi, I propose to confine my speech to the English language. Hindi pro-paganda is, in my opinion, a necessary thing for the growth of real nationalism in India especially, as that nationalism is to be conceived in terms of the masses. More than five years ago, this idea was conceived in Indore when I presided over the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan Conference. At that time the idea was that for five years the whole propaganda should be conducted with money collected from outside the Southern Presidency, as the majority of the speakers were Marwari gentlemen who were lovers of Hindi. Five years have elapsed and something has been done to make it self-supporting. I, therefore, seek another opportunity of saying that the Southern Presidency should take this burden from off the shoulders of the North. It is a matter of duty on their part to do so. There are very few young men who study and learn Hindi. When the idea was conceived, I thought that there would be young men who would be flocking to the free Hindi classes in the name of the Congress whenever they could. But it has been a matter of great disappointment to me and to those who are conducting the classes that the young men have given very little encouragement. But it is not for us to give way to despair. This institution is going to

¹ In reply to an address of welcome in Hindi presented by the Hindi Prachar Samiti, Madras

remain here even though there may be only one Tamilian wishing to learn Hindi, because those who have taken this burden on their shoulders have full faith in themselves. At the same time the lovers of Hindi language who bring the language to the door of the Tamils are bound to tell them that they have not received adequate response.

The Hindu, 24-3-1925

22. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, MADRAS

March 24, 1925

As you know, throughout my journey in India, I meet students, both boys and girls, but whenever I come to the South, I meet many more girls than I meet elsewhere except, perhaps in Bengal, because in Bengal the education of girls has gone forward much more than in other parts of Upper India but, by no means, so much as in South India. I was really surprised to see the stride that education among girls had taken in the State of Travancore. It was a perfect eye-opener to me. The question has always occurred to me: "What will India do with its modern girls?" I call you modern girls of India. The education that we are receiving on these institutions, in my opinion, does not correspond with the life around us, and, when I say life around us, I do not mean the life around us in the cities but the life around us in the villages. Perhaps some of you girls, if not all of you, know that real India is to be found not here in the very few cities but in the seven hundred thousand villages covering a surface of 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad. The question is whether you have any message for your sisters in the villages. Men do not need the message perhaps so much as the women, and I have long before come to the conclusion that unless women of India work side by side with men, there is no salvation for India, salvation in more senses than one. I mean political salvation in the broadest sense, and I mean economic salvation and spiritual salvation also.

We may call ourselves Christians, Hindus or Mohammedans. Whatever we may be, beneath that diversity there is a oneness which is unmistakable and underneath many religions there is also one religion. As far as my experience goes, at one time or other, we, the Mohammedans, Christians or Hindus, discover that there are many points of contact and very few points of difference. Then I would like you to ask yourselves whether you have any message for the villages, for the women of the villages, for your sisters there. I am afraid you will also come to the same conclusion as I have, that you will never

have a message unless something is added to your education. It is true that the present educational system takes no notice of the village life. It is not so in other parts of the world. In the others parts of the world, I have noticed that those in charge of education take note of the masses of the people among whom these products of schools and colleges have to live and have to disperse, among whom they have to act. But in India, I have noticed that the student world is isolated from the masses of the people. I have no doubt that some of you are poor girls descended of poor parents. If you have not made that discovery yourselves, I ask you to make it for yourselves and ask yourselves whether the things that you learnt here you are able to take to them or whether there is real correspondence between home life and school life. The lack of that correspondence has appeared to be the tragedy. I have suggested, therefore, to the whole student world of India to add something to what they are learning in schools, and then you will find there will be some satisfaction for themselves and some satisfaction for the masses also and to those who will be so good as to think of the masses.

I have known that Christian girls and Christian boys, at least some of them, consider that they have nothing in common with the vast masses of people. That is mere ignorance. No good Christian nowadays says that and, I am sure, no one here in charge of your education gives you that training and teaches you that you have nothing in common with the masses. No matter to what religion you belong, I say that you were born in India, take Indian food and pass your life in India. Your life would be incomplete in more senses than one unless you can identify yourselves with the masses. What is that bond between the masses and yourselves? You may know or you may be told about the ridiculous percentage of literacy in India. You will perhaps be told that the literacy in India is on the decrease whilst higher education is increasing. Somehow or other, education among the masses is decreasing. Whereas every village had a school 50 years ago, these schools have gone for want of patrons. The Government had established new schools but unfortunately those in charge of the educational system took no notice of these village schools. The proportion of literate people in India today is really less than the proportion that existed 50 years ago.

What is the message? I suggest the spinning-wheel because of the deep poverty of the Indian masses. Some of us know that in this country, at any rate among the masses, women have to earn side by

side with the men. This is perhaps one of the few countries in the world where women do the hard task also. I am coming from a part of India where women take up even a shovel or a pickaxe. They do the work on the roads and break stones. One hundred years ago, they did not do this. Whenever social workers go to work among the masses, women surround them and ask for the spinning-wheel so that they might get a few pice. This may mean nothing to you but they mean a fortune to them. I wish that your Principal will one day take you to the surrounding villages so that you might have an ocular demonstration of what the women of India are doing. You will not then need that I should press this message home to you. You will have to take up the spinning-wheel, which is the bond that will tie you indissolubly to the masses. Let it be for ever a reminder to you. After your education is finished you will not disappear from public life; you will not disappear in the household simply doing the household work but you will extend your helping hand to the poor and needy, who need all the help that can be given to them. I hope this will serve as an inestimable instrument in your hands to bring cheer into those unhappy homes where extreme desolation prevails. The historians of India will tell us that about one-tenth of the population live in semi-starvation. Can you contemplate that with any degree of satisfaction? Can I not hope to fire you with the ambition to serve them? I see that a majority of you are Christians. Let me remind you of one saying of Jesus. He said: "It would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Remembering this, dedicate the education that you are receiving for the use of the poor.

May God bless you!

The Hindu, 25-3-1925

23. SPEECH AT "SWARAJYA" OFFICE, MADRAS¹

March 24, 1925

You have very clearly set forth what my ambition at the present moment is. Eating, walking, sleeping and doing everything, I can think of nothing but the spinning of khaddar, removal of untouchability and unity of almost all classes and races. But there is a

¹ T. Prakasam, the editor, presented an address of welcome to Gandhiji on behalf of the directors and staff of *Swarajya*.

limit to our capacity for doing the work in the last two things; all cannot pay equal contribution to the removal of untouchability and all cannot also pay equal contribution to the bringing together of the different classes say, at the present day, the Hindus and Mussalmans, or, as I now discover, the non-Brahmins and Brahmins. (Laughter.) As I say, this is not one in which everyone could only assist or simply refrain by doing anything [*sic*]. Therefore, it takes a negative character; whereas in spinning and khaddar the young, the old and debilitated could do their very best. A little *Panchama* boy could beat Mr. Prakasam hollow, if he chooses, in hand-spinning, (Laughter.) and a man in the street can give points to Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, so far as wearing khaddar is concerned.

I feel thankful, therefore, for the reassurance given to me in this address that *Swarajya* will not abandon this message of khaddar and of the spinning-wheel, but it will carry it to the hamlets. I do not know how it will carry it to the hamlets, because people do not read the English *Swarajya*. I know that is the only programme before the country which is incredibly the simplest proposition in which all could participate. But the simplest of propositions carry with them the significance of the highest order. I know, I have only this message to give at the present moment and that is our unfortunate tragic position. As I said, speaking to the girls of the college, illiteracy in India is very great and only a small percentage of our people can read and write. How can they take the message from the newspapers? Therefore, I have suggested to Mr. Prakasam at Poona that he should become a walking newspaper, and to everyone. If we talk less or talk simply of the spinning-wheel, then the message of the spinning-wheel would spread. Take the spinning-wheel, plant yourself in some place in the village and simply turn it away. The villagers and their children will take to it.

I was really that all our newspapers talk about nothing but the charkha just as you know during the War and even after the War, every home in Europe talked of nothing but the War and its evils. Why may we not do the same thing, if we are convinced that there is no other living tangible programme before the country, and as far as I know, this is the only tangible programme before the country. Therefore, let this message percolate from this office to every hamlet at least in the Southern Presidency. (Loud cheers.)

The Hindu, 25-3-1925

24. SPEECH AT SCAVENGERS' MEETING, MADRAS

March 24, 1925

The scavengers living in Kuppathoti Maidan near Monigar Choultry welcomed Mahatmaji last evening. . . . A member of this profession read a welcome address in Telugu to which Mahatmaji made a brief reply in Hindi which was translated by Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu. Mahatma Gandhi impressed upon them the necessity to observe the principles of sanitation in their daily lives. He advised them to be clean and tidy in their dress and to take a bath every day in the morning. They should pray to God early in the morning and evening. He was sorry to see most of them dressed in dirty clothes. They must not leave their work nor spend their income by taking to vicious habits like drink. In conclusion, he asked them to spin and wear khaddar.

The Hindu, 25-3-1925

25. SPEECH IN REPLY TO CONGRESS SABHA ADDRESS, MADRAS¹

March 24, 1925

FRIENDS,

I thank you for the address you have presented to me. You know the remedy that I have suggested for the attainment of swaraj. The first thing is that we must all spin for the sake of the country for at least half an hour. We must all wear khaddar, hand-spun and hand-woven. You will not gain anything by crowding in thousands at such meetings if you do not listen to what is being said to you. You must, therefore, everyone of you, discard your foreign cloth and wear khaddar. Hindus must regard untouchability as a crime and a sin. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Jews must all remain together and live together in Peace and brotherliness. We must give up drink and gambling and we must all, in due humility, worship God according to our own ways and early in the morning, after having washed our mouth, cleaned our teeth and having regained perfect possession of our faculties, we must announce the name of God and ask Him to help us to be and remain good. We must ask Him to help us to do our duty by our country. We must not think ill of anybody or think of injuring anybody. And if we can do these things, I can see my way clear to attain our freedom in an incredibly short time. If we are to do all these things, we must learn how to keep discipline. All the noise

¹ At Peddunaikenpet

you make, whether it is about me or whether it is about any other servant of the nation, is of no use whatsoever.

If we want, on due occasions, to give expression to certain national cries, they must be given expression to in a musical manner and they must not be taken up on every occasion and every time, but there must be fixed occasions and when the leader takes up the cry others should follow. We heard a great deal of noise at the time when we commenced the meeting. If we are to be soldiers of the nation, we must do even as the soldiers do. Therefore our movements should be orderly. We should be able to hold meetings which thousands can attend without discomfort and without any noise. It is no use trying to touch my feet and shower flowers upon me. By such blind affection and devotion you will be no nearer to swaraj than you are today. Now, I wait to test you just now to see whether you have understood what I have been saying, whether the truth has gone home to you. I am about to finish my speech. I want you not to shout but give me a clear passage to go out without any of you touching my feet, and enable me to pass through swiftly. It should not be necessary for volunteers to form cordons in order to protect me from your embarrassing affection. But before I put you to that test, I want to sum up what I have been saying. This is my last meeting in Madras. From you I am straightaway going to the station. The programme that I have sketched before you now has been before the nation since 1920. I hope to return to this Presidency inside of three months and one thing that I hope is to see everyone I meet in Madras clad from top to toe in hand-spun khaddar. I hope you will besiege Congress offices for cotton and slivers for spinning or spinning-wheels. I pray to God that He may give you all the wisdom to see the necessity of doing what I have been asking you to do and the strength to do these things. I am exceedingly thankful to you for the great patience and silence with which you have listened to my remarks. Now comes the test. I expect all friends on this side of this meeting to give me clear passage and also to keep sitting till I have boarded the car. If you will but do this little thing I shall go easily filled with hope of you and hope of India. God bless you! (Loud applause.)

The Hindu, 25-3-1925

26. ALL ABOUT TRAVANCORE

A LAND OF BEAUTY

It was a perfect pleasure to visit Travancore and incidentally Cochin. It is a land of perfect beauty. My few days in Travancore were days of incessant journeying and meeting vast crowds of people. Travancore is blessed with a magnificent waterway and equally magnificent roads. Its extreme length is 179 miles and breadth 75 miles. Its area is 7,625 square miles more than half of which is covered by hills and forests. I entered at the northern entrance. Vykombathur lies almost on the northern border. The route lay through a beautiful waterway studded on either side with luxuriant vegetation, chiefly palms. I was taken to the extreme south, the Cape Comorin, where the sea daily washes in adoration the feet of *Hind Mata*¹. And as I travelled, I seemed to go from one end of a beautifully laid out garden to the other. Travancore is not a country containing a few towns and many villages. It looks like one vast city containing a population of over 4,00,000 males and females almost equally divided and distributed in small farms studded with pleasant looking cottages. There was, therefore, here none of the ugliness of so many Indian villages in which human beings and cattle live together in an overcrowded state in spite of the open air and open space surrounding them. How the Malabarites are able to live thus in isolated cottages and to feel, as they evidently do, safe from the robber and the beast I do not know. Those of whom I inquired about the cause could not say anything beyond corroborating my inference that both men and women must be brave.

THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The woman in India lives nowhere in greater freedom than in Malabar. She is more than well protected by the local law and custom. Education among women is nowhere greater than in Travancore. Indeed Travancore appears educationally to be the most advanced part of India. In 1922, general literacy was 244 per thousand of the population, 330 in the case of males and 150 in the case of females. This literacy is daily increasing both among males and females. The backward classes are taking their full share in this wonderful progress. This progress even disturbs a sceptic like me. If all the education

¹ Mother India

means a general discontent with one's surroundings, a wrench with the past without hope for the future and a general scramble for employment, the whole of the beautiful edifice must one fine morning come down with a sudden crash. Without the culture of the heart and the hand mere growth of literacy has no attraction for me. What is wanted therefore is a drastic measure giving not an indifferent manual training but a proper occupational training specially designed to make it worth while for highly educated men not to look up to Government service but to farming, or say weaving, for their maintenance. Unless the mind of the student world is given a bent in the direction of the main and natural sources of livelihood and is developed in a scientific spirit in keeping with the special Indian conditions, the gulf between the educated classes and the masses must widen, the former must live on the latter instead of the former living with and for the latter and sweetening their life.

HER HIGHNESS THE MAHARANI REGENT

But I do not wish to write this note in a critical spirit. For the photograph I have on my mind of Travancore is altogether pleasing. My visit to Her Highness was an agreeable surprise for me. Instead of my being ushered into the presence of an over-decorated woman, sporting costly diamond pendants and necklaces, I found myself in the presence of a modest young woman who relied not upon jewels or gaudy dress for beauty but on her own naturally well-formed features and exactness of manners. Her room was as plainly furnished as she was plainly dressed. Her severe simplicity became the object of my envy. She seemed to me an object lesson for many a prince and many a millionaire whose loud ornamentation, ugly looking diamonds, rings and studs and still more loud and almost vulgar furniture offend the taste and present a terrible and sad contrast between them and the masses from whom they derive their wealth. I had the honour too of waiting on the young Maharaja and the junior Maharani. I found the same simplicity pervading the palace. His Highness was dressed in a spotlessly white dhoti worn in the form of a *lungi*, and vest reaching just below the waist. I do not think he had even a finger-ring for an ornament. The junior Maharani was as simply dressed as the senior Maharani the Regent. It was with difficulty that I

could see on her person a thin delicate *mangala mala*¹. Both the ladies had on their persons spotlessly white cotton hand-woven saris and half-sleeved jackets of similar stuff without any lace or embroidery.

The reader must pardon this minute description of the Travancore royalty. It has a lesson for us all. The royal simplicity was so natural because it was in keeping with the whole of the surroundings. I must own that I have fallen in love with the women of Malabar. Barring Assam I have not seen the women of India so simply yet elegantly dressed as the women of Malabar. But let the Assamese sisters know that the women of Malabar are, if possible, simpler still. They do not require even borders to their saris. The length needed is under four yards, a sharp contrast to the Tamil sisters on the east coast who need nearly ten yards heavily coloured saris. The Malabari women reminded me of Sita as she must have been dressed when she hallowed with her beautiful bare feet the fields and forests of India along the route she traversed. To me their white dress has meant the emblem of purity within. I was told that in spite of the utmost freedom they enjoyed, the women of Malabar were exceptionally chaste. The eyes of the most educated and advanced girls I met betokened the same modesty and gentleness with which God has perhaps endowed the women of India in an exceptional degree. Neither their freedom nor their education seemed to have robbed them of this inimitable grace of theirs. The men of Malabar in general are also just as simple in their taste as the women. But, sad to say, their so-called high education has affected the men for the worse and many have added to the simple articles of their original dress and in so doing have purchased discomfort in the bargain. For, in the melting climate of this country the fewest white garments are the proper thing. In making unnatural unbecoming additions they violate the laws of both art and health.

WANT OF KHADDAR

After all this generally flattering description of the men and women of Malabar, the reader would expect to find here the widest use of khaddar. I am sorry, however, to say that such is not the case. Though there is no warrant for the use of mill-made cloth in Malabar, khaddar has made but little progress. If khaddar was well-organized, the people would take to it without the slightest difficulty. For they have not the excuse for not using it that the people in other parts of India have. They want no colours. They do not need large lengths. They wear no turbans or other head-dress. They are, therefore, well

¹ Auspicious necklace

able to take to khaddar without the need of a revolution in their tastes. Not one Malabari spoke to me about the difficulty of persuading the people to adopt khaddar. Some did speak to me about its prohibitive cost. But locally made khaddar need not be dear. For the wages here are low. But no one has thought of organizing the wheel and khaddar. Happily the art has not altogether died out. Near the Cape there is still held a fair at which hand-spun yarn is sold. There are thousands of weavers who are weaving mill-spun yarn.

The Provincial Congress Committee has done some thing but it is sadly little. The Vykom satyagrahis have been doing much more. But ever so much more requires to be done.

THE HOPE

The Legislative Council has recently passed a resolution requiring the Government to introduce the spinning-wheel in the State Vernacular Schools. The Dewan in his address to Sri Mulam Popular Assembly said that effect would be given to the resolution during the next school year, the necessary provision for the purpose having been made in the current year's budget and the services of a competent spinning instructor having been advertised for. A great deal can be done to popularize hand-spinning if the local Government act in a business-like manner. The State has a hand-weaving department. It has a textile expert. The reference in the address to hand-weaving is worth reproducing. Here it is:

The textile expert was directed to devote his attention first to the improvement of handloom weaving which is the most important cottage industry in the country. For the introduction and demonstration of improved methods in weaving and dyeing, a central technical institute on a large scale is necessary. The required buildings are in process of construction within the premises of the School of Arts, which have been enlarged by the acquisition of adjoining lands. Pending their completion, a beginning has been made in a rented building, where the textile expert has taken six students each for training in weaving, dyeing and knitting, and is demonstrating improved methods of knitting and handloom weaving and the possibility of utilizing indigenous dyes for dyeing. The institution is open to the public and it is hoped that the people interested in these matters will freely visit it. Two itinerant weaving parties have been entertained to work among cottage weavers in the southern and the northern taluks of the State respectively. It is through these parties that the results obtained by the experiments of the textile expert are spread among the numerous cottage weavers scattered over

the whole State. It is reported about 200 dhobis were newly introduced by these parties into the country during 1099. Two depots have been opened for the sale, at cheap rates, of loom accessories to cottage weavers, one at Trivandrum and the other at Nagarcoil, and the itinerant parties also carry for sale these accessories to the cottage weavers' doors.

The same thing that is being done regarding weaving will have to be done regarding hand-spinning if it is to be successful. The department can improve the wheels and inspect those that may be in use. It can give loans of wheels to the poor people and sell them on hire-purchase system. It can encourage voluntary spinning by undertaking weaving at a cheap rate. It can encourage the weavers to take to using hand-spun yarn. What can be more graceful or more appropriate than the royalty taking to spinning and thus popularizing it among the submerged classes? The population is roughly as follows:

Brahmins	60,000
Cast Hindus	7,85,000
Untouchables	17,00,000
Christians	11,72,934
Mussalmans	2,70,478
Animists	12,637
Other religions	349
Total	<u>40,01,398¹</u>

Of these, the majority of the seventeen lakhs of untouchables and the eleven lakhs of Christians are very poor. To them spinning as a home industry during leisure hours must be a veritable blessing. Those who have farms do not and cannot work in them the whole day.

The State concentration on the development of this great national industry and the State patronage of khaddar will, at a stroke, increase the saving or, which is the same thing, the income of the people by at least Rs. 12,000,000 counting only Rs. 3 per head of population, for the labour to be spent upon the cotton before it is turned into cloth required for the use of its 40 lakhs of people. An extremely well regulated State like Travancore can solve the problem of famines, floods and poverty in an incredibly short time by handling the question of hand-spinning in a scientific manner.

¹ The source, however, has "40,06,062".

TO THE CHRISTIANS

It was a sad sight to see the Christians from the Bishop downward using foreign cloth. They are the most educated and progressive community in the State. They owe it to the country to use their high education and intelligence for its service. The best service they can render is to adopt spinning and khaddar and lead the way for the other communities. I single out the Christians because they are better organized than the Hindus and the Mussalmans. They are the most influential and the most numerous here compared to the Christians in other parts of India. They can, therefore, easily take the lead in Travancore though they cannot be expected to do so elsewhere.

THE DRINK CURSE

The one thing most deplorable next to untouchability is the drink curse. The total excise revenue of the State was, in 1922, Rs. 46,94,300 against land revenue Rs. 38,18,652 and out of a total revenue of Rs. 1,96,70,130. This I regard as a most serious blot upon the administration. That so much of its revenue should be derived from intoxicants affords food for serious reflection. The excise revenue subdivides itself thus:

<i>Abkari</i>	Rs. 26,82,367
Opium and Ganja	Rs. 3,11,635
Tobacco	<u>Rs. 17,00,298</u>
Total	Rs. 46,94,300

Thus the liquor revenue is a terrific item. I was told that the drink was most prevalent among the Christians and that it was decimating hundreds of homes and bringing poverty and disgrace upon thousands of men otherwise able and intelligent. From all one can see, the State is looking upon the increasing revenue with philosophic calmness, if not pleasure. The communities are playing with the evil and playing at temperance. It is necessary to stamp out the evil before it is too late. The most effective method no doubt is to make the getting of liquor impossible except upon a medical prescription. How to give up the largest source of revenue is the question. If I was the autocrat able to impose my will upon Travancore, I would remove that source of revenue altogether and close every liquor shop, take a census of those who are addicted to the habit and find out means of giving them healthy refreshments

and healthy amusement or employment as the case may be and rely upon the people turned sober, contributing to the revenue more by their increased efficiency than by drinking. But the days of autocracy are over. Democracy is the autocrat. The Legislative Council and the Popular Assembly can do the whole thing. It would be wrong to fling one stone at the Maharani Regent and another at the Dewan and say that the duty was done. The people are having a daily increasing share in the administration of the State. They are extremely well-educated. They can force the State to use the whole of the revenue while it is being received, towards the eradication of the evil and insist upon closing the nefarious traffic in a year's time. But whether it can be done in a year, for it must take longer, is for the people to decide. Let them know that there is a snake in the grass. And I respectfully ask once more, who can lead in this matter if not the Christians? My importunity to the Christians does not absolve either the Hindus or the Mussalmans. But in such matters the first appeal must be to the stronger party.

UNAPPROACHABILITY

I have reserved the question that took me to Travancore to the last. I have positively dreaded to write about it. I have remained in exile during the best years of my life and after reaching the age of responsibility. Having returned, I have been absorbed in a series of undertakings which have excluded all other pursuits. I must, therefore, confess my ignorance of many things that as an Indian I should have known. Although I know vaguely that Travancore was called a progressive state, I did not know anything of the marvellous progress it had made in some directions, nor did I know of the ravishing beauty of its landscape. But when I saw with my own eyes what the State is, what a cultured ruler and what a cultured Dewan it had, this existence of unapproachability staggered and puzzled me. How the inhuman thing could exist in such a State with such a sovereign, such a Dewan and such a people, baffled me as it still baffles me. But for the satyagraha no one would have known anything of it. But now that it is known in its nakedness, I must own that I have become impatient for its removal. I am impatient because I am a Hindu, because the State is a Hindu State, because its Dewan is a Hindu, because the people are educated and because the evil is acknowledged. If it was the British Government, it could certainly plead neutrality if it wished. But since

it is a Hindu Government and in this case and in such cases it is not dominated or influenced—not so far as I am aware—by the British Government, it cannot plead or profess neutrality. It must take the side of reform and oppose blind orthodoxy or superstition even as it would take the side of the robbed and come down upon robbers with a heavy hand. A Hindu sovereign is the custodian of the dignity and protection of Hinduism against assault from without and disintegration and corruption from within. It can remove abuses that have crept into Hinduism without any difficulty or even in spite of it. Whilst, therefore, I have been able to appreciate the extreme caution observed by Her Highness and the Dewan Bahadur as representing the Government of Travancore, I have not been able to understand or appreciate the nervous anxiety about the consequences of removing the abuse. But I believe both to be anxious for the removal of the abuse. Though the local men have told me that but for the support, secret and open, given by Government officials to the opponents of reform there would not be even the little opposition that there is to the proposed reform, I have not been able to share this view. I am inclined to think that it is largely based upon suspicion. I, therefore, take at their face value the Dewan's references reproduced last week in these pages.¹ I am of opinion that the sincerely believes that there is a legal difficulty and that public opinion is not ripe for the reform by legislation. He, therefore, wants to bring it about by consent. The reformers claim that public opinion of *savarna* Hindus has been expressed with sufficient emphasis in that the vast majority of the *savarna* Hindus voted for the council resolution favouring the reform and that the caste Hindu *jatha* that travelled from Vykom to Trivandrum last year proved the same thing. They further point out that of nearly eight lakhs of caste Hindus, over seven lakhs are Nairs and that the Nairs are almost to a man in favour of the reform at least in so far as the use by the unapproachables of public or semi-public roads is concerned. They argue further that the temples are public property of which the Government are trustees. All this argument deserves consideration. But I still feel that it is open to the

¹ Vide Appendix "Extract from Dewan of Travancore's Speech on Vykom Satyagraha".

Government to dispute the inference that the opinion of the *savarnas* is overwhelmingly in favour of reform.

I had the privilege of meeting the opponents of reform who kindly permitted me to wait upon them.¹ They claim that the movement is confined only to a few youngsters, mostly outsiders, that the caste Hindus are overwhelmingly opposed to the claim of the unapproachables which they, the orthodox opponents, refuse to call reform. They contend that the prohibition to use the roads surrounding temples such as the one at Vykom has been handed down from immemorial times and is based on direct writings of Shankaracharya. The spokesman said that if the unapproachables were permitted to pass through the roads in question, the orthodox would not be able to go to the temple for worship. Asked whether Christians and Mussalmans were permitted to use these roads, he replied in the affirmative and said that they were superior to the unapproachables in as much as, he said, they, the unapproachables, were so born as a fit punishment for their misdeeds in the past incarnation and that the taint was indelible during their present incarnation. The spokesman who expressed these views is, I am told, a learned man. I have no doubt that he believes what he says. Whilst, therefore, I hold this view to be totally mistaken and contrary to Hinduism and humanity, I can find it in me to treat him as a friend worthy of regard and affection. That is my meaning of toleration. I do not look forward to a time when we shall all hold one and the same view but I do look forward to a time when we shall love one another in spite of the sharpest differences of opinion.

And so I made the following proposals to the friends:

1. They should produce Shankara's authority in support of their contention and I would advise the withdrawal of satyagraha from Vykom should the learned Shastris, whom I may consult, regard it as authentic and clearly bearing the construction sought to be put upon it by the orthodox party. It could not bind me for all places for the simple reason that even if Shankaracharya held the view in his time, I would not be bound by what appeared to me to be contrary to religion and humanity.

2. The whole matter could be referred to arbitration consisting of a learned man to be nominated by them, another to be

¹ Vide "Discussion with Caste Hindu Leaders, Vykom", 10-3-1925

nominated by me on behalf of the satyagrahis and the Dewan of Travancore to be the umpire.

3. A referendum to be taken of all the adult male and female caste Hindus of Vykam alone or of the whole of Travancore or selected areas according as they preferred. The Government should be invited to participate in the organization of the referendum.

The third proposal was put first by me as it was contended by the orthodox party that the caste Hindus were against the reform. But when I took them at their word and said that I would gladly agree to a referendum, the spokesmen veered round and said that in a matter of religious conviction a man could not be bound by the verdict of a majority. I appreciated the force of the suggestion and made the other two proposals. I may say in passing that I proposed a referendum because the present satyagraha is based upon the supposition that *savarna* public opinion is in favour of reform.

None of the proposals was, however, accepted by the gentlemen and I am sorry to say that we parted company without coming to any understanding. I then waited upon Her Highness and she granted me a patient and courteous hearing. She was anxious for the opening of the road at Vykam and appreciated the proposals made by me.

I waited also upon His Holiness Shri Narayan Swami Guru. He entirely approved of the satyagraha movement and said that violence would never succeed and that non-violence as the only method. The next day I waited upon the Dewan Bahadur. He too said he was entirely on the side of reform. His only difficulty was that as an administrator he could not legislate unless there was strong and clearly expressed public opinion. I suggested that he should insist upon the opponents of reform accepting one of my proposals. They could not entrench themselves behind an ancient custom if it was, as this was, contrary to humanity and public morals.

SATYAGRAHI'S DUTY

Here the matter rests for the time being. The satyagrahis hold the result in the hollow of their hands. They must continue without fatigue, without despair, without anger or irritation and with forbearance towards the opponents and the Government. By their dignified bearing and patient suffering they will break down the iron wall of prejudice and they will stimulate and draw public opinion towards them and will force the hands of the Government if the orthodoxy itself does not yield to their gentle treatment.

Young India, 26-3-1925

27. A CORRECTION

I wrote the other day¹ about a spinning class being opened in Seva Sadan. The sister who wrote to me says it was not Seva Sadan she referred to. It was the Sarasvat Hall where the class was to be opened. I am sorry for the error.

Young India, 26-3-1925

28. STONING TO DEATH

My brief note² on the penalty of stoning of death awarded against certain members of the Ahmadiya community has resulted in a great deal of correspondence on the subject. I am unable to print all the correspondence. But I am printing enough to put the reader in possession of the views of my correspondents. Here is what Maulana Zafar Ali Khan has to say in the matter.

I hasten to fulfil the promise which I made in my last letter to deal at some length with the controversial points arising out of your note on the stoning of certain *Qadianis* in Kabul. I have read the note over and over again and each successive study has strengthened me in the conviction that as President of the National Congress and above all in your personal capacity you had better left it unwritten. I reproduce the passages, which to my mind are open to exception:

“I understand that the stoning method is enjoined in the Koran only in certain circumstances which do not cover the cases under observation. But as a human being living in fear of God, I should question the morality of the method under any circumstance whatsoever. Whatever may have been necessary or permissible during the Prophet’s lifetime and in that age this particular form of penalty cannot be defended on the mere ground of its mention in the Koran. Every formula of every religion has in this age of reason to submit to the acid test of reason and universal justice if it is to ask for universal assent. Error can claim no exemption even if it can be supported by the scriptures of the world. . . . It is the form of penalty that wounds the human conscience. Both reason and heart refuse to reconcile themselves to torture for any crime no matter how vile the crime may be.”

The opening lines of the above extract are open to correction. The

¹ *Vide*, “Notes”, 5-3-1925, sub-title, “An Oasis in the Desert”.

² *Vide* “Notes”, 26-2-1925, sub-title “Stoning to Death”. Subsequently, Gandhiji wrote on the subject in “My Crime”, 5-3-1925 and in “Notes”, 12-3-1925, sub-title, “No Stoning in Koran”.

Koran nowhere prescribes stoning to death as a penalty for any crime and you have erroneously attributed to it a statement which has no basis in fact. This is, however, a very trivial affair as compared with the attitude taken up by you that your form of penalty which according to your standard of morality is unacceptable to you must be condemned as inhuman even if it is supported by the Koran and all the other scriptures of the world. This means that the Koran as a source of Islamic law must be looked upon as a bundle of errors because it “wounds the human conscience” by ordaining the punishment of flogging for adultery and mutilation in respect of theft. I would not mind in the least if such sweeping statements emanated from the unsympathetic critics of Islam with whom we are only too familiar. But your position is quite different. As President of the National Congress you occupy the proud position of the head of the three hundred million Indians who expect you to respect their beliefs. As Mahatma Gandhi, the champion of Khilafat, millions of Mussalmans have grown accustomed to regard you as their “guide”, philosopher and friend”. Your categorical denunciation, therefore, of a peculiar aspect of the penal provisions of the *Shariat* was most unexpected; and Mussalmans whose susceptibilities in matters concerning the fundamentals of their faith are extremely delicate, naturally look upon the expression of such views as an uncalled for interference in an affair which concerns themselves alone. You have certainly the right of personally holding any opinion as to the validity of the moral sanction of penalties imposed by Islam on such of its followers as transgress its law. But a public expression of this opinion, in what very much looks like the capacity of a Muslim jurisconsult makes your illustrious position rather awkward, and it is my solicitude for your prestige throughout the Islamic world that has prompted me to address you in this manner.

I now turn to the main point at issue. The Koran as a penal code has prescribed punishment only in respect of a limited number of crimes, viz., murder, adultery, theft and slander of chaste women. Punishment for other offences has been left to the discretion of the Prophet whose lifelong practice forms the basis of the legislative activities of his successors. Full latitude for the exercise of independent judgment has been conceded to the latter where the Prophet’s authority is not forthcoming. Thus the Koran as the word of God, the practice of the Prophet, the first and infallible interpreter of the revealed book, and the collective judgment of the Islamic world constitute the *Shariat*, and no Mussalman who is worth his salt dare impugn its authority.

Now apostasy, as such, is an offence punishable with death under the *Shariat*; and although the Koran is silent on the subject, the other two sources of the Islamic law have announced in unmistakable language that an apostate

must forfeit his life. I have dealt exhaustively with this subject in a series of articles which I am writing for the *Zamindar*.

To people who have been dazzled by the glamour of modern scepticism, this unrelenting attitude of Islam towards apostasy might seem a direct challenge to the freedom of human conscience, whatever that expression may connote. These gentry should, however, remember that Islam is not only an institution for the guidance of those who profess it but a State which must exact allegiance from its subjects. If a British Indian subject can be hanged for infringing Section 121 of the Indian Penal Code and cannot escape such fate on the plausible plea that he is at liberty to shake off King George's allegiance, surely it stands to reason, on similar grounds, that a Mussalman who rebels against the overlordship of Islam should pay for the act with his life.

The question now is whether capital punishment in the case of an apostate should or should not take the form of stoning. I will cut short this discussion in one word. Forms of punishment are always regulated by the cultural stage of a people. Legislators in every age have obeyed this psychological necessity. Even the British Government which prides itself on its humanitarianism has been forced to enact the notorious Frontier Crimes Regulation in the North-West Frontier Province, which it would not think of promulgating in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. The Kabul Government is following the same natural law in stoning to death a number of *Quadianis* who have been proved guilty of high treason not only against the spiritual but the temporal power of Islam.

Maulana M. Safdar writing from Sialkot says:

I have read your note "Stoning to Death" in the *Young India* dated 26th February, as well as the rejoinder by Maulvi Zafar Ali Khan as published in the *Zamindar* dated 4th March. I am afraid any controversy might lead to misunderstandings and the point in issue should be cleared at once. As you have stated Koran enjoins the punishment of *Rajam* i.e., stoning to death, nowhere. The word *Rajam* is only twice mentioned in the Koran. Firstly in *Sura Had* where the people of Midian tell their Prophet, "O Shuaib! We do not understand much of what you say and most surely we see you to be weak among us, and were it not for your family we would surely *stone* you and you are not mighty against us". (*Sura Had*, verse 91, page 470-M. Mohammed Ali's translation). Secondly in *Sura* "The Cave" where one of the dwellers in the cave goes to the market to purchase food with a coin hundreds of years old and is told by the provision seller, "or surely if they (i.e., Government) prevail against you they would *stone* you to death of force you back to their religion

and then you will never succeed” (*Sura* “The Cave”, verse 20, page 591-M. Mohammed Ali’s translation). This will show that the word *Rajam* is mentioned only in the course of references to the ancient history and is not at all enjoined by the Koran as a punishment. I feel, you are right in saying that the present human morality cannot stand this barbarous penalty and in saying this you by no means contravene the teaching of the Koran and thus wound the religious susceptibilities of the Mussalmans. I fear, M. Zafar Ali Khan is not right in qualifying *Rajam* as Islamic *Shariat*. Koran does not support him and opinions differ as to what later Muslim jurists hold it to be.

Khwaja Kamaluddin, head of the Muslim Mission at Woking, says:

The Koran proposes no punishment whatsoever for apostasy, on this side of the grave. The Book advocates absolute freedom of conscience in matters of religion and prohibits all sorts of compulsion in this respect. I have directed my office (Lahore) to send you a copy of my book *India in the Balance* which I wrote sometime in 1922; in it you will find a chapter on the subject as an appendix. You have read the Koran, and I am afraid you made a mistake in saying that the Koran proposes punishment of stoning to death. Will you kindly refer to the Verse as well, when you write on the subject again. I fail to see anything like that in the Book. Apostasy occurred in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet in many cases, but no punishment was awarded to anyone, solely for it. No tradition can abrogate the Koran. The Holy Prophet said, “You will hear many sayings ascribed to me; if they are according to the Koran they are from me; if they are not according to the Koran they are not from me.” This is the only test with us to find the truth of what has been ascribed to our Prophet as his traditions.

I am very glad to find that there is no penalty of stoning to death in the Koran. I did not say that there positively was. I said, “I understand that the stoning method & c. . .” But Maulana Zafar Ali Khan whilst saying that the penalty is not prescribed in the Koran energetically argues that it has nevertheless a place in Islam and gives it his support. To me, an outsider, it is the same thing so long as a particular practice is part of Islamic practice whether it is defended on the basis of “the practice of the Prophet” or “the collective judgment of the Islamic world”. What I would like my Mussalman friends to do is unhesitatingly to condemn, irrespective of its source, what the world’s reasoned opinion rejects as contrary to humanity. I am glad, therefore, that Maulana Safdar and Khwaja Kamaluddin condemn the penalty of stoning altogether, and that of death at all, for apostasy. I wish that they could say with me that even if it could be established

that the practice of stoning to death could be proved to be derived from the Prophet's practice or "the collective judgment of the Islamic world", they could not defend it as being repugnant to their sense of humanity. I would relieve the Maulana of his anxiety for my "prestige throughout the Islamic world". It would not be worth a day's purchase if it could be reduced to a nullity on account of an honest expression of my opinion about practices defended in the name of Islam. But the fact is, I have no desire for prestige anywhere. It is furniture required in courts of kings. I am a servant of Mussalmans, Christians, Parsis and Jews as I am of Hindus. And a servant is in need of love, not prestige. That is assured to me so long as I remained a faithful servant. And I would ask the Maulana to transfer his anxiety to the prestige of Islam. And I shall share his burden. In my opinion he has unconsciously diminished that prestige by his defence of an indefensible practice. No amount of casuistry can defend the penalty of stoning to death in any event or that of death, whether by stoning or otherwise, for apostasy.

My own position is clear. In my writing about Islam I take the same care of its prestige that I do of Hinduism. I apply the same method of interpretation to it that I apply to Hinduism. I no more defend on the mere ground of authority a single text in the Hindu scriptures than I can defend one from the Koran. Everything has to submit to the test of reason. Islam appeals to people because it appeals also to reason. And in the long run it will be found that any other method would land one in trouble. There are undoubtedly things in the world which transcend reason. We do not refuse to bring them on the anvil of reason but they will not come themselves. By their very nature they defy reason. Such is the mystery of the deity. It is not inconsistent with reason, it is beyond it. But stoning to death is no more beyond reason than, say, the practice of honesty or of swearing. Taken in its broadest sense apostasy means "abandonment of one's religion". Is that a grievous crime meriting the punishment of death? If it is, reconversion of a Hindu convert to Islam is a step involving capital punishment. The Maulana Saheb's suggestion that I should not criticize any act in Islam or say anything of the Koran because I am President of the Congress and friend of Mussalmans is, I am afraid, unacceptable. I should be unworthy of either position if at a critical moment I suppressed my own judgment. The stoning incident

is a matter with which every publicist is concerned. It is a matter of public morality and general humanity which is the basis of all true religions.

Young India, 26-3-1925

29. TELEGRAM TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

BOMBAY,
March 26, 1925

PANDIT M. M. MALAVIYA
BIRLA MILL
DELHI

PROPOSE CALLING COW-PROTECTION MEETING BOMBAY 22ND APRIL.
PLEASE WIRE SABARMATI IF THAT WILL SUIT.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

30. TELEGRAM TO SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

March 26, 1925

SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI
BHAVNAGAR

REACHING ASHRAM TOMORROW. LEAVING SAME FOR KATHIAWAR
TUESDAY.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

31. TELEGRAM TO RANCHHODLAL PATWARI

March 26, 1925

RANCHHODLAL PATWARI¹
MORVI

REACHING ASHRAM TOMORROW. LEAVING SAME FOR KATHIAWAR
TUESDAY. WIRE ASHRAM WHETHER WE CAN MEET ANYWHERE.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

¹ Life-long friend of Gandhiji; served as Dewan in the Princely States of Western India

32. TELEGRAM TO JAYASHANKER WAGHJI

March 26, 1925

JAYASHANKER WAGHJI

PASSENGER BOMBAY MAIL

IMPOSSIBLE STAY BOMBAY. PLEASE STOP AHMEDABAD. MEET THERE TOMORROW.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

33. TELEGRAM TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

March 26, 1925

VALLABHBHAI PATEL

AHMEDABAD

DETAIN AHMEDABAD JAYASHANKER WAGHJI OF JAMNAGAR TRAVELLING TONIGHT'S MAIL FOR BOMBAY. ASK HIM STOP AHMEDABAD MEET ME TOMORROW.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

34. LETTER TO HAKIM AJMAL KHAN

March 26, 1925

BHAI SAHEB,

I have received your telegram. Does the money¹ have to be sent in lump sum? I did not say so to the friend² who has promised to send it; but there should be no harm if it is paid well in time every month. Please send the reply to the Ashram address. When are you going to Europe? Has there been another riot in Delhi? Who was at fault? I know nothing about it. I heard something only on reaching Madras. I hope you are keeping well.

Yours,

MOHANDAS GANDHI

HAKIM SAHEB AJMAL KHAN

DELHI

From the Urdu original: A. M. Khwaja Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

¹ For the Aligarh Muslim University

² G. D. Birla; *vide* following item and "Letter to G. D. Birla", March 30, 1925.

35. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

*Chaitra Sud 2 [March 26, 1925]*¹

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Here is Hakim Saheb's telegram. Can you send me Rs. 25,000² now? If you can, will you send it to Hakim Saheb's address or to Jamnalalji's firm in Bombay? If it could be credited at Delhi some commission might perhaps be saved. I shall be at the Ashram till the 1st of April; after that I shall be proceeding to Kathiawar again. I have got to reach Faridpur on May 2.

I hope your wife is quite well.

I intend to take up the work of cow-protection on my own lines, or rather I will have to take it up. I expect to receive help in this work from all of your brothers. I have agreed to take up this work after much hesitation.

Yours,

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6108. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

36. INTERVIEW TO "THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE"

BOMBAY

March 26, 1925

What about your mission to Vykom? Was it a success?

It was neither a success nor a failure. It was not a success because the roads are not yet thrown open, not a failure because I believe that success is near if the satyagrahis remain true to their faith.

But in your offers, contrary to your wont, have you not put a common right of humanity in jeopardy by making it subservient to the opinion of a class, which is presumably opposed to your contention, or to Shastric authority?

I do not think I have done any such thing, because the caste Hindu opinion, if I am correctly informed by my co-workers, is overwhelmingly in favour of reform. The original satyagraha is based upon the assumption that the opinion of caste Hindus is in favour of reform. Such being the case, when the orthodox party suggested that

¹ From the reference to cow-protection and second visit to Kathiawar, the letter appears to belong to 1925.

² For Aligarh; *vide* "Letter to G. D. Birla", 30-3-1925.

the opinion was not in favour of the reform and when I knew that the Government wanted an unequivocal expression of that opinion, I was bound to suggest a referendum in order to satisfy ignorant but honest orthodoxy. I was bound to suggest the reference to learned shastris as I knew in the matter of use of public roads there was no authority at all to suggest the contention. It must be understood that the contention of the Government is that the law in Travancore is against the reformers. It is, therefore, necessary for the Government to pass new legislation, if there is orthodox opposition. How far this contention is correct, I do not know, but I had to reckon with it.

What about the future of satyagraha?

I expect Government to take the next natural step to adopt one of the suggestions made by me, whether with or without the concurrence of the orthodox party.

The Bombay Chronicle, 27-3-1925

37. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, BOMBAY¹

March 26, 1925

Gandhiji said the yarn spun here was not of the requisite quality and fineness but the fault was their own, for the high hopes they had first entertained when they had met in such large numbers on the Chowpatty some four years ago were not fulfilled. He wanted 40s and higher counts if they were to supply their personal requirements as far as cloth was concerned. He had 800 counts spun in this country, and it was such fine yarn that made the Dacca mulls possible. He asked the women of Bombay to make it possible for him to realize the high hopes he had entertained in regard to khadi and spinning. He had recently toured in Southern India and had been even to Kanyakumari and had seen all sorts of people from the Maharani of Travancore downwards and he was glad to tell them that the Maharani had promised him to wear nothing but khadi and also to spin yarn. He had seen evidence for himself that in Travancore, until a few years ago, every household spun its own yarn and made its own cloth. In Cochin the royal family was wearing khadi and also spun yarn. But how many of the women who were there that day were wearing khaddar? He fully realized that the people of Bombay could not well realize the importance of the spinning wheel—they who spent money so heedlessly. But the famine-stricken men and women of Orissa who looked like mere bundle of bones, did realize the importance of khadi and the charkha. Even these

¹ Under the auspices of the Rashtriya Stree Sabha at the Congress House, Girgaum. Sarojini Naidu presided.

starving people of Orissa had helped him with their offerings when he had been there to make collections for the Tilak Swaraj Fund. To starving people like these, the charkha was of greater importance than to the women of Bombay. Mrs. Naidu had informed him that the Begum of Bhopal had ordered a lot of khaddar for her use. The reason why he asked Begums and rich men and women to devote a small portion of their time to spinning was in order that they might bring themselves to the level of the poor in this country and realize to some extent at least their trials and tribulations. In this connection he said those who endowed *sadavrat*¹ for the poor were really committing sin, although unintentionally.

Why were so many lakhs of able-bodied men in this country, who were we able to earn an honest livelihood, starving and loafing? It was because they had no work and could not find any work. At best the mills in India could employ a few lakhs, but not the many crores who were there starving and workers. He did not ask the women to give him any money for these people, but to dedicate at least 30 minutes a day to spinning for the sake of the starving masses. Let them wear khaddar for the sake of these poor men and women; they must give up all foreign cloth, even mill-cloth and until they did so, they could not be free, could not have swaraj and *Ramarajya*. He invited the women of Bombay to take part in the national functions which would be held in the Congress House, which would be the centre of all national activities in this city. The women of Bombay had given him much, but he asked them to give him something more for the country and that was half-an hour daily devoted to spinning.

The Bombay Chronicle, 27-3-1925

38. *SPEECH AT MEETING OF DEPRESSED CLASSES, BOMBAY*²

March 26, 1925

The Mahatma said it was unnecessary for him to tell them all he wanted to do, or had already done, for the abolition of untouchability from this land, and while he admitted that untouchability was fast disappearing from India, he regretted that the pace was not fast enough for him. They knew in Vykom satyagraha was being performed by the untouchables in order to assert their right to walk in a street adjoining the temple. These untouchables were offering satyagraha with a view to bringing round to reason those Hindus who in their bigotry had become blind to all real principles of Hindu religion. It was to open the eyes of these caste Hindus that

¹ Alms or charity

² An address of welcome praising Gandhiji's services for the removal of untouchability was presented. S. V. Puntambekar translated the speech into Marathi.

the untouchables in Vykom were offering satyagraha. Gandhiji hoped their efforts would prove successful in the end. These people were performing *topascharya*, sacrifice, in order to convince the caste Hindus of their mistaken notions. These untouchables had a great spiritual leader, Narayan Guru, who had promised him not to allow any of his followers to approach him without wearing khaddar. If the young boys in the audience could not understand his Hindi speech, he could only bless them and wish them a long life, which he hoped they would spend in the service of their country, in good deeds, in truthfulness and in fearlessness. They should fear no man, and fearing none, serve their country. He also asked them to give up drink.

The Bombay Chronicle, 27-3-1925

39. SPEECH AT OPENING OF CONGRESS HOUSE, BOMBAY

March 26, 1925

Gandhiji after congratulating the winners of the medals¹ said the work for which they had gathered there was a blessed one. But before opening the House they must fully realize their responsibility. The national flag was a mere piece of khaddar with a charkha on it, yet they loved it immensely, and it symbolized their hopes and pride. The hoisting of the flag meant something more than the mere ceremony signified. In this country at the present time there was suspicion among the different communities towards each other. In the South, the Hindus were fighting with each other. From the prayers said there by the representatives of various communities, they would find that they contained the same eternal truth about the great God pervadin everywhere. If they but realized that all religions were great and must be honoured and respected as such, and that they must tolerate each other, the object of such a ceremony would be realized. Once the flag was hoisted, it should never be lowered whatever happened, even if they all died for it. If the man who was holding it aloft fell stricken down, then the next man must take it from his hands and never allow it to die in the dust. The flag was the embodiment of all that they cherished and honoured. With the hoisting of the flag, Gandhiji said, the House would be opened by him. The House was purchased out of the Tilak Swaraj Fund, to which Bombay was the largest contributor. The House was consecrated to the Congress work, and he asked them all to take advantage of the building. He then prayed to God to make their hearts clean, that they might bear no ill will towards each other, that they might serve the country, that the flag which they had hoisted that day would never be lowered, and that the members of the Congress would bear no ill will towards their countrymen.

¹ In the spinning competition organized by the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee before the function.

Gandhiji then walked upto the flagstaff and slowly unfurled the national banner and hoisted it amidst loud cries of *Vandemataram*.

The Bombay Chronicle, 27-3-1925

40. LETTER TO C.F. ANDREWS

March 27, 1925

MY DEAREST CHARLIE,

I am so sorry about Gurudev. I do hope he is not so ill as your letter leads me to think.

I understand your remarks about birth-control. I have been drawn into the controversy now. You will therefore see the thing developing in *Young India*.

I am quite sure that Banarasidas's¹ going to East Africa will do no good. It will if he could stay there for some time.

Yours,
MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 963

41. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Chaitra Sud 3 [March 28, 1925]²

Why do you say that my report³ has become lame⁴? What is it that I have left out? Did you not see my first one? But even if I see to be obtuse, I shall be satisfied if all of you who have understood the position will retain the spirit of justice and non-violence while remaining firm in your convictions.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 76

¹ Banarasidas Chaturvedi (b. 1892); journalist and writer; professor of Hindi, 1921-25, Gujarat Mahavidyalaya, a constituent college of the Gujarat Vidyapith.

² As in the source.

³ On Hindu-Muslim riots in the country, specially in Kohat

⁴ According to the addressee, he had described the report as "dry" but Gandhiji misread the word to mean "lame".

42. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Chaitra Sud 3 [March 28, 1925]¹

I was unhappy because I could not meet Anand² this time, but I was helpless. Next time when I come, I shall certainly see her.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 80

43. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Chaitra Sud 4 [March 28, 1925]³

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter. What you have heard is absolutely incorrect. I made a thorough inquiry in Delhi itself. It is true that a Muslim eloped with a Hindu woman. But neither of the brothers was in any way involved. It is a long story. If you ask me when I go there, I shall explain. The story appearing in *Milap* is wholly false. Neither of the Maulana's nephews has anything to do with it.

There are some things that are worth doing always, while there are other things that should be done only under certain circumstances. The Use of one's writing ability for a good cause is admirable. But it is a crime to use it to promote wickedness.

Blessings from

BAPU

CHI. MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

93 BAZAR GATE STREET

FORT, BOMBAY

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

¹ The year and month as in the source

² Anandbehn, Gandhiji's sister's daughter

³ The postmark bears the date March 29, 1925, in which year *Chaitra Sud 4* corresponded to March 28.

44. LETTER TO INDRA VIDYAVACHASPATI

THE ASHRAM, SABARMATI,
March 28 [1925]¹

MY DEAR INDRAJI²,

I am sending you herewith something received from a correspondent. What have you to say regarding the statements made therein? Are there really any editions of the *Satyartha Prakash* which do not contain Chap. XIV about Islam? Was the chapter written or inserted after the death of the Maharshi³? And if so, by whom? Gandhiji wants your detailed reply and he thinks only you could enlighten him in the matter.

What is this rioting in Delhi? Newspaper accounts are meagre. We read something whilst we were in Travancore, and have heard nothing more.

Yours sincerely,
MAHADEV DESAI

[PS.]

Please return enclosure with your reply.

From a photostat: G.N. 7207. Also C. W. 4867. Courtesy: Chandra Gupta Vidyalkar

¹ From the reference to Gandhiji's visit to Travancore, which took place in March, 1925

² Son of Swami Shraddhanand

³ Swami Dayanand

45. TELEGRAM TO “ENGLISHMAN”¹

SABARMATI,

[After March 29, 1925]

WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH DESHBANDHU DAS AND UNDERSTANDING THE IMPLICATIONS I HESITATE TO MAKE ANY STATEMENT BUT GENERALLY I CAN SAFELY SAY THAT CO-OPERATION WITH ALL PARTIES ANY DAY IS POSSIBLE ON HONOURABLE TERMS.

The Bombay Chronicle, 3-4-1925

46. THE “DARSHAN” OF KANYAKUMARI

India's frontiers extend from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Karachi to Assam. These are the four corners of India. The summit of Hindukush is her crest, the strength and beauty of Mother India. At the base, the pure waters of the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal wash her feet. Kanyakumari is no other than Parvati² who practised penance in order to be united in marriage with Siva, the Lord Supreme transcending all worldly attachments. We see the ocean on all three sides of Kanyakumari as it is on the tip of India. Since there is a confluence of two waters, two tints are visible here. As we face due south, we can see from the very same spot the sun rise to our left and set to our right. We did not have the time to witness that spectacle; nevertheless, we could imagine the sun rising at dawn after a bath in the great Bay of Bengal, robbing the stars of their brightness,

¹ In reply to the *Englishman's* telegram requesting Gandhiji for his views on C.R. Das's manifesto published on March 29 which had said: "Apprehension has gained considerable ground in the minds of Europeans in India and Great Britain that Swaraj Party has encouraged and is encouraging political assassinations and intimidation. . . . I am opposed on principle to political assassinations and violence in any shape or form. It is absolutely abhorrent to me and to my Party. I consider it an obstacle to our political progress. . . . I am equally opposed to and equally abhor any form of repression by the Government. . . . We are determined to secure swaraj and political equality of India on terms of equality and honourable partnership in the Empire."

² Siva's consort

and, in the evening, going down the golden sky and retiring for rest into the western ocean full of germs. The watchman of the State guest-house there tried his best of persuade us to stay on to see the majestic sunset, but how could we, who were astride a horse, or rather a car, stay on to enjoy such bliss? I had to be content with having my feet purified in the waves of the ocean sanctified through washing the feet of Mother India.

What a magnificent structure the *rishis* have raised! What a sense of beauty the *Puranis* had! Here on the tip of India, which is the end of our world, the *rishis* built the temple of Kanyakumari and the authors of Puranas beautified it with pictures. I had no desire to enjoy the beauty of nature, although it fills the place to overflowing. For my part, I drank in here the nectar of the mystery of religion. When I was still dipping my feet in the ocean on the beautiful ghat there, one of my companions said to me. "Vivekananda used to go and meditate on the hill over there." Whether he in fact did so or not, he could have done it. A good swimmer could swim to that spot. There could not but be perfect peace on that island promontory. The music of the ocean-waves, sweet and gentle like strains from a *vina*¹ could only invite one to meditation. Hence my religious yearning grew stronger. Adjoining the steps is a raised platform on which a hundred persons could sit with ease. I felt like sitting down there and reciting the Gita. Finally, however, I suppressed even that sacred desire and sat in silence, my heart filled with the image of the teacher of the *Gita*.

Having thus sanctified ourselves, we went to the temple. As I am a crusader for the abolition of untouchability and call myself a *Bhangi*, there was some doubt whether I could enter the temple. I told the man in charge of the temple not to take me anywhere where he felt that I had no right to go. I would respect those restrictions. He said that the Goddess's *darshan* could be had only after half-past five and that we had come at four o'clock. However, he would show us everything else. The restriction imposed on us was only with respect to approaching the sanctuary where the Goddess is installed. That, however, applied to all who had been abroad. I replied that I would gladly abide by it. After this conversation, the man in charge led me within and took me round the place.

¹ Indian string instrument.

I did not pity the ignorance of the idolatrous Hindu, but, on the contrary, realized his wisdom. By discovering the way of image-worship, he has not multiplied the one God into many, but realized the fact and shown it to the world that man can worship—and he will continue to worship—God in His diverse forms. Although the Christians and the Muslims do not regard themselves as idolators, nevertheless, those who worship their ideals are also image-worshippers. A mosque or a church also involved a form of image-worship. Imagining that one can become more holy only by going to these places is a form of idolworship, and there is no harm in such belief. Even the faith that God is revealed only in the Koran or the Bible is idol-worship and an innocent one. The Hindu goes further and says that everyone should worship God in the form he likes. Even a person who makes an idol of stone or gold or silver and after attributing divinity to it, purifies himself by meditating on it, will be fully qualified to attain *moksha*. While circumambulating the temple, all this became clearer to me.

However, even there my happiness was not untainted by sorrow. I was allowed to make a complete circle, but I was not permitted to go to the inner shrine because I had been to England. The restriction imposed on untouchables, however, was due to the fact of their birth. How can this be tolerated? Could Kanyakumari be polluted? Has this practice been followed since ancient times? My inner voice cried out that this could not be. Moreover, if it had been, it would be sinful. That which is sinful does not cease to be so or become meritorious through its antiquity. Hence, I was all the more convinced that it was the duty of every Hindu to make a mighty effort to remove this stigma.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan , 29-3-1925

47. THE COMING WEEK

Is it possible to forget the 6th or the 13th of April? On the 6th of April 1919, the people had a new birth; on the 13th of that month they performed a human sacrifice in which hundreds laid down their lives. It is true that the sacrifice was unplanned and enforced. Nevertheless, it undoubtedly deserved the name. In the carnage at Jallianwala Bagh, the blood of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs mingled freely. Those who seemed separate while alive, became one in death.

Hindus and Muslims may fight and wrestle, may kill and be killed. Such disputes will be forgotten; but will the event of Jallianwala Bagh be ever forgotten? Its memory will remain fresh so long as India exists. Hence these two dates cannot be forgotten.

What should we do this year? The days of hartals are over. These have value no longer. Moreover, today public enthusiasm is too low to support such moves. Hartals would not be appropriate so long as Hindus and Muslims are full of bitterness. However, those who look upon national service as a part of their dharma, those who desire to secure swaraj through peaceful and pure means alone, should fast for half a day or observe *roza*¹ on that day. They should specially meditate and worship God on that day, purify their hearts and participate in the present programme of the Congress.

Although these three tasks are important, they cannot be taken up simultaneously. Hence I would suggest that those who spin should spin more during that week, those who have not yet given up foreign cloth should do so and urge others to do so. Then again, during that week propaganda for khadi should be given special impetus, so much so that no stocks of khadi should remain unsold in any of the Congress Khadi Bhandars. All people should shed the bitterness in their minds towards others and every Hindu should serve the *Antyajas* in one form or another during this week. Those who cannot do anything in particular should, at any rate, contribute some money for the service of the *Antyajas*.

Some may ask how the cause of swaraj is served by such trivial tasks. Those who do so could not have fully thought things out. If they do so, they will realize that, apart from this, there is nothing else to be done for swaraj at the moment. Swaraj may not be secured by merely doing this, but without this it can never, never, never be secured. Should anyone who lacks faith humorously ask me what is proved by repeating “never” thrice, the answer is that by doing so I do not wish to prove the worthiness of the cause, but only to express my firm conviction and my determination.

As a matter of fact, no doubts should arise about the need for the three things mentioned above. All these three assume supreme importance and become inseparable parts of the Congress programme because of the knowledge and the enthusiasm aroused during that

¹ Fast among Muslims

week in 1919. The pledges regarding swadeshi, Hindu-Muslim unity and the abolition of untouchability were taken on that very occasion. It immediately became apparent that swadeshi meant the spinning-wheel and khadi. Rules were framed for the spread of the spinning-wheel. How can we, therefore, doubt today what we have regarded as an essential part of the activity for swaraj?

Supposing, however, that we had been mistaken? If so, we should certainly rectify the errors. The Congress, however, not only has not regarded it as such, but has also passed resolutions to encourage the programme. There is, therefore, no room for considering it a mistake.

One doubt alone remains to be considered now. Non-cooperation is suspended, civil disobedience is suspended. What is the use of khadi, etc., now? This argument is like a bad workman quarrelling with his tools. If we have realized that civil disobedience is impossible without these things, how then can we put forward such an argument? If I claim that there can be no civil disobedience without the threefold programme of khadi, etc., and if the public claims that the latter is not possible without the former, we would be placed in the same situation as the oilman's bullock¹. However, that man or woman who does not get involved in this circular argument, but rather follows the straight thread of the yarn, will continue to progress and will never lose his way during the journey because the thread will be his guide. He need not look this side or that. Hence there is no danger of his losing his way.

If, during the journey, he carries with him food in the form of Hindu-Muslim unity, etc., there is no danger of hunger, etc., for him. If perhaps he does not take that food with him, his fasting, that is, his penance will generate the food for him.

During his journey, he will pass through the gardens of prohibition and other social services, will roam there, and end the suffering of those who are addicted to liquor by pointing out the straight way of the yarn, and make companions of the ex-addicts who will have purified themselves through *prayaschitta*².

On the way, he will meet many skeletons who though alive are as good as dead. On seeing his yarn they will dance, and, seeing his

¹ Going round and round in a circle

² Atonement

wheel, they too will want to work it, and by infusing blood into their skeletons, they will save themselves from the clutches of death and contribute their offering to the sacrificial fire of swaraj. I request every one of my brothers and sisters to perform this fine sacrifice next week.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-3-1925

48. A GOLDEN GARDEN

Travancore is not a province. It is like a large city. Its citizens do not live in flats with the walls of one touching those of another, as the citizens of Bombay do. They live in their beautiful single-storeyed houses with thatched roofs, a mile or a little less apart from one another and surrounded by their own fields and gardens. I have not seen the like of this anywhere except in Malabar and the region of Kerala which surrounds it. Travancore is like a beautiful garden or an orchard. One comes across coconut, banana, pepper and mango trees everywhere. The coconut trees, however, hide all the rest. The traveller passes through these groves. There are two modes of travel. One can travel in boats by way of canals and backwaters or by road in a car. The railway too is there, but it serves only a very few areas. The view on the backwaters is magnificent. Both the shores are, of course, visible. Moreover, all the year round, as far as the eye can see, there stretches an endless garden on both shores. I have described it as a golden garden. If anyone looks at these gardens before sunset while journeying on the backwaters, the trees appear to have golden leaves. The sun peeps through these leaves and looks like a revolving mount of gold. Man would never get tired of looking at it and singing the praises of God's creation. No painter can paint such a scene. Who can paint a scene that changes every moment and grows ever more beautiful? Man's handiwork appears insignificant by the side of it. Moreover, millions of men can see this scene free of cost.

After having seen the sights in Travancore and Assam I feel that there is no need for Indians to go abroad in search of natural beauty. For salubrious climate, we have in India mountains like the Himalayas, the Nilgiris and Mount Abu. How is it that people are not happy in such a beautiful country where anyone can get the climate that he

wants? Or, in the words of the late Shri Malbari¹, how can man develop the capacity to see or know anything of foreign lands so long as he has not appreciated the beauty of the history and geography of his own home, his own street, his own town and his own country? Until then, he has no standard of comparison and hence he sees nothing though he has eyes. Just as tailors, cobblers and such other persons cannot take measurements without a tape, similarly, a lover of nature cannot appreciate other countries even though he sees them, if he has no knowledge of his motherland. To him only those things at which he looks with wide eyes and open mouth are beautiful, or else he merely repeats what others have written about those countries.

I found that what is true of the natural beauty of Travancore is also true of its government. Its motto is: "Dharma is verily our strength." I have not seen such roads anywhere else in India. There seemed to be no disorder in the State. For the past many years the rulers have not harassed the subjects. The Ruler does not disregard any rules or laws. The Maharaja of Travancore is always the offspring of a marriage between a Brahmin and a Kshatriya. The late Maharaja was looked upon as a devout and learned man. Travancore has had a legislative assembly for many years. There are large numbers of Hindus, Muslims and Christians in Travancore. Of the population of above forty-six lakhs, almost a half are Christians. It seemed that everyone found employment without any discrimination. The people can freely express their views. There is hardly any part of the country where education is as widespread as in Travancore. And this is true of girls as well as of boys. A good proportion of the State's revenue is spent on education. It is difficult to come across illiterate men and women in Travancore. There is a special college for women in its capital Trivandrum. Not only are the untouchables permitted to join any school and any department but a certain sum is spent on them is spent on them every year.

MAHARANIS

I saw the dowager Queen-mother who runs the Government on behalf of the boy-king and the younger queen who is his mother. On meeting both of them I was delighted by their august simplicity. Both were clad exclusively in white garments. I could not see any ornaments on them except for a necklace of tiny black beads. They wore

¹ Behramji Merwanji Malbari (1854-1912) ; poet, author and social reformer

nothing on their ears or noses. I did not see any diamond or pearl rings on their fingers. I have never seen such simplicity even in middle class women. Their furniture was in keeping with their attire. When I compared the furniture of these Maharanis to that of our wealthy class, I felt pity for the latter. Why is it that we have become so luxury-loving?

I found that both the Maharanis were free from any ostentation. To me, the boy-Maharaja appeared very good-natured. I found that his dress consisted only of a shirt and a dhoti simply wrapped around the waist sash-like. I could see no special sign to denote his being a Maharaja. All these three things won my heart. It is possible that on closer acquaintance, I may find it necessary to qualify my description. I did ask others. No one contradicted the impression that I had. I do not suggest that the intrigues found in an average royal court do not exist there despite all this simplicity. It was certainly not my dharma to look for faults. I seek virtues and worship them. I am thrilled and dazzled when I find them. I like singing their praises. No one is without faults in this world. When I see these, I note them and feel sad and sometimes, if it is relevant, I speak of them with a heavy heart.

I would request those to whom God has given a little money to take a trip to Travancore and Cochin.

SIMPLICITY AND PEASANTS

As is the king, so are the subjects. I have not found such similarity between the dress of the ruler and the subjects anywhere else as I found here. The dress of the ruling class and the peasant class was almost the same. It is amongst the peasants that I found some variety in dress. One may come across a few highly educated persons wearing western clothes or some women dressed in silk saris; however, the common dress of the Malayalis consists of an untucked dhoti and a shirt. The women also wear the same kind of dhoti, but one end of that dhoti serves as an upper garment, and of late a shirt or a blouse has been added.

Khadi can be easily introduced in these parts because women require neither dyeing nor any border, nor any great length like our sari or *ghaghra*¹. Despite this, calico and nainsook have wrought

¹ Petticoat worn low up to ankles

ruin. Khadi has found its way after the recent struggle¹. Nevertheless, there is no end to the number of spinners and weavers in these parts. In the vicinity of Kanyakumari there is a village called Nagarcoil where hand-spun yarn is sold at a regular weekly market.

SATYAGRAHA AT VYKOM

How is it that untouchability is practised with such fanaticism in a region where there is so much education, where there is good government and where the people have many rights? This is the beauty of an ancient custom. It seems even ignorance passes off as knowledge when it receives the sanction of tradition. I even met persons here who sincerely believed that Christians might use roads near temples but the untouchables should not; not even a barrister or a lawyer of that class should be allowed to pass by. There is an untouchable swami here who performs the *sandhya*² and such other rites. He has a good knowledge of Sanskrit and dresses like a sannyasi. He has thousands of disciples. He owns thousands of acres of land and has established an Advait Ashram. Even he cannot pass by the roads near temples. How well-protected are these temples ! They are surrounded by six feet high walls. Around these are roads on which even bullock-carts move. And yet, no untouchable is allowed to pass that way. Satyagraha is being offered in Vykam to end such ignorance, such injustice. I met and talked courteously with the *san-atanis* who defend this practice. They put forward many arguments to support it, but I found them insubstantial. Finally, I made three suggestions, and agreed to withdraw the satyagraha if any of them was accepted, irrespective of the outcome being unfavourable to the demands of the satyagrahis. These gentlemen were not ready to accept even these suggestions. The agreement eventually arrived at a result of a conference with the local police commissioner³ has been given in Mahadev Desai's letter elsewhere.

Thus, the movement is at a standstill now. As my suggestions meet with the approval of the authorities, I hope that this struggle will soon come to a successful end. However, everything depends upon the true, that is, gentle persistence of the satyagrahis. I have an

¹ Satyagraha in Vykam

² Morning and evening prayers with a set formula

³ W. H. Pitt

undeviating faith that the result will be nothing but good if they do not transgress the restrictions they have willingly accepted.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-3-1925

49. MY RESPONSIBILITY

I am often asked questions about the reports of my speeches appearing in newspapers. I find it impossible to answer them. I do not read newspapers, for I cannot. Much of my time is spent in travelling about, and my mail is also delayed because of that. I have also to make a good many speeches in the course of my tours. Placed in such an unenviable condition, I do not know whom to answer and whom not to. We have very few reporters in our country who can take down speeches in short hand. I have, therefore, hardly read a report of my speech which I have liked. One single word in place of another can distort the speaker's meaning. I would, therefore, request all friends that, if they come across anything in the reports of my speeches in newspapers which is contrary to my known views, they should assume that I did not say it. An effort is made to report in *Navajivan* everything in my speeches which is considered important enough to be preserved. Other things which I may have said were addressed to the audience and personally I do not mind if they are not preserved in print. Even those who place a high value on my views have no cause to feel sorry on this account. What does it matter whether or not reports of the same views and ideas, clothed in different language every time, are made available to them? What is more important at present is to digest what one reads or hears, and then act accordingly. Too much reading may even do harm rather than good.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-3-1925

50. MY NOTES

FOUR MARRIAGES

For want of time I have not been able to write, though I wanted to, about the three marriages which took place under my supervision and which, it may even be said, were solemnized by me on the premises of the Ashram in Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta's bungalow. However, as they are well worth knowing about, I am dealing with them

here. It is not my function to arrange or encourage any marriage or to take part in one. Moreover, allowing marriages on the Ashram soil is not in keeping with its ideals. My dharma is to practise *brahmacharya* and persuade others to do so. Moreover, I look upon these times as difficult ones. I regard it as harmful for people to marry or multiply population during these difficult days. The duty of wise people now is to reduce enjoyments and encourage renunciation.

This is but one view of the matter. My wishes and my ideals are one thing. However, I would join, not to condemn, and in some cases would even approve, an act which is inevitable and also not altogether harmful and in which special stress is laid on the dharma of self-control and propagation of Khadi.

These three marriages belonged to this class. I had previously also helped in celebrating two marriages of this kind—those of the two daughters of Imam Sahib¹, who lived with me and was like my own brother. I have always regarded these girls as my own daughters. One of the sisters, Fatima, died only a few years after her marriage. Amina was the other daughter. Imam Sahib and I were bound to get them married in accordance with their wishes. As much simplicity as possible was introduced into these marriages. In both of them, the bride and the bridegroom were, of course, dressed in khadi. Apart from intimate friends, no one else was invited. This time, one of the three marriages was that of a girl who had been brought up in the Ashram itself. The other was that of Shri Vallabhbbhai's son² and the third, that of Dr. Mehta's son³. All the three were celebrated on the very same day and the ceremony took only one day. In each case, both the parties in the marriages used nothing but khadi. In the wedding ceremony there were no drums, *shehnai*, feasts, etc. There were neither invitation cards nor a large party consisting of the bridegroom's relations and friends. Some friends had come along as witnesses. Deliberately, not even sherbet was served to them.

Not only was a single step not omitted from the wedding ritual but, in addition, the vows that had to be taken were fully explained to the couples in Gujarati. The couples and their elders who performed

¹ Imam Abdul Kadir Bawazeer, a Muslim priest who took prominent part in satyagraha in South Africa and later lived with Gandhiji as Sabarmati

² Vide "Speech at Ahmedabad", 25-2-1925.

³ Vide "Telegram to Arya, Rangoon", 26-2-1925.\

the ceremony of *kanyadan*¹ had fasted in the customary fashion. In this manner, the couples embarking upon the journey of life were made aware of the fact that marriage, according to Hinduism, is for practising self-control and not for enjoyment. The ceremony was concluded with blessings on the couples and with the Ashram's prayer to God.

Of these three marriages, one should be given some special mention. The marriage of Shri Vallabhbhai's son, Shri Dahyabhai, with Shri Kashibhai's daughter, Yashoda, may be regarded as one of their own choice. The two selected each other and decided to get married after receiving permission from their parents. Both desired only to serve the country together. The future alone will show how long they will abide by this youthful desire. This could be regarded as an ideal marriage in the *Patidar* community. Both the families are well-known and Shri Kashibhai could have spent much money if he had wished to. Nevertheless, he deliberately decided to dispense with all expenses at the wedding. To some extent this incurred the wrath of other members of their caste. I expect other *Patidars* to have such marriages, and other castes too should do the same and free themselves from the burden of heavy expenses. This would relieve the poor, while the wealthy could use the money thus saved for serving the country or for religious purposes, according to their own wishes.

The fourth marriage took place at Jetpur between Shri Devchandbhai's daughter and Shri Trikamlal Shah of the Gujarat Vidyapith. Shri Devchandbhai insisted upon my attending it so that I could see how it was celebrated with the utmost simplicity² and that nothing but khadi would be found there, and the bride and bridegroom could receive my blessings. I gave in to his sincere and pressing invitation and attended the wedding. There were many men and women present there who had been invited by Devchandbhai's family. On the bridegroom's side, however, there was no one except the bridegroom himself. Shri Trikamlal was determined to marry if he could find a worthy bride, with no more than a *tulsi*³ leaf as dowry. He carried out that decision of his. The wedding ceremony ended with the bride giving away khadi clothes to

¹ Giving away the bride

² *Vide*, however, "My Notes", 19-4-1925, sub-title, "A Correction".

³ A sacred plant tended in Indian homes

the children of the *Antyajas* in their locality. In this marriage, too, music, songs, etc., were completely left out. My request to the *mahajans*¹ of Kathiawar is not to be enraged at such simplicity, but rather regard it as praiseworthy and propagate it. The era of large dinner parties should be regarded as having ended. Some practices should indeed change with every age. Just as winter clothes are useless in the summer, even so the customs of one age sometimes become useless and indeed harmful in another.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-3-1925

51. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

*Chaitra Sud 6 [March 30, 1925]*²

CHI. VASUMATI,

Your letter. It appears you did not get my letter from the South to your Surat address. You were never out of my mind during the tour. I was keenly reminded of you while watching the scenery and while visiting the temple at Kanyakumari.

I am all right. I may stay for about eight days in Kathiawar. I have to come to Bombay for a couple of days in April.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 588. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

52. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

*Chaitra Sud 6 [March 30, 1925]*³

CHI. MATHURADAS,

These days I happen to be writing to you daily.

Have two of the enclosed sent to Maulana Shaukat Ali and one to Chi. Vasumati⁴. Vasumati lives on Lamington Road opposite the

¹ Elders of the community

² From the reference to the visit to Kanyakumari, Kathiawar and Bombay

³ The addressee received the letter on April 1, 1925, in which year *Chaitra Sud 6* corresponded to March 30.

⁴ Vasumati Pandit. For Gandhiji's letter to her dated March 30, 1925.

Powell Building. She has just gone there from Surat.

Give me news about Anand. I shall definitely meet her this time when I go there.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

53. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

*Chaitra Shukla 6 [March 30, 1925]*¹

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter.

Your yarn is quite good. I hope you will never give up the sacred work you have taken up.

As regards your wife, you can take a vow that in case she dies you will strictly observe *ekapatnivrata*, i.e., the vow that you will not marry again. If you have the inclination and the strength to take this vow, I would advise you to do so before your wife.

As regards the amount of Rs. 20,000, I shall make enquiries from Jamnalalji's firm.

I had very close relations with Shri Raychandji². I do not think he followed truth and non-violence with greater devotion than I, but I do believe that he far surpassed me in knowledge of the scriptures and retentiveness of memory. He had self-knowledge and self-confidence from his childhood. I know that he was not a *jivanmukta*³ and he was himself conscious that he was not. But he was fast progressing in that direction. I know his views on Buddha and others. We shall talk about these things when we meet. My tour in Bengal begins in May.

I have already asked you for Rs. 25,000 for Aligarh. I have also sent you Hakimji's telegram.

Yours,

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W.6109. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

¹ From the references to the appeal for Rs. 25,000 for the Muslim University and the illness of the addressee's wife, it is evident that the letter belongs to 1925.

² A businessman, jeweller and karmayogi who profoundly influenced Gandhiji; *vide An Autobiography*, P. II, Ch. I.

³ One who has attained deliverance in one's life

54. LETTER TO R. D. BIRLA

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
*Chaitra Shukla 6 [March 30, 1925]*¹

BHAISHRI RAMESHWARDASJI,

I have your letter. When I get the Rs. 5,000, I shall spend the amount on the untouchables' welfare, as desired by you. No letter from Jamnalalji as yet. At present he is touring Rajputana for khadi propaganda.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

SJT. RAMESHWARDAS BIRLA
BIRLA HOUSE
RANCHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6122. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

55.VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

After the last lines on the Vykom affair were written for the last week's issue, I received a wire from Mr. Pitt, Commissioner of Police, Travancore. It was then too late to publish in *Young India* the correspondence between the Commissioner of Police and myself. Police and myself. The reader must, however, have seen the correspondence² in the Press. It makes a distinct advance in the reform aimed at. The correspondence shows unmistakably that the Travancore Government favour the reform and that they are also pledged to carry it out at the earliest opportunity. Let no one

¹ The date is given on the presumption that Jamnalal Bajaj toured Rajasthan in 1925.

² *Vide* "Letter to Associated Press of India", 24-3-1925.

consider that in agreeing to a referendum or Shastric interpretation I have endangered the reform itself. The present campaign in its inception is based on the assumption that the reform is required by the vast majority of the caste Hindus and that the prohibition against the suppressed classes is not warranted by the genuine Hindu scriptures. For me, therefore, not to have made the proposals would have betrayed woeful lack of resourcefulness. It was the most natural thing for a satyagrahi like myself to have made the proposals which, if they had proceeded from the orthodox party, I could not have honestly rejected. Indeed, I make bold to say that my proposals paved the way for the remarkable support the cause received everywhere, save among the very few members of the orthodox party. Had there been real opposition from the majority of caste Hindus, or had there been any doubt as to the Shastric endorsement of the reform, the satyagraha would have assumed a different shape altogether. It would have been then a movement for a change in the religion rather than the removal of an irreligious custom. Indeed, those who were in immediate charge of the movement never questioned the propriety of my proposals. I could not take any step without consultation with them and without their full concurrence. It now remains for the satyagrahis at Vykam to carry out the letter and the spirit of the agreement and for the caste Hindus to support the movement in the manner promised by them everywhere to ensure the speedy and successful ending of the struggle. The satyagrahis must fulfil the letter by not overstepping the boundary-line until a settlement is reached, or a crossing after due notice by me becomes necessary for furthering the object of the agreement. The spirit of it requires gentleness and utmost humility on the part of the satyagrahis. Their uniform courtesy towards the opponents of reform will break the edge of the opposition. They must regard the Government not as opposed to the reform but as pledged to carry it out at the earliest possible moment. I have not the slightest reason to doubt the word of Her Highness the Maharani Regent or the Dewan or the Commissioner of Police. The conduct of satyagrahis in the Ashram must be in correspondence with their bearing at the boundary-line. The Ashram must be a busy hive in which every member is ever found at his own allotted task. It must be a model of simplicity and sanitation. The members are pledged to the charkha work during all spare moments. The spinning, the carding and the weaving departments admit of considerable improvement. Every

inmate should be an expert carder and spinner if everyone cannot also become an expert weaver. The members must insist on spinning and weaving at least the cloth required by them. They should also learn Hindi well. They are or should regard themselves as trustees for the prestige and dignity of Hinduism. Theirs is a fight not to end with the opening of the roads round temples but it should be considered to be the beginning of a glorious struggle for the purity of hinduism and removal of the abuses that have crept into it. They are not reformers who would take no note of the opposite side or would violate every sentiment of the orthodox people. They would vie with the tallest among the orthodox in purity of conduct and veneration for all that is good and noble in the Shastras. They would not disregard scriptural authority without the deepest thought, and to tha end, some of them would even study Sanskrit and explore the possibilities of reform within the four corners of the scriptures. They will not be in a hurry, but having fearlessly taken all the steps that they can consistently with their creed of truth and non-violence, will have the patience and the faith of the *rishis* of old.

ENTRY INTO TEMPLES

For, the opening of the roads is not the final but the first step in the ladder of reform. Temples in general, public wells, public schools must be open to the untouchables equally with the caste Hindus. But that is not the present goal of the satyagrahis. We may not force the pace. The schools are almost all open to the untouchables. The temples and the public wells or tanks are not. Public opinion should be carefully cultivated and the majority should be converted before the reform can be successfully carried out. Meanwhile, the remedy lies in founding temples and digging tanks or wells that would be open to the untouchables and to the other Hindus. I have no doubt that the movement for the removal of untouchability has made tremendous headway. Let us not retard it by indiscretion or over-zeal. Once the idea of pollution by the touch of a person by reason of his birth is gone, the rest is easy and bound to follow.

Young India, 2-4-1925

56. NOTES

SIKH SACRIFICE

The Akali position still seems to be uncertain. In the resume published by Sardar Mangal Singh in his capacity as President of the Central Sikh League occurs the following summary of the Sikh sacrifices:

30,000 arrested, 400 died and killed, 2,000 wounded, Rs. 15 lakhs of fine including forfeitures of pensions of retired soldiers.

If these figures are verifiable, they tell a tale of sacrifice which reflects the highest credit on Sikh courage and self-sacrifice, and means equal discredit for a Government that has taken no count of their sufferings.

BENGAL

I hope to attend the Provincial Conference that is to be held at Faridpur on 2nd May next. I must confess that the impelling force is the temptation of doing khaddar, charkha and untouchables' work. The same temptation will take me to other parts of Bengal. Those, therefore, who want me to visit the other parts will kindly put themselves in correspondence with the organizers of the tour. Deshbandhu Das should naturally be the one to arrange the tour but I have just received a wire from Acharya Ray saying that Deshbandhu is at Patna and that he would like to fix up his khadi centres for visiting. I, therefore, hope that those interested in my tour will place themselves in communication with Dr. P. C. Ray.

MILK SLIVERS

I understand that in several places mill slivers are still used for spinning. I need hardly point out that yarn spun from mill slivers is not hand-spun yarn. Mill slivers are themselves almost like very thick yarn and their use defeats the purpose for which hand-spinning is intended namely, reintroduction of hand-spinning in seven hundred thousand villages of India. It is impossible and useless to send mill slivers to these villages. To cart slivers from Bombay to a Punjab village would be a remedy worse than the disease. Carding is not a defunct occupation. It is possible to get professional carders almost anywhere. Moreover, carding is an employment which pays in cities as well as villages. Therefore, it is an occupation which young men may learn even as a trade. In any event, no Congress office worth the name should be without facilities for carding. A good carder is as

much a necessity in a Congress office as an honest clerk and book-keeper.

KHADDAR IN BENGAL

The following is the translation of Mr. Shankerlal Banker's notes¹ on Khaddar work in Bengal:

Young India, 2-4-1925

57. CONUNDRUMS

A Mussalman lawyer handed me the following questions for answer. I am omitting from two questions argumentative matter:

How far do you approve of the contention of Muslims like Mr. Jinnah and his school of thought that the Indian National Congress which has a large Hindu majority in it cannot adequately and justly represent and safeguard the interests of the Muslim minority and that, therefore, a separate and communal organization like the Muslim League is absolutely necessary?

I do not agree with the contention imputed to Mr. Jinnah. In my opinion, the Congress has from its birth gone out of its way to solicit Mussalman co-operation, even patronage. The existence of the League must, therefore, be justified on other grounds.

How far do you give countenance to the contention of eminent Hindus like Lala Lajpat Rai and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and their school of thought that the same Indian National Congress, although it consists of a large Hindu majority, cannot also be taken to represent and safeguard the interests of the Hindu community, and that, therefore, separate and communal organizations like the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sangathan are absolutely necessary and essential to protect Hindu interests?

I do not think that the Congress has failed to represent the Hindu interest in so far as it was consistent with the national interest, i.e., the interests of all communities considered as one nation. The existence, therefore, of the Hindu Mahasabha, too, must be justified on other grounds. It is obvious that the Congress cannot represent mutually antagonistic interests. Its existence presupposes mutuality of interest and effort.

What is your honest belief and conviction as to the real cause, whether remote or immediate, of the frequent riots and differences between Mussalmans and Hindus in North India and of their absence or infrequency in South India?

¹ Not reproduced here

I can only guess and my guess is that the two communities quarrel more frequently in the North because they are more equally balanced than in the South. Where riots do take place, they occur because both think communally and because either fears and distrusts the other, and because neither has the courage nor the foresight to forego the present for the sake of the future, or the communal interests for the sake of the national.

Do you really hope to solve the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity placing as you do reliance upon the present day orthodox Ulema of the Theological School of Deoband and of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, who condemn in season and out of season as *kafirs*, infidels, apostates, and as deserving of no other punishment than being stoned to death, a considerable section of the Muslim community, popularly known as Qadianies, Mrisais, or better as Ahmediyas, or will you seek assistance for the solution of the mighty problem from the Ahmediya community who seem really to hold the key to the situation, and who have already solved the question of Hindu-Muslim unity by their writings and their conduct?

I must woo the orthodox Ulema as well as the Ahmediya community. It is impossible, even if it were desirable, to disregard the "orthodox Ulema". What one must, however, do is not to truckle to any person or party. Having fixed one's minimum from which one may not recede, one may stoop to conquer the whole world.

Have you ever inquired as to why, while the Muslim community in India as a whole is so keenly interested in the affairs of Muslim countries abroad, not the least appreciable proportion of it takes any active interest in the internal political life and advancement of the country and especially in the Presidency of Madras?

In so far as the charge is correct, the Mussalmans take less interest because they do not yet regard India as their home of which they must feel proud. Many regard themselves, quite wrongly, I think, as belonging to a race of conquerors. We Hindus are in a measure to blame for this aloofness on the part of the Mussalmans. We have not come to regard them as an integral part of the nation. We have not set out to win their hearts. The causes for this unfortunate state of things are historic and were in their origin inevitable. The blame of the Hindus, therefore, can be felt only now. The consciousness being of recent growth is naturally not universal and the physical fear of the Mussalmans in a vast number of cases makes it constitutionally difficult for the Hindus to adopt the blame and proceed to win the

Mussalman heart. But I must own to the reader that I no longer regard myself as an expert on the Hindu-Muslim question. My opinion has, therefore, only an academic value. I still hold to my own view even though I admit that I have found it difficult to make it acceptable to either party.

What is your remedy for the unfortunate turn the politics of this country have ever since taken, viz., that while politics and political life in this country have from the beginning attracted successfully only a few of the rich and well-to-do classes, it has become almost an impossible thing for men of the middle and the poor classes to lead anything like an active and successful political life in this country, especially during the last four years?

The politics have taken no unfortunate turn. We are passing through a necessary stage. The immense self-consciousness among the poorer classes has upset old calculations and formulae. We have not yet adjusted ourselves to the new state of things. But I see signs everywhere of settling down to the new order of things. Taking even the Hindu-Muslim disturbances in that light, I do not despair of the future. Order must come out of the present chaos. We would expedite the advent of order by watching, waiting and praying. If we do so, the evil that has come to the surface will disappear much quicker than if, in our haste and impatience, we would disturb the surface and thus send the dirt to the bottom again instead of allowing it to throw itself out.

Young India, 2-4-1925

58. THE NATIONAL WEEK

The 6th and 13th of April must for ever remain green in Indian memory. 6th April 1919 witnessed an unexpected and huge mass awakening of the nation. On 13th of April the nation we made to offer a sacrifice in which Hindu, Mussalman and Sikh blood mingled at Jallianwala Bagh. They became one in death.

Since then much water has flown under the Sabarmati bridge. The nation has passed through many vicissitudes. Today Hindu-Muslim unity seems to have been but a dream. I observe that both are preparing for a fight. Each claims that it is preparing in self-defence. Each is in a measure right. And if they must fight, let them fight bravely, disdaining the protection of the police or the law-courts. If they will do that, the lesson of 13th April will not have been lost upon them. If we will cease to be slaves, we must cease to rely for protection

upon the British bayonet or the slippery justice of law-courts. Not to rely upon either, at the crucial moment, is the best training for swaraj. The supersession¹ of Sir Abdur Rahim, the passage of the Supplementary Ordinance², the restoration of the salt tax, tell us in plainest language that the British rulers propose to rule in spite of our opposition. In fact, they tell us by their action as clearly as possible, that they can and will rule without our assistance. Shall we not have the negative courage of doing without their assistance? We have seen that we can, when we do not quarrel. It is possible, if we have some courage, to do without that assistance even if we quarrel. It is any day better to stand erect with a broken and bandaged head than to crawl on one's belly in order to be able to save one's head. I can see Hindu-Muslim unity issuing out of our street fights without Government intervention. I should despair of real unity if we would fight under the shadow of the British uniform and perjured evidence before British Courts. We must be men before we would rule ourselves.

But the satyagraha week is preeminently one of self-purification and self-introspection. It is my fixed conviction, daily growing on me, that we shall not make this unhappy land happy except by purity of conduct which, spelt otherwise, means truth and non-violence. Such purity can come only by prayer and fasting. Hartal in the present state of things is out of question. I, therefore, suggest to those who believe in prayer and fasting to devote 6th and 13th to that sacred purpose. Khaddar and the wheel are the only universal programme in which young and old, rich and poor, men and women can usefully take part. Those who can spin should spin as much as they can and induce their friends to do likewise. Those who can will hawk khaddar in their places and thus the week can be used as a week of dedication to this most important national work.

Hindus have also the impurity of untouchability to remove. They can fraternize with the untouchables. They can set apart what

¹ The appointment of Sir John Kerr as the acting Governor of Bengal for the period Lord Lytton was to take over as Viceroy during Lord Reading's absence from India. Sir Abdur Rahim, a senior member of the Council, should have been given the Governorship.

² The Bengal Ordinance, promulgated to supplement the ordinary criminal law in Bengal for the suppression of revolutionary crime

they can spare for the relief of distress among them and; in a variety of ways, make them feel that they are no longer the despised class among Hindus.

Hindu-Muslim unity, khaddar and removal of untouchability are to me the foundation for swaraj. On that firm foundation it is possible to erect a structure nobler than which the world has not seen. Anything without that foundation will be like a building built on sand.

Young India, 2-4-1925

59. TWO QUESTIONS

During my travels in the South, I discovered that Congress organizations accepted money in lieu of yarn for membership. I understood that the practice had become almost universal. As a member myself and as editor, I have no hesitation in saying that the practice is illegal. Whether it is so in fact or not only the Working Committee can decide. I have no desire as President to give rulings in such matters. But as a common sense man writing for common sense people, I remind Congressmen that the idea of importing money payment as an alternative was discussed and rejected. The idea of yarn being treated as subscription was that everyone desirous of joining the Congress was to be expected himself to take the trouble of knowing good hand-spun yarn from bad and purchasing it. The Congress ledgers can only contain yarn receipts, not monetary subscriptions. To take money payments, therefore, is to violate the constitution. I would go a step further and say that the spirit of the pact¹ requires the Congress organizations to cater and canvass for only self-spinning members. Those who do not wish to spin themselves may send in their quota of yarn but a Congress organization should put forth its best effort by merely catering for self-spinners to popularize hand-spinning among its members. I, therefore, hold it to be the duty of the Congress organizations to return all monetary payments. It is for private agencies to provide hand-spun yarn to those who wish to buy it. Unless this limitation is observed, we cannot claim to have worked or given a fair trial to the new franchise. Personally, I do not mind even though we may have only a few hundred self-spinning members

¹ The Calcutta Pact; *vide* "Joint Statement with Party Leaders", November 6, 1924.

provided that they do the spinning without any stimulation save what is contained in the pride of belonging to the Congress. I hope, therefore, that those Congress offices that have taken money in lieu of yarn will return the same and advise the subscribers to send in hand-spun yarn if they wish to remain members. If the latter feel aggrieved, they have a perfect right to secure a ruling from the Working Committee.

The second question I came to know only on reaching Bombay. I understand that there are gentlemen who persist in attending Congress meetings without being fully clad in khaddar. In my opinion, such persons cannot be considered members and have no right to take part in any Congress meetings so long as they remain clad in anything but hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. In that state, they can neither vote nor speak.

Young India 2-4-1925

60. SOME ARGUMENTS CONSIDERED

My article¹ on birth-control has, as was to be expected, given rise to energetic correspondence in favour of artificial methods. I select three typical letters. There is a fourth letter which is largely theological. I, therefore, omit it. Here is one of the three letters:

I have read your article on "Birth-control" with great interest. The subject is, at present, exercising the minds of many educated men. Last year, we had long and heated debates. They proved at least this much, that young men are acutely interested in this problem, that there is a great deal of prudery and prejudice about it, that in a free and open discussion one's sense of "decency" is rarely shocked. Your article has set me thinking afresh and I appeal to you for some more light to dispel many doubts that arise in my mind.

I agree that "there can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth-control". I further agree that "*brahmacharya* is an infallible sovereign remedy doing good to those who practise it". But I ask whether the problem is not one of "birth-control", than of "self-control". If so, let us see if self-control is a feasible method of birth-control, for the average person.

I believe that this problem can be examined from two different points of view, that of the individual and society. It is the duty of each individual to restrain his carnal passions, and thus evolve his spiritual strength. At all

¹ *Vide* "Birth-control", 12-3-1925

times, there are a few such persons of great moral fibre who set up this noble standard before themselves and will follow no other. But I wonder whether they have any perception of the problem of birth-control which they are intent on solving. A sannyasin is out for salvation, but not for birth-control.

But can this method solve an economic, social and political question of the greatest importance to the vast majority of people within a reasonable period of time? It presses for solution on every thinking and prudent *grihastha* even now. How many children can one feed, clothe, educate and settle in life is a question which brooks no delay. Knowing human nature, as you do, can you reasonably expect large numbers completely abstaining from sexual pleasure after the need for progeny has been satisfied? But, I believe, you would permit a rational and temperate exercise of the sexual instinct, as is recommended by our *smritikaras*¹. The vast majority may be asked neither to indulge the passion nor to repress it, but only to regulate it. But, even if this were possible, would this method control births? I believe that we shall then have better people but not fewer people. In fact, the problem of population would become more acute, as an efficient population grows faster than an inefficient one. The art of cattle-breeding does not give us few cattle, but more and better cattle.

I agree that “union is meant not for pleasure but for bringing forth progeny”. But you must grant that pleasure is the chief, if not the only inducement to it. It is Nature’s lure to fulfil its purpose. How many would fulfil it, and do fulfil it, where pleasure is lacking? How many go for pleasure and get progeny, and how many go for progeny and also find pleasure? You say that “Union is a crime when the desire for progeny is absent”. It beautifully suits a sannyasin, like you, to say so. For have you not also said that he who owns more than he needs is a “thief” and a “robber”, that who loves not others more, loves himself less? But why be so hard on poor and weak mortals? To them, a little pleasure without desire for progeny would soothe and meet natural changes in body and mind. The fear of progeny would, in several cases, agitate nerves, and in some cases, delay marriage. The desire for progeny, in normal cases, would cease after a few years of marriage. Would union after that be a crime? Do you think that a man afraid of committing that “crime” would be morally superior, by sitting tight over the safety-valve of his restless passions? After all, why do you tolerate “thieves”, who hold more than they need, but not the “criminals” who unite after the desire for progeny is satisfied? Is it because “thieves” are too numerous and powerful to reform?

¹ Authors of the *smritis*, law-books regulating social and moral conduct

Lastly, you allege that “artificial methods are like putting a premium upon vice. They make men and women reckless”. This is a heavy charge, if true. I ask whether “public opinion” has ever been strong enough to restrain sexual excess. I am aware of drunkards being restrained by fear of such opinion. But I am also aware of the saying that “God never sends mouths but he sends meat also” that “Children are born because of God’s Will”; of the prejudice that a large progeny is a proof of manliness. I know cases where such opinion gives a license to husbands over wives and considers the exercise of the sex instinct as the main bond of marriage. Besides, is it certain that “adoption of artificial methods must result in imbecility and nervous prostration ?” There are methods and methods, and I believe that science has discovered, or will soon discover, innocuous methods. This is not beyond the wit of man.

But it seems that you would not allow their use, in any case, for, “it is wrong and immoral to seek to escape the consequences of one’s acts”. This is unexceptionable, only you assume that even a moderate exercise of one’s appetite, without desire for progeny, is immoral. Moreover I ask, whoever is restrained by the fear of progeny, the consequences of one’s acts? In any case, many are impelled to seek the advice of quacks, reckless of their health and happiness. How many abortions have not been caused while “seeking to escape the consequences of one’s acts”. But, even if “fear” proved an effective restraint, the “moral” results would be poor indeed. Besides, by what system of justice should the sins of parents be visited upon the heads of their progeny and the imprudence of individuals hurt society? It is true that “Nature is relentless, and will have full revenge for any such violation of her laws”. But, why assume that the use of artificial methods is *such a violation*. None calls the use of artificial teeth, eyes and limbs, as “unnatural”. That alone is unnatural which does not secure our well-being. I do not believe that mankind is by nature vicious, and that the use of these methods will make it worse. There is enough of license even now, not even India excepted. It is as easy to prove that this new power will be properly used as that it may be abused. But let us recognize that man is on the point of winning this tremendous power over Nature, and that we can ignore it only at our cost. Wisdom lies in controlling it, not in shunning it. Some of the noblest workers seek the propagation of these methods, not for indulgence, but to help men to self-control. Let us also not forget that woman and her needs have been ignored too long. She means to have her say in this matter, for she refuses to allow men to treat her body “as tilth for offspring”.

The strain of modern civilization is too great to permit her to rear a large

family with all the drudgery and worry it means. Dr. Marie Stopes¹ and Miss Ellen Key² would never seek the “nervous prostration” of woman. The methods they suggest can be made effective chiefly by woman, and are more likely to evolve wise motherhood than reckless indulgence. In any case there are circumstances when a lesser evil may avoid a greater. There are dangerous diseases which must be avoided even at the cost of “nervous prostration”. There are natural periods of lactation when union is unavoidable but injurious if fruitful. There are women, otherwise healthy, who can bear children only at a serious risk to their lives.

I neither wish nor expect you to turn into a propagandist of birth-control. You are at your best in keeping the light of truth and chastity burning in its purity and holding it before mortals who seek it. But a prudent parent will seek that light more than an imprudent one. Who realizes the need of birth-control may easily evolve self-control. The present license, thoughtlessness and ignorance are so great that even you cry, as if in a wilderness. There is great need for more enlightened discussion than your apologetic and “reluctant” article permits. If you cannot join in it, you must at least recognize it, and, if need be, guide it betimes, for there are breakers ahead; and it will serve no purpose to blink our eyes at the danger, and “hesitate on approaching this subject.

Let me clear the ground by saying that I have not written for sannyasins or as a sannyasin. I do not claim to be one in the accepted sense of the term. My observations are based upon unbroken personal practice with a slight aberration for a period of twenty-five years and that of those who have joined me in the experiment for a long enough period to warrant certain conclusions. In the experiment, both young and old men and women are included. I claim a certain degree of scientific accuracy for the experiment. It has undoubtedly a strictly moral basis but it originated in the desire for birth-control. My own case was peculiarly for that purpose. Tremendous moral consequences developed as an afterthought though in a perfectly natural sequence. I venture to claim that by judicious treatment it is possible to observe self-control without much difficulty. Indeed it is a claim put forth not merely by me but German and other Nature-cure practitioners. The latter teach that water treatment or earth compresses and a non-heating and chiefly fruitarian diet soothes the nervous system and brings animal passions under easy subjection

¹ 1880-1958; author of works on birth-control

² 1849-1926; Swedish author who wrote on welfare of women and children.

whilst it, at the same time, invigorates the system. The same result is claimed by rajayogis¹ for scientifically regulated *pranayam*² without reference to the higher practices. Neither the Western nor the ancient Indian treatment is intended for the sannyasin but essentially for the householder. If it is contended that birth-control is necessary for the nation because of over-population, I dispute the proposition. It has never been proved. In my opinion, by a proper land system, better agriculture and a supplementary industry, this country is capable of supporting twice as many people as there are in it today. But I have joined hands with the advocates of birth-control in India from the stand-point of the present political condition of the country.

I do suggest that men must cease to indulge their animal passions after the need for progeny has ceased. The remedy of self-control can be made popular and effective. It has never had a trial with the educated class. That class has not yet, thanks to the joint family system, felt the pressure. Those that have, have not given a thought to the moral issues involved in the question. Save for stray lectures on *brahmacharya*, no systematic propaganda has been carried for advocating self-control for the definite purpose of limiting progeny. On the contrary, the superstition of larger family being an auspicious thing and therefore desirable still persists. Religious teachers do not generally teach that restriction of progeny in given circumstances is as much a religious obligation as procreation may be under certain other circumstances.

I am afraid that advocates of birth-control take it for granted that indulgence in animal passion is a necessity of life and in itself a desirable thing. The solicitude shown for the fair sex is most pathetic. In my opinion, it is insult to the fair sex to put up her case in support of birth-control by artificial methods. As it is, man has sufficiently degraded her for his lust, and artificial methods, no matter how well meaning the advocates may be, will still further degrade her. I know that there are modern women who advocate these methods. But I have little doubt that the vast majority of women will reject them as inconsistent with their dignity. If man means well by her, let him exercise control over himself. It is not she who tempts. In reality, man being the aggressor, is the real culprit and the tempter.

¹ Those who practise yoga as a means of liberation

² Regulation of breathing, the fourth stage of yoga

I urge the advocates of artificial methods to consider the consequences. Any large use of the methods is likely to result in the dissolution of the marriage bond and in free love. If a man may indulge in animal passion for the sake of it, what is he to do whilst he is, say, away from his home for any length of time, or when he is engaged as a soldier in a protracted war, or when he is widowed, or when his wife is too ill to permit him the indulgence without injury to her health notwithstanding the use of artificial methods?

But says another correspondent:

With respect to your article on birth-control in a recent issue, may I respectfully point out that you start by begging the whole question when you assert that artificial methods are injurious. In the Contraceptive Section of the last International Birth-control Conference (London, 1922), attended by members of the medical profession only, the following resolution was passed with 3 dissentients out of 164 present:

“That this meeting of the Medical members of the Fifth International Birth-control Conference wishes to point out that birth-control by hygienic contraceptive devices is absolutely distinct from abortion in its physiological, legal and moral aspects. It further records its opinion that *there is no evidence that the best contraceptive methods are injurious to health or conducive to sterility.*”

Now it seems to me that the opinion of such a large body of medical men and women including some of the most eminent names in the profession can hardly be set aside with a stroke of the pen. You say: “Adoption of artificial methods must lead to imbecility and nervous prostration.” Why “must”? I venture to submit that modern scientific methods do not lead to anything of the kind, though the use of harmful methods through ignorance may. This is only one more argument why proper methods should be taught to all who are likely to need them, i.e., to all adults capable of reproduction. You blame these methods for being artificial, and still want medical men to find out “means of self-control”. I do not quite understand what you mean, but as you refer to medical men, would not any “means of self-control” devised by them be equally artificial? You say: “Union is meant not for pleasure, but for bringing forth progeny.” Meant by whom? By God? In that case, what did he create the sexual instinct for? You further say: “Nature is relentless and will have full revenge for any such violation of her laws.” But Nature, at any rate, is not a person as God is supposed to be, and does not issue orders to anybody. It is not possible to violate Nature’s laws. The consequences of actions are inevitable in Nature. Good and bad are words that we apply to them. The

people who use artificial methods do take the consequences of their acts like those who don't. Your argument, therefore, does not mean anything unless you can prove that artificial methods are injurious. I assert, from observation and experiment, that they are not, provided proper methods are used. Actions must be judged moral or immoral according to their results and not by a *priori* assumptions as to their morality.

The method you propose was also advised by Malthus, but is absolutely impracticable except for a few selected individuals like you. What is the use of advocating methods which cannot be practised? The benefits of *brahmacharya* have been greatly exaggerated. Modern medical authorities (I mean those who have no religious prejudices) think that it is positively harmful beyond the age of 22 or so. It is religious prejudice which makes you think that sexual union is a sin except for procreation. As nobody can guarantee the result beforehand, you condemn everybody either to complete abstinence or to take the chance of spinning. Physiology does not teach this and it is now too late in the day to ask people to ignore science in favour of dogma.

This writer has taken up an uncompromising attitude. I hope I have given enough illustrations to show that self-restraint and not indulgence must be regarded as the law of life, if we are to accept and retain the sanctity of the marriage time. I have not begged the question, for I do contend that artificial methods, however proper they may be, are harmful. They are harmful not perhaps in themselves but because they increase the appetite which grows with every feed. The mind that is so tuned as to regard indulgence not only lawful but even desirable will simply feed itself on the indulgence and will at last become so weak as to lose all strength of will. I do maintain that every act of indulgence means loss of precious vitality so needful to keep a man or woman strong in body, mind and soul. Though I have now mentioned the soul, I have purposely eliminated it from the discussion which is intended merely to combat the arguments advanced by my correspondents who seem to disregard its existence. The tuition that is needed for much married and enervated India is not that of indulgence with artificial means but complete restraint, if only for the sake of regaining lost vitality. Let the immoral medicines whose advertisements disfigure our Press be a warning to the advocates of birth-control. It is not prudery or false modesty which restrains me from discussing the subject. The restraining force is the certain knowledge that the devitalized and enervated youth of the country fall

an easy prey to the specious arguments advanced in favour of indulgence.

It is perhaps now hardly necessary for me to combat the medical certificate produced by the second correspondent. It is wholly irrelevant to my case. I neither affirm nor deny that proper artificial methods injure the organs or produce sterility. No array, however brilliant, of medical men can disprove the ruin which I have witnessed of hundreds of youths who have indulged their passions even though it may be with their own wives.

The analogy drawn by the first writer from false teeth seems to me to be inapplicable. False teeth are indeed artificial and unnatural but they may serve a necessary purpose. Whereas artificial methods are like antidotes taken by a man who wants to eat not for satisfying hunger but for pleasing the palate. Eating for the sake of pleasure is a sin like animal indulgence for the sake of it.

The last letter is interesting for the information it gives:

The question is now vexing the governments of the world. I refer to your article on "Birth-control". You doubtless know the antipathy of the American Government towards its propagation. You have no doubt also heard about the free sanction given to it by an Eastern Power—I mean the Empire of Japan. The one rules out birth-control altogether—whether as a result of artificial means or natural ones—for reasons best known to everyone. The other sponsors it for reasons also universally known. In my opinion, there is nothing to admire in the action of the first. Is there much, however, to despise in the step of the second? Don't you think the Japanese Government should be given credit at least for facing facts? They must stop procreation; they must also take human nature at its *present worth*. Is not birth-control, as at present understood in the West, the only way out for them? You will say an emphatic "No". But may I ask, if the course you suggest is practicable? *It may be very ideal, but is it practical?* Can humanity be expected to forgo sexual pleasure to any very appreciable degree? It may be easy of find a glorious few who practise self-control or *brahmacharya*. Can this method, however, be depended upon for any mass movement in this direction? And nothing less than a mass movement is necessary in India to meet the situation.

I must confess my ignorance of the facts about America and Japan. Why Japan is advocating birth-control I do not know. If the writer's facts are correct and if birth-control by artificial methods is at all general in Japan, I make bold to say that this fine nation is rushing headlong to its moral ruin.

I may be wholly wrong. My conclusions may be based on false data. But the advocates of artificial methods have need to be patient. They have no data at all except the modern examples. Surely, it is too early to predict anything with any degree of certainty of a system of control which on the face of it, seems to be repugnant to the moral sense of mankind. It is easy enough to trifle with youthful nature. It will be difficult to undo the evil effects of such trifling.

Young India, 2-4-1925

61. DIFFICULTIES IN DHOLKA TALUK

A Correspondent writes from Dholka:¹

If what the correspondent says is true, there are three ways of ending the hardships, and they can be adopted simultaneously. We should explain things and educate those who submit to injustice through ignorance or fear, approach the constables and explain to them their duty and lodge complaints with the officials of the department concerned. Those who submit to hardships cannot be called non-co-operators. They can always petition. There is also the fourth way, going to the court. Kind-hearted lawyers can offer their services free to the people. The last course can be adopted only if the grievance is not redressed by the Government.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 2-4-1925

62. SPEECH AT MADHADA

April 2, 1925

I have an unyielding faith in devotion to duty. A fighter knows no fatigue. He wishes to die with his boots on and is confident that, if he cannot win while living, victory will be his after he is dead. Even if you lose your life as a result of your *tapascharya* and the entire Ashram is ruined, you should still believe that the principle of faith in oneself taught by Gandhi is true, and that you will win your goal in the next birth, if not in this.

It often happens that, when we feel ourselves thoroughly

¹ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had described the harassment of the villagers by the officials and constables in charge of a customs post in the taluk.

beaten and the whole world seems against us, money starts suddenly pouring in from unexpected, unknown quarters; I can cite many instances of such bitter sweet experiences from my own life. When I fixed one year as the time limit within which we would have swaraj, God humbled me. He asked me who I was to fix a time-limit. I had no doubt fixed this limit subject to certain conditions being fulfilled, but even so I should have properly measured the strength of the country before doing that. I alone am to blame for misjudging that strength. However, I have far more faith and confidence today than what I had in 1920-21, and they are a source of peace and happiness to me. Those who would share my peace and happiness should cultivate the same faith that I have. You described me as a prophet of non-violence, but my friend Shastri and the Government regard me as a prophet of violence. Non-violence is my creed, but what is the meaning of this non-violence if people kill, or abuse others, all in my name? I have been observing that the response to everything I say or do seems to distort it out of recognition, so that I ask myself what must be the quality of the non-violence which I profess to practise. In spite of such difficulties, I am clinging like a fanatic to the principle of non-violence. I go on working without being influenced by what other people think or say, and that enables me to do my work without any fear of losing my sanity or self-control.¹

Udyog Ashram is a fine name indeed; in industry everything is included. Where the trinity of knowledge, service and action is the aim, two different names like Udyog Ashram and Seva Ashram connote an error in our thinking. We should aim at a happy synthesis of the three ways, and tell the aspirant not to lose faith in God even for a second, not to play with Him. We should ask him not to think that the people of India are hypocrites. They are not. In fact, they are the 33 crores of deities in the Hindu pantheon, if only we can be one with them, otherwise we may even think them to be devils. parvati had to perform *tapascharya* for thousands of years to get the great Siva as her consort. On the other hand, the age in which we live is age of strife. I you think that you can achieve a happy synthesis of knowledge, service and action in a short time, you are sadly mistaken. Shankaracharya, describing the patience a seeker after *moksha* must have, says that it is more than the patience of a man who would empty

¹ In what follows, Gandhiji refers to several names of the Ashram

the ocean with the help of a straw. Here Pandit Lalan and Shivjibhai want money. They should show more patience even than the seeker after *moksha*. If they desire that money should pour in, I would tell them that money is but a trifle. Goodwill is a noble quality of the soul and is more difficult to cultivate in others. When Shivjibhai and Lalan feel that people are not coming forward with offers of money, they must attribute the fact to their lack of strength of purpose and the imperfection of their spiritual realization. Instead of believing that they have had self-realization, they should think that they have had an illusion of it. If, having observed a little *brahmacharya*, we start boasting, or, having kept somewhat the vow of non-possession, we start lecturing others, what an attempt it would be to impose on the world! personally, I feel every day that the definition of *brahmacharya* and the field of its practice are much wider than I had thought, and I am not today such a *brahmachari* as to be able to give a perfect definition of *brahmacharya*. The same is true about the definition of truth. I have not yet become such a devoted follower of truth in my life that I can give a perfect definition of it. Non-violence, too, is equally difficult to define. The author of the holy books who discovered this principle could not find a positive word for it, for he said that there was no limit to a virtue. He, therefore, employed the word *ahimsa*. His plight was similar to that of the seers who ended up with *neti, neti*¹. Anybody who dedicates himself to a high aim must understand this first.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 12-4-1925

63. SPEECH AT DHASA

April 2, 1925

The Government has deposed the Durbar Saheb² because he served his people; but has he lost his exalted position? He lost the rule of Dhasa and gained that of Borsad. The whole world knows him today. He now rules over the hearts of the people of Borsad. Many people have made heavy sacrifices in this great *yajna* for the freedom

¹ Literally, “not this, not this”, indicating the ineffable nature of Reality

² Durbar Gopaldas, ruler of a small State in Saurashtra; he had joined the Congress.

of India, but he is the only one among the rulers to have done so. Has he really lost the rule of Dhasa? He will do that only when you, the people, throw him out and say that you have no place for him in your hearts. I am afraid, however, that you have actually deposed him, since you have broken the pledges you made to him. The *Antyajias* have not kept their pledge not to weave foreign yarn, not to touch liquor or eat meat. Let the whole world perish, but a pledge must not be broken. And especially if you do not keep a pledge made to your ruler, you would deserve to have your heads chopped off. But we have no Harischandras¹ now who would sell themselves for the sake of their word, nor any ruler who deserves the right to demand a man's head. If the *Antyajias* broke their pledge, so did you. Would you behave as you do if you really wanted your Durbar Saheb back? How many women wear khadi? How many have taken to spinning? The Government may have deprived the Durbar Saheb of his authority; if, however, you in Dhasa pay the revenue to the Government but respect the Durbar Saheb's orders in other matters, will he have been deposed? When Rama went to live in the forest, his subjects insisted on going with him and suffered voluntarily for his sake. A brother like Bharata performed *tapascharya* at Nandi Gram, installed Ramchandra's wooden sandals on the throne and meditated on them. What did you do? You can get back your Durbar if you obey orders issued from Borsad. I shall tell you. Listen how you can do this.

Let every man and woman wear khadi and ply the spinning wheel, let the *Antyajias* weave only with hand-spun yarn and wear khadi themselves. The *mahajan* should not ill-treat the *Antyajias*; it should attend to their difficulties about water, etc., and refuse to regard them as untouchables. Do this, and then ask me what the position of the Durbar is. Whether he returns or not, I will then come to you, giving up the fight for the country's freedom, and join you in your *tapascharya*.

What are you waiting for? Has the love for the Durbar Saheb which you once professed before me evaporated? You complain that the *Kothis* let loose their cattle into your fields. Did the Durbar forbid you to defend yourselves and your fields? Even the British Government gives you the right to drive out poachers and beat off cattle from your fields. Why have you become so helpless? Why did you break all your promises?

¹ King of Ayodhya who suffered the severest ordeals for the sake of truth

But let bygones be bygones. Are you ready to make a fresh start? You have seen the Durbar in a turban and rich clothes. But now he wears a shirt of coarse khadi. He wears no cap, and has only a coarse loin cloth wrapped round his waist. What do you intend to do? Have you given up your turbans? Will you lose your manhood by doing so? What have you done so far that I should regard you fit to call the Durbar back? Do not mind, however; take a pledge today for one year. Let the *Antyaja* give up meat and drink and stop weaving foreign yarn. You should give up foreign cloth. Everybody should spin and wear hand-woven cloth. If you do not wish to burn your foreign clothes put them aside for the time being. If, after living for a year in this manner, you find that I do not keep my pledge, you may cut off my head and start wearing your old, foreign clothes again. Each and every home must have a spinning-wheel. If you do not get enough cloth, wear only a cod piece or wrap a little bit of khadi round your waist. Welcome the *Antyajias* among you, and let them also use the water which God has provided for you. If you do not, you may be sure you will see the end of the world. Do not for a moment talk of asking the *Antyajias* to drink water from those ponds from which you yourselves would never draw your drinking water.

Do these simple things which are in your own interest, and if then you do not get the Durbar back, write to me. Though I am a non-co-operator, I will still request the Government to restore him to you. If I fail, I will join you in your *tapascharya*. May God give you the strength to keep your pledges, and like-wise give me the strength to keep mine. I have poured out my heart to you and expressed my hopes. You may now act as you think best.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 19-4-1925

64. SPEECH AT BAGASARA

April 2, 1925

I have a special liking for Bagasara. I did not know the difference between a loom and a spinning-wheel in 1908, though I had written about the latter in *Hind Swaraj*¹ then. When I returned to India, Bagasara was the first place to help me in reviving weaving. I was in

¹ *Vide* "Hind Swaraj", November 22, 1909.

search of someone from whom I could secure a specimen loom, and I wrote to Shri Ranchhoddas Patwari.¹ He informed me that I could get one from Durbar Shri Vajsurwala. This gentleman was the first to give me a loom; afterwards the Nawab Saheb of Palanpur gave me another and also sent a worker. I had succeeded in securing a loom, but I found it hard to start weaving. Then, too, the Bagasara weavers came to my help. This town is a centre of weaving and, if the weavers and traders here take sufficient interest, they can supply enough khadi for the whole of Kathiawar.²

I cannot find words strong enough to condemn the practice of accepting bride-money. A daughter is like a meek cow; anyone who, instead of giving her in marriage as a sacred gift, treats her as a means of making money and sells her, commits a sin far more heinous than killing a cow. When I think about the probable origin of communities like *Chandalas*³ and *Antyajias*, I feel that society must have cut off relations with persons who accepted bride-money and treated such persons as outside the pale of the recognized castes. If any people deserve to be so treated, I believe it is those who accept bride-money though, of course, in no circumstances can it be right to treat a person and his descendants as perpetual untouchables.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 19-4-1925

65. SPEECH IN REPLY TO WELCOME ADDRESS, PALITANA

April 3, 1925

HON'BLE THAKORE SAHEB, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I thank you all for presenting me with an address. Receiving it from Thakore Saheb's hand, I feel honoured all the more. All kinds of praises have been showered on me in the address. These are nothing new to me now. Wherever I go, I find the same words arranged in different ways. When I listen to them all, I am so touched

¹ *Vide* "Letter to Ranchhodlal Patwari", June 5 and 9, 1915.

² Gandhiji then explained the scheme of the Kathiawar Political Conference for raising a fund of Rs. 20,000 and continued as follows.

³ Outcastes regarded as untouchable

that I feel like praying to God to grant me that whatever is said in these addresses may come true.

Let me tell you something else which has been left out in the address. Only one side has been referred to in the address but it must not be forgotten that there is another side to the medal. I find those who praise me and take part in these functions are indifferent to the ideas they praise me for. It is my fate that wherever I go, I should criticize. But that is unavoidable. I do not ask blind faith from the public; neither do I seek polite phrases from rajas and maharajas. Those may be pleasant to hear. But I wish to become a link between the ruler and the subjects. I shall deem my duty done if I can bring them together and explain the views of one to the other. I have maintained the same relationship with the British. It is my intention to bring the British and the Indians together. I shall not be able to achieve this task if I don't receive the full co-operation of the subjects. I do not say "of the ruler" because I am myself a subject and wish to remain so. I am therefore better able to understand the distress of the people and their words and I can expect greater co-operation from them. Let me ask of them therefore that what they praise [in me] they should praise themselves.

I have often said that the maxim, "As the king, so the subjects" is true and so too its converse, "As the subjects, so the king". If the subjects are truthful then there is no likelihood of disrespect [for the king]. There would be nothing wrong with the king. If the subjects are indolent and untruthful, what is there that the best of rulers can do? Think over it. Our *rishis* have not conceived of a better king than Janaka. Rama was an avatar and accepted as God. So we cannot regard him as an ideal [for a king]. But Kalidas¹ has attributed all the [kingly] qualities to Janaka. Suppose the people of Janaka's times were not attuned to his ways, what could the king have done? If today the people do not respond, what can the ruler do? I have seen in Travancore that if the subjects do their duties, the Maharani will manage to do hers. But if the subjects remain recalcitrant, the Maharani cannot do anything, however much she wants. If today I alone were to declare my rejection of untouchability, it will be of no avail. I am telling you all this in the presence of Thakore Saheb with a somewhat selfish motive. Today you have praised me, but if you do nothing tomorrow and I reprimand you for it, you would be nasty to

¹ Apparently a slip for Valmiki

me. On subjects such as these, I expect more from the people than from the ruler. What work can the ruler get out of idlers and drunkards? I had a talk with Thakore Saheb about drinking. He told me that there were no liquor shops here, not even a tea shop; but there are many who would take smuggled drinks. Where things have come to such a pass, what can the ruler do? Can a ruler cure one of one's bad habits? All that can be expected to him is that he should not be a party to the corrupting of his people.

That is why unless the people of Kathiawar are steadfast in their conduct, nothing can be achieved. Without that the prosperity we aspire for, we are not likely to attain. I entertain especial hopes of the people because I see promise of prosperity in Kathiawar. I can get [help] from the people we shall get it from the ruler. And that is the *bhiksha*¹ I beg for. There was a time when I asked for money. And people were not slow to respond. Women took off their jewellery and gave it. People have given away their diamonds and pearls. But today I ask for something else and that is a change in conduct. I ask that the defects in our character should be removed. But I get no response. Wealth you can give me. I thank you for presenting me a purse. It will have its uses. But that will not satisfy me.

You must have compassion. Palitana is sacred and the greatest among the places of Jain pilgrimage. But its people have not yet imparted to others the lesson which they should. Seeing the women did not make me happy; on the contrary I felt unhappy. These women do not understand even the common ethics of compassion. If the poor people of Kathiawar have to leave the State for earning a paltry two or four annas a day to whom is it a disgrace? I regret to say that it is to both the ruler and the subjects. If the matter were in my hands, I would permit no one to leave and would even pass a law to that effect. For the sake of adventure, let them go from one end of the globe to the other. Today there is not a corner of the earth without a Kathiawari. They include castemen, *Vagheals* and Rajputs. Tod² has stated that there were many Thermopylaes³ in Rajputana. How many Thermopylaes do we see here in Kathiawar? Let the people seek adventure to become millionaires. Let them seek adventure for the

¹ Alms

² James Tod (1782-1835); historian; Political Agent to the Western Rajput States; author of *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*

³ A reference to the historic battle of Thermopylae (480 B.C.)

sake of education. But I feel sorry when Kathiawaris say that they go elsewhere because they have nothing to eat at home. There is a shortage of water in Kathiawar. So it is in South Africa, but there the adventurous Boers lifted water from deep wells. I was a member of such a farm¹ where a drop of water could not be had. We tried hard and succeeded in watering 1100 acres of land by digging a well in a small spring. we have to dig deep down before we strike water. The deeper we go the more water we get. Minerals as well as springs of water occur inside the earth. But these are conditions of extreme scarcity.

It would be exile for the poor of Kathiawar if its industry of a hundred years is not revived . But to keep poverty at bay, people must needs wear khadi. There is no salvation unless we wear khadi, coarse or fine. I urge the ruler and the subjects to practise this simple religion. There is nothing to lose by doing so; no one can stop us from practising it and there is no need for machinery. I does not demand self-sacrifice or penance. It only needs a change of heart. Merely by wearing a particular kind of cloth, one fulfils a great dharma. I feel upset that though I receive all these addresses, I cannot persuade the ruler or the subjects to do this little thing. I believe in heeding the inner voice and therefore think that there is something wanting in my *tapascharya*. But I do not give up hope. I my *sadhana* is true, a time will come when the whole of India will put on khadi.

I repeat my words to Lord Reading and Lord Willingdon. My soul will not abide in peace so long as the king, the queen, the porter, the officer, the people and the *Bhangi* do not all become khadi-minded. For there is not other means for eradication of poverty than this. There is not other way but that of the spinning-wheel. Hence I call it *Kamadhenu* and value it higher than the sword. Rama did not give up the bow and arrow, but he gathered firewood for Vishvamitra. He did nothing which the people had not done. As long as the king does not win the hearts of his subjects, he cannot understand them well. The king must do that which is vital for the people's livelihood. That is why training in the Navy is obligatory for the British kings. Their King George drank black coffee and ate cheese. The king takes on

¹ The Phoenix Settlement near Durban started by Gandhiji in 1904; *vide An Autobiography*, Pt. IV, Ch. XIX.

the people's habits. Because the subjects are virtuous, the king enjoys happiness. If they overcome their bad habits he will be happy for ever. We can't say when they would do that. But when they do that, their virtues will be there for the whole world to see. I wish that our rulers and the people may emulate the virtues and adventures of those people. I wish that we may overcome our shortcomings. During the War the barristers and the professors carried thread and needle in their hands and with these they sewed gowns. I was drafted for ambulance work. Those who could not go to the front in Belgium and France did have this work at any rate. They made the work so easy that even an untrained person could sew as many gowns as the expert. I can cite many such instances. If all that you have said in the address is true, you should imbibe all these virtues.

Why have you become so lax? Why is machine yarn used in the *Antyaja* colony? Can't you produce that much yarn in Palitana? I do not want you to encourage Ahmedabad [mills]. I want you to make the finest khadi.

I visited the *Antyaja* school and was unhappy. There was not a single non-*Antyaja* teacher that could be found for the school. Whose fault is it? The Thakore's? You look upon yourselves as pious. But is not there even one among you who is ready to do this work? It is my hope that Brahmins and Banias will come forward offering to teach. In that school one does not get even drinking-water. This is also your job, Thakore Saheb! Why should your subjects not get water? Those people dig in the river bed and try hard to extract water. There are wells even in dharmshalas. But *Antyajias* cannot draw water from there ! What kind of dharma is it that even the travellers can get water but not the *Antyajias*? Who brothers about them? Who among you claims to be compassionate? How can you call yourselves Hindus?

There is no place in our religion for the kind of untouchability being practised these days. After reflection on the Shastras, purifying myself, and much introspection, I have come to the conclusion that the way we practise Hinduism will prove to be its destruction. That is why I ask you to beware. It is the duty of the ruler and the subjects to protect Hinduism. The only way of reform Hinduism is to serve the *Antyajias*. We cannot wash off our sins without self-purification. I request you therefore to befriend the *Antyajias*. Just as you have come here tidied, provide them with the means with which to clean

themselves. If in spite of this they do not clean themselves, tell them that they are unclean and therefore untouchable. But I know that there are thousands of *Antyajas* who are no less clean than I am. They have every capacity and no shortcomings. Whatever shortcoming we see in them, is due to us. That is why I ask you to take the matter into your own hands and apply for service in the school. One person had asked for a salary of Rs. 150 but how can we afford such large amounts? Demand what you need for your livelihood and start an *Antyaja* school from tomorrow. No man may dump his dirt into his neighbourhood.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 318-24

66. DISCUSSION WITH A JAIN “MUNI” AT PALITANA¹

April 3, 1925

GANDHIJI: Does this imply that Lalan can ply the spinning-wheel only if he makes no such claim [to practise ahimsa to the utmost limit]? I have not understood in what way it involves the renunciation of the dharma of ahimsa. It is understandable that unlike a householder, a sadhu should do nothing which would promote his self-interest; but surely he may ply the spinning-wheel for the welfare of others. Let us take one instance. A sadhu may not go out at night. Supposing, however a neighbour's house is on fire, if a sadhu stays at home and does not help his neighbour with water, it would, I think, amount to violence rather than non-violence. Similarly, if during a famine, those who are stricken by it are given food only after they do some set work, it becomes their dharma to do what is assigned to them. If people are dying of thirst, but no one is ready to dig with spade and hoe, a sadhu has no choice but to set an example by taking up these tools. It is not enough to ask others to dig. Even when you do not wish to drink a drop of water, nevertheless, if you get ready with a spade and a hoe and are content only after you have quenched

¹ Gandhiji visited Munishri Kapurvijay at Palitana. Lalan who accompanied Gandhiji, asked the Munishri whether there was any objection to a *muni* (saint) spinning on a wheel. Munishri replied in the affirmative and added that a *muni* claiming to practise supreme ahimsa could not ply a wheel. thereupon Gandhiji initiated the conversation. The conversation has been extracted from Mahadev Desai's article "Third Time in Kathiawar."

the thirst of others, than can be called ahimsa. There is not harm if you drink water even if you do not wish to do so after having quenched the thirst of others. In this way, a sadhu may do many things for the welfare of others; it becomes his duty to do so. Similarly, when there is widespread starvation in India today, when the spinning-wheel enables the poor to be fed, when it has become one's dharma to make every idle person take to spinning, how can a sadhu be permitted not to spin and advise others of do so? Why should people do something that sadhus do not regard as worthwhile? It becomes the dharma of the sadhu, therefore, to sit down with a spinning-wheel and silently work at it. He should not answer if anyone comes to him and seeks his advice; even if he is asked a second time, he should keep silent; finally, he should break his silence and say that besides doing this he has no other advice to give. Hence this alone is the dharma of the sadhu who is attentive and vigilant. There is a risk of the sadhu turning selfish in this work; in that case, his downfall is but proper. Instead of remaining idle and being a burden to society, he will become industrious and work for his livelihood.

I accept the state of extreme non-violence . What, however, is the nature of that state? As a matter of fact, today, sadhus eat and drink like householders, they wear the same kind of clothes, they live in the *apasaras* that have been built for them by the people; they must therefore take part in public life. They must participate in that work which is the greatest public service today.

MUNISHRI: It would then be an *apaddharma*¹.

GANDHIJI: No, it is not that, but the dharma of the age. Today, the dharma of our times is to spin and so long as the sadhu is dependent on society for his daily needs, he must spread the dharma of the age by practising it. Today, you eat the rice grown and cooked by the people, and wear the clothes produced by them. It is a different matter, however, if he eats left-overs lying around, does not care to cover himself, and lives in some unapproachable and unseen cave away from society. He is then free not to observe the dharma of the age. Otherwise, I would say the very same thing today even to the sannyasi who lives and moves in society. In Travancore, I have told the sannyasi who is the guru of the *Thiyas*² not to accept anyone as a

¹ Action allowable only during extreme distress or calamity

² A community in Malabar traditionally regarded as untouchable

disciple unless he comes to him dressed in khadi, so that it would also put an end to overcrowding there. I would ask this of you also. It is possible that this would encourage hypocrisy; but then were there no hypocrites surrounding Shri Rajchandra? It is not we who are harmed by such hypocrisy but the hypocrites themselves.

MUNISHRI: I have not gone into this matter in such detail. I shall discuss it with you after doing so.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 12-4-1925

67. A SPINNER'S DIFFICULTIES

A lover of the spinning-wheel from Bombay describes what he had to go through before he secured one. It was with great difficulty that he found a shop selling spinning-wheels. He got one after waiting for two and a half hours. He paid Rs. 4 as. 8 for it and, on returning home, found that the spindle was bent. The spinning-wheel moved by fits and starts and even now it does not work well. Now, this gentleman asks me what he should do. Another gentleman writes to say that he spins well when he stays at one place; however, he cannot do so while touring around, as he is unable to get a spinning-wheel everywhere.

The difficulties of both are real and yet not so. Anyone who has fully mastered the technique of spinning will not experience the first difficulty because he would be able to repair a bad spinning-wheel. He could carry his spindle with him. However, just as each spinner should become fully proficient in spinning, each Congress Committee should maintain spinning-wheels and other accessories in good working condition. If this is not done, those who have enthusiasm but no knowledge would be left in the lurch. The Congress officials could also remove the difficulties of the second gentleman. There should be an arrangement in the Congress Committee for those who wish to spin. Even in the smaller Congress offices a few spinning-wheels should be in operation.

However, the *takli*¹ can solve all these problems. Anyone who can spin on the *takli* can travel with his spinning-wheel in his pocket. During my tour of Travancore, I found the *takli* invaluable. I carry it

¹ A spindle consisting of a round disc attached in the centre to a thin rod about seven inches long

with me in a bamboo tube. It costs little, and it is immensely useful. Hence I would advise every spinner to carry, without fail, a *takli* with him. It may produce only twenty-five yards in an hour, but, as it is something that can be used at any time and at any place, there is no end to its usefulness. It is for this reason that it can compete with a spinning-wheel in spite of producing less yarn per hour. For the poor, the *takli* is like a blessed sister.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-4-1925

68. TWO CONVERSATIONS

A large number of students come and ask me questions on various subjects. Some of them harass me very much, while others go away satisfied after asking me a few questions in a quiet manner. Both these types of conversations took place during the past few days, and as they are interesting I give them below:

FIRST CONVERSATION¹

During the return journey from Madras, I lay tired and exhausted in the train and was trying to catch up with my writing. The train halted at a station and presently a young man who had just completed studies entered my compartment after asking my permission. He asked me:

“Are you returning from Vykom?”

“Yes.”

“What happened there?”

I did not like this question and asked him in return, “Where, do you come from?”

“I belong to Malabar.”

He carried two newspapers. I asked, “Do you read newspapers?”

“How can I? I have to travel so much, you see.”

“I see you are carrying a copy of *The Hindu*. You can get all the news you want of Vykom from it.”

“But I want to hear it from you.”

“If everyone, like you, starts asking me the news and I have to

¹ This took place at Guntakal on March 25, while Gandhiji was on his way to Bombay.

answer, I would have no time for any other work. Have you thought of that?"

"But you can tell me."

"Do you read *Young India*?"

"No, I do not get time for reading. I read *The Times* though, for I can get it."

"Then I cannot spare any time for you. You do not read *The Hindu*, nor *Young India*. What can I tell you, then, in ten minutes during a chance meeting like this? Please excuse me."

"So you will not tell me"?

"Please excuse me. You do not even wear khadi and are needlessly harassing me."

"But it is your duty to tell me what happened."

"And it is your duty to wear khadi."

"I have no money."

"You are wearing gold buttons. You give them to me and I shall provide you khadi."

"I have a fancy for these buttons and that is why I wear them. Why should I give them to you?"

"Then please excuse me now."

"So you will not tell me anything because I do not wear khadi?"

"Take it that way if you like. But please excuse me."

"Why don't you say that you will not tell me what happened?"

"All right, if you would have it so."

"I shall make this behaviour of yours public."

"You may, with pleasure. But you should now allow me to do my work."

"I have been doing what I can. I had even collected something like a hundred rupees for the Malabar Fund."

"And yet you will not wear khadi which is woven by poor people."

"When people die of starvation, you think of asking people to spin—do I not know that?"

"Let us not discuss that subject."

"Should I go away then?"

“Please do, now.”

I am afraid, I could not make this friend see that he should not waste my time, which is people’s time, by asking me about things he can easily learn from newspapers. After he had left, I felt that had I, instead of being serious with him, talked to him good-humouredly, I could have converted him, though I should certainly have had to spend more time on him. I fear that my seriousness and the consequent stiffness lost me a public worker. Truly, how difficult is the path of non-violence! One has always to be vigilant, however busy one may be, and must constantly try to enter the heart of the person with whom one is talking and that of the bystanders. Those who follow the path of non-violence can have no time of their own and cannot think of their convenience. Whether or not they are in a position to attend to a thing or can spare the necessary time, they are servants who have sold themselves to the world for its service. I saved my time, looked to my convenience, tried to become a teacher and, seeking to instruct, lost the pupil. Tulsidas and other saints have rightly said that a person without discrimination is a brute.

SECOND CONVERSATION

The one whom I wanted to teach had proved to be my teacher. I had learnt the lesson and did not wish to lose another worker. I was, therefore, vigilant. This student was from the Punjab. The Punjabis whom I have met were all of them courteous people. This student, too, was extremely polite and so I had no occasion to exercise vigilance and restrain myself.

“I have been trying for five years,” he said, “to be able to see you. My ambition has been fulfilled today.”

“You are welcome. Do you have anything in particular to ask me ?”

“With your permission, Sir, I should like to ask you a question or two in regard to my studies.”

“You are welcome to do that.”

“Do you believe that I can make a living from the spinning-wheel?”

“No. I have never recommended spinning as a means of livelihood for people like you. You can take it up only as a form of *yajna*.

“What should I do then?”

“If I can persuade you, I would ask you to take up carding and

weaving as a means of livelihood. These crafts can be easily learnt.”

“Will they help me to maintain my family?”

“Yes, if all your family members help you in the work.”

“That is impossible for a family like mine. As you see, I wear khadi. I also spin. I believe in spinning. But how can I create the same faith in my family members? And even if I succeed in doing so, they will not agree to do this work.”

“I can well understand your difficulty, but a good many of us will have to change our way of living; otherwise there is nothing but despair for the seven lakh villages of our country.”

“I understand the idea, but I do not have the strength to follow it in practice today. I want your blessings so that I may have it, but till then what should I do?”

“That is for you and your elders to think out. I have placed before you what I believe to be the ideal.”

“Should I learn some craft like pottery ?”

“It is certainly useful. You can make a living from it and, if you have some capital to invest and start a factory, you will also help a few others to earn their livelihood. But you must admit that in that case you will have to exploit the labourers, for you will be keeping more for yourself and pay them less.”

“That is true. But, being used to city life, I think I cannot do anything else, for the present at any rate. I shall, however, never forget what you have told me. I hope I have your blessings?”

“Every student has my blessings in all good undertakings.”

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-4-1925

69. IS THIS NON-CO-OPERATION?

A gentleman writes to say:¹

If any teachers in a national school or leaders have acted as alleged in this letter, their conduct was certainly disgraceful and should make one sad. If a teacher who was joined the non-co-operation movement applies for a Government job and, failing to get it, applies to a national institution and joins it, he certainly cannot be counted a non-co-operator. If the national school to which he applied knew of his having sought a Government job, it would not appoint him, and if it was forced by circumstances to appoint him he would not thereby be qualified to be called a non-co-operator. The leaders who preserved their own valuable foreign garments and got others' burnt were worse than these teachers. They deceived their countrymen and still maintained their leadership. I do not know if the teachers or the leaders acted in the manner alleged. The correspondent has even sent their names to me, but I have not thought it proper to reveal them. It is also possible that the correspondent, though he has given the names, has himself been misled and that his information may be incorrect. I have often received such allegations, and they were found to be without any foundation.

But suppose that what the correspondent writes is true; even so, he was no ground for the conclusions he has drawn. I two teachers or a couple of leaders have betrayed the movement, that does not mean that everyone is like them. Hundreds of non-co-operators have remained staunch in the face of overwhelming temptations. Hundreds of *snatakas* have refused to appear at Government recognized examinations; they suffer hardships, but do not give up courage. I have, therefore, no reason to feel repentant.

It is thoughtless to say that all khadi-wearers are hypocrites and cheats. I should certainly like to see people in khadi caps wherever go,² but I do not see anything of the sort. I have no reason whatever to believe that the few people who wear khadi caps are cheats. They are

¹ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had cited several instances to show that people had not been sincere in their support of the non-co-operation movement and suggested to Gandhiji that he should adopt the programme of the Swaraj Party.

² The correspondent had argued that Gandhiji was taken in by the sight of people in khadi caps wherever he went.

perfect strangers to me. Some of them I would probably see only once in my life. What do such persons expect to gain by wearing khadi only to please me? Even if they wear khadi with that motive, I would still not call them hypocrites.

It is not true that non-co-operation was planned without feeling the pulse of the people. I would not have got the idea of khadi had I not felt their pulse. If any movement is being carried on steadily, it is that of khadi and the spinning-wheel. I do not know of any other national activity in which so many voluntary workers are engaged and which is a source of untainted income to so many people. This programme is making some progress, no matter how small. Even if the poor have not taken it up actively, they have welcomed it. They know instinctively that the programme is rightly conceived, adds to the country's wealth and is of universal value.

The correspondent says that the spinning programme will not succeed and I should, therefore, give it up and also withdraw the spinning qualification for the franchise. I cannot give it up for reasons explained above. I have no authority to omit the spinning qualification for voting. The Congress can do so at the end of the year if it wishes to. But even if it does, the correspondent will always find me a worshipper of khadi and the spinning-wheel.

The correspondent further says that swaraj cannot be won by khadi alone. I have never said that it can; but what I have said, and repeat again, is that it cannot be won without khadi. It is not true that we lost our independence although we used to wear khadi then. We gave up khadi and lost our independence. If we introduce khadi again, we shall get back our independence also. Besides, when we lost our freedom we did not know that khadi has the virtue of preserving it. Now we know that. If we do not know that we can walk long distances if our lungs are strong, we may possibly lose that strength by neglecting to take care of them so that they become diseased. If even after knowing it, we do not regain our strength by improving the lungs, we would be reckoned fools. The same thing can be said about khadi.

The correspondent wants everyone to be a Swarajist. I can only say that that is not the view of the Congress. At any rate, the khadi movement does not prevent a single person from joining the Swaraj Party. A sincere Swarajist can be a devotee of khadi. There are swar-

ajists who are such devotees. The compact endorsed by the Congress¹ assumes that both the parties have faith in khadi, and has explained what that faith is. It is, therefore, permissible to a person, while spinning and persuading others to spin or weaving khadi and persuading others to do so, to join the Swaraj Party and invite others to join it.

I do not at all feel sorry that only a few members are left in the Congress. If it has only ten thousand members who are sincere lovers of khadi, they will be able to serve the Congress and the country more effectively than hundreds of thousands of members, who are such only in name and who do nothing but pay their four-anna subscription to the Congress. Indeed a large number of such members may do more harm than good.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-4-1925

70. INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

General Smuts deserves credit for supporting the cause of the Indians in South Africa. But this by itself will not remove their hardships. Their plight is becoming more and more pitiable. European traders are out to destroy completely the Indians' business, the very means of their existence. They are, therefore, now ready openly to attack the trade-interests of Indians settled in the Transvaal. India is not in a position to help them. Government has given up all pretence of decency. It sets no store by public opinion in this country. No matter what the result of voting in the Legislative Assembly is, the Government goes its own way. Public opinion in India is of course in favour of their countrymen in South Africa. Whatever is possible will certainly in South Africa. Whatever is possible will certainly be done here. But I feel it my duty to warn the Indians living in South Africa or other foreign countries that they must in the last resort rely on their own strength. The saying, "One cannot go to heaven except by giving up one's own life" fully applies to their situation.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-4-1925

¹ *Vide* "Resolution on Calcutta Agreement and Spinning Franchise, Belgaum Congress", December 26, 1924.

71. MY NOTES

UNINTENDED INJUSTICE

Shri Amritlal Thakkar had dedicated himself to the service of the poor and is, therefore, always thinking about them; some times it is the *Bhils*¹ and sometimes it is the *Bhangis*, or it may be a small store selling pure khadi. True to this self-imposed mission, or, if you like, this vocation of his, he writes to me as follows:²

If I have, intentionally or otherwise, used *Navajivan* to give publicity to the other two stores, I now give like publicity, with full intention, to this khadi store so dear to Amritlal, and wish that its monthly sales may go up from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 30,000. This is not an impossible hope. The author of the *Mahabharata* asks “Between human effort and Fate, which is more potent?” and, not being able to come to any definite conclusion, he represents sometimes the former and sometimes the latter as the more potent. If the proprietor of this khadi store has faith and courage and is sincere, his efforts will draw Fate to his side, and his store will prosper and help the other two also to prosper; for it can be asserted in regard to the khadi movement that if one store prospers other stores in the same town, will also prosper. I have seen this with my own eyes at Tirupur. It is a small town, but has five or six stores. When people liked khadi, all of them flourished. However, when people became indifferent to khadi, all of them lost custom.

CASH IN LIEU OF YARN

It has been noticed that some Committees accept cash in lieu of yarn when enrolling members of the Congress. According to me, this is against rules. It was suggested that those who might not spin or get the required yarn spun by others, could pay cash, but the suggestion was rejected on the ground that if a person wishing to become a member did not even take the trouble to obtain yarn from somebody

¹ An aboriginal tribe

² The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had drawn Gandhiji's attention to a small khadi store run by a private gentleman at some loss to himself, and said that Gandhiji had done it an injustice by not mentioning it in his article “Is Bombay Asleep?”, 23-3-1925.

else, the spinning qualification for the franchise would be rendered pointless. If, nevertheless, members are enrolled on payment of cash, it is surprising indeed. The truth is that if the spinning qualification for the franchise is to succeed, Congress Committees should exert themselves to see that all those enrolled as members are persons who themselves spin. A person offering purchased yarn may certainly be enrolled, but the Congress should try to encourage only those who spin with their own hands, if it wishes to see the new plan succeed. Whether or not this is done, it is a violation of the Congress constitution to enrol members by accepting cash.

THOSE WHO DO NOT WEAR KHADI

To have the right of voting in the Congress, a member has to wear khadi when doing Congress work and on similar occasions. In spite of this, it is found in places that members do not wear khadi. In my view, this is also against the rules of the Congress. Personally, I do not understand how we can win swaraj if we do not obey rules framed by ourselves. Somebody may argue that it is only proper to disregard the rules of the Congress which one does not approve of. But this is not right, for, if everybody disregarded rules which he did not like, there would be no rule which would be obeyed by all, and as a result the constitution, i.e., the very system, would break down. Before a rule is introduced, one may oppose it as much as one likes, but to violate it after it has been accepted would be to invite chaos. Let no one say that my argument would also rule out civil disobedience. The argument is not correct. Civil disobedience is offered only when not to do so would be immoral. In this case, there is no question of immorality. To wear khadi is not immoral. I have yet to hear anyone argue that it is immoral to wear khadi.

The question, therefore, arises what should be done when a member not wearing khadi comes to attend a Committee meeting. The president can politely ask him of leave; if the member disregards the request, he can be stopped from making a speech. In any case, his vote should not be counted. Do I express these views as he President of the Congress, or are they just my private views? I have no desire whatsoever to express a view as the President. If an occasion arises requiring a ruling on this matter, I do not wish to give any. I will ask the Working Committee to decide. I myself suggested the change in the franchise and drafted the rule; I therefore, do not think it would be proper for me as President to give any ruling. The right thing would

be for the Working Committee to give a ruling. But I hope that nobody will ask for an authoritative ruling from the Working Committee on a simple point like this.

NEXT WEEK

This issue will be in the readers' hands before April 6. I have already explained what we should do during the National Week.¹ I, however, wish to lay stress again on khadi and spinning. This is one programme which the people can carry out successfully, if they wish to. So far we have not been able to complete a single national programme of permanent value. Khadi is one such programme, which we can successfully carry out if only we decide to do so. There can be no religious objection to it. I have never heard of one. It is not difficult to carry out either, for we have the necessary resources and means. Only the will is lacking. Even more than the will, we lack efficiency, do not work hard enough. Has anything been ever achieved in this world, can anything be achieved, without hard work? If we do not understand this, what great task can we ever accomplish? I have often heard people saying that they would work if others did. But how are we concerned with what others do? It will be enough if we do our duty. I wish that every reader will understand this and spend all this energy in khadi work during the forthcoming Week.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-4-1925

72. MY NOTES

HARDSHIPS OF WEARING KHADI

I am giving below a few excerpts, in his own language, from a letter which a cobbler friend writes from Karachi:²

Such difficulties will always arise. Every reformer has to face hardships. I compliment this cobbler family.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-4-1925 (Supplement)

¹ Vide "The Coming Week", March 29, 1925.

² The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had recounted the difficulties he had had to face on having adopted khadi and insisting on wearing khadi at the time of marriage.

73. SPEECH AT LATHI

April 5, 1925

Why has the Lathi of 'Kalapi' come to be known as Ramjibhai's¹ Lathi? Is there anything so special about him?

Only this, that at a time when everyone else refused to weave hand-spun yarn, he and Gangabehn gave a lead and set out to do so. What did he lose by doing so? Today, he is well known throughout Gujarat. He went as far as even Kashi Vishwanath and taught weaving; he was able to come to Poona too to see me. He gained this reputation only because of his singleness of purpose in weaving hand-spun yarn. Gangabai surpasses even her husband at weaving. I worship her although she is an untouchable because that aged lady is holy and abides by her vow. I shall not encourage you in your demand for a temple² and I shall also ask the manager not to go out of his way to do so. If I ask for a lakh of rupees for you today, I can get it, but why should I ask for this sum? If you wish to build a temple, you can do so on your own. I shall look after your physical well-being; you should, on your own, make arrangements to satisfy the hunger of your souls. If I have a temple built for you now, you would dance in it after getting drunk—I found this to be a fact in Dhoraji. If you, therefore, feel a real need for a temple, contribute towards it by the sweat of your brow, ask Ramjibhai to contribute funds and when a good amount has been collected, request the manager to contribute an equal sum. If you do this much, I shall add a sum equal to the above two sums. Do so if you really need such a temple. Have only a true *Vaishnava* as the priest. The temple should have three trustees—the manager of the temple or Thakore Saheb when he ascends the throne, myself and a person nominated by you; and the temple will continue to function only so long as it is run well, otherwise, it will be taken away from you.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 12-4-1925

¹ A weaver; vide *An Autobiography*, Pt. V, Ch. XL.

² The teachers at the *Antyaja* school, while submitting their report before Gandhiji, had suggested the building of a temple for *Antyajias*.

74. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM GANDHI

[After April 5, 1925]¹

CHI. PURUSHOTTAM²,

I received your letter yesterday. I am writing this reply after the morning prayers. How years pass! I had not realized you were already sixteen. I too wish that you should become devout and brilliant as Hanuman. I am giving you better blessings than you have asked for. I bless you that you may always try to be like Hanuman. Therein lies achievement. We can then feel that we are making whole-hearted effort and for one who feels this there is only joy. Hanuman is an ideal character. Whether we can attain to the ideal depends on many factors. The responsibility of making efforts, however, rests solely on us, and in that rests our striving.

Radha told me that you thought that I had forgotten you. I am forgetful, no doubt, but I have seen you and listened to your singing so many times that I could not have easily forgotten you. I often think of you and of others whom I can remember. Hopes of a bright future rest only on young people like you.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 914. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

75. LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI

[April 6, 1925]³

REVERED ANASUYABEHN,

Today is a silence-day. I continue to have only one meal a day. Just now I have been writing for *Young India*. In the morning we are leaving Amreli. I have to go to Bombay without detraining at Ahmedabad. I shall pass Ahmedabad on Friday night by the Mail. You will no doubt see me at the station. If Ba wants to come to the station bring her.

¹ The date has been inferred from Gandhiji's blessings for the sixteenth birthday of the addressee who was born on April 5, 1909.

² Son of Narandas Gandhi

³ The date has been inferred from the contents of the letter and from Gandhiji's itinerary.

I went up to Shatrunjaya and came down without being carried. Jamnabehn also did the same thing. I enjoyed the excursion. God is the help of the helpless.

Blessings from
BAPU

Anasuyabehn
Sevashram
Mirzapur
Ahmedabad

From the Gujarati original: G.N. 11544

76. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

AMRELI,
*Silence Day [April 6, 1925]*¹

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I am reaching there on Saturday by the Gujarat Mail. I shall be there till Monday at least. Inform Maulana Shaukat Ali so he can talk to anyone he may choose about this. You should also inform Sarojini Devi, so that I do not have to write to her.

Anand, I trust, is well.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI
93 BAZAR GATE STREET
FORT, BOMBAY

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

77. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

*Monday [April 6, 1925]*²

BHAISHRI, GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter. I certainly was not joking when I said that you surpassed me. I see nothing wrong in it. Surely, one should

¹ The postmark bears the date April 9, 1925. The silence-day, i.e., Monday, preceding this date fell on April 6.

² *Vide* Letter to the addressee dated March 30, 1925.

endeavour to surpass one's elders and friends in moral strength. It is my duty to add to the moral heritage bequeathed to me by my elders. I always pray to God that He may grant my friends more strength than I possess, which only means that He may save them from my shortcomings. I do wish you surpass me in moral strength. Therein lies the fulfilment of my association with you. Similarly you should wish greater strength to me. That is one thing in which competition will not breed jealousy.

I hinted at re-marriage only to safeguard you against any eventuality.

Yours,

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6110. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

78. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MANGROL*

April 8, 1925

There is a limit to a man's patience and I, too, have reached mine. When I see *Antyaja* girls being asked to sing from that distance, I can keep quiet no longer. You must have noticed that every five minutes my eyes turned to the *Antyajas* standing there in that corner outside the cordon. I could not bear that they should be given seats there. If *Antyaja* girls are to sing from there, the presentation of the address on behalf of the Congress committee would be a mere farce, it would be just for show. I have said again and again that I am a *Dhed*, an *Antyaja* a *Bhangi*. I take pride in describing myself thus. It gives me joy to do so. When asked about my profession in the past, I described myself as a farmer and weaver,¹ but, in my reply to the address of the Madras Municipal Corporation,² I went a step further and described myself as a *Bhangi*. How, then, can you keep at a distance those among whom I count myself and at the same time expect to keep me among you? While singing my praises, you throw verses from the *Gita* in my face; how then do you imagine that I would keep these people at a distance? If you are honest in the praise you have bestowed on me, in attributing the virtues you have done to

¹ *Vide* "Trial and Statement in Court", March 11, 1922.

² On March 7, 1925. *Vide* "Speech in Reply to Corporation Address, Madras".

me, we should ask those girls to take their seats right in our midst. You are irritated at this and ask in anger why these people should have come to the meeting at all to disturb the peaceful and happy atmosphere here. If their coming here has pained you, as seeing them standing at a distance has pained me, do tell me so. We have, all these days, been merely passing resolutions. On your welcome arches I read slogans about abolition of untouchability. Either these are merely for show, or what we see here betrays your weakness. It is my duty on this occasion to help you overcome that weakness. I ask you, therefore, either to take back the address you have given me, or let me go and sit in the midst of the *Dheds*. If you sincerely wish that our *Antyaja* sisters and brothers should sit among us, tell me so. My religion enjoins non-violence, as does yours. In fact, every religion teaches non-violence; the difference is only in the extent to which one is required to practise it in action. I do not, therefore, wish to hurt you at all. If you let the *Dheds* come over here merely out of your regard for me, my non-violence will have been compromised. Permit them to come only if you feel it your duty to do so, convinced that what I have told you a thousand times about following dharma is right and should be accepted. It will not hurt me even if you raise your hands against admitting them. I shall only ask myself, with a sigh, how and when Hindus will see light. And, therefore, let everyone raise his hand for whichever side he likes, without fear and without false regard for anyone.

I am placed in a very unhappy position. As the number of those who want the *Antyajias* to be kept at a distance is very small, it is my humble request to them that they should retire from the meeting. If they do not appreciate the spirit of my request and take offence, it is better that I myself should go and sit among the *Antyajias*.

We cannot follow here the ordinary law of meetings. In this difficult situation, it is better that you let me go and sit there.

You should not feel hurt. You had not told the people in advance that *Antyajias* would be admitted. In fact, you had let all of them sit apart and, if I had not protested, you would have let them remain where they were. It seems to me, therefore, that by applying the ordinary law of meetings on this occasion we shall be hurting those others. My sitting there will give me no pain, and it will save you

embarrassment, will make things easier for you.¹

The problem of *Antyajās* has unexpectedly assumed a serious shape here. That people left the meeting was, I think, an auspicious beginning. I compliment the friends who left quietly, as also those who have stayed behind intending to take a bath after returning home. It would have been very good if you had let me go. But what has happened is not bad either. The meeting has acted within its rights, and I would have violated my non-violence if I had forced you to act in a particular way. Besides, it is not right for me to put all the pressure on those who agree with me. I, therefore, understood the keen desire of my supporters and kept to my seat, content with the arrangement which followed.

I shall now address a few words of those who oppose me. Though this matter is being discussed for the last several years, what a pity it is that you still do not wake up to the truth! You would have had no objection if a *Dhed* had quietly come and taken his seat in your midst. The objection came only because the matter was mentioned.² If any volunteer did this, he acted well, but he has been guilty of deception if he admitted an *Antyaja* making it appear that he was not an *Antyaja*. If he did, he has deceived me and deceived those who believe that they earn religious merit through the practice of untouchability. We cannot force anyone to follow dharma. There can be no compulsion in any matter concerning dharma; by using compulsion, we really violate dharma. If any volunteer has acted in this manner, he should atone for his conduct, should apologize for it.

The person who interrupted me earlier did not understand what I was trying to say. You do not mind contact with *Antyajās* in trains, public offices, mills and other public places where they mix with us. In mills, actually, we employ them to work and naturally, therefore, we don't object to contact with them. It is neither human nor clever nor wise to forget this and to think that those who consider untouchability sinful and abominable are foolish men, thus closing one's eyes to the truth. I advise you to have some practical wisdom. *Vaishnavas* claim that they are full of love. What love did they show

¹ The person in the audience who had protested against the admission of *Antyajās* was finally persuaded to leave, after which Gandhiji proceeded with his speech.

² Someone in the audience protested at this point, saying that in fact volunteers had admitted *Antyajās*.

for *Antyajas* in this meeting? I meet a few *Antyajas* on my way Bagasara. They told me that they were not allowed to draw water from the common well, and that they were obliged to get it from open ponds. Is this compassion? Is it compassion to force these people to get their drinking water from what serves animals, and from which we never drink? It is, on the contrary, sheer cruelty, it is the very opposite of dharma, it is sin, it is the demoniac way. It is no part of Vaishnavism, nor of the teaching of the *Bhagavata*. If it is proved that any of the scriptures teach this thing, I shall have nothing to do with that Vaishnavism or that Hinduism. I heard the same tale in Hadala. The *Antyaja* who is endowed with the same five sense-organs that we possess, who is, like us, capable of good or evil, this *Antyaja* to be forbidden to drink the water given to us by God! The reason, that he eats meat! If he does, he does it publicly. What do we do to those who eat is secretly? We accept bride-money which is heinous as killing a cow as and then we observe the practice of untouchability as dharma. Those who follow this dharma have no compassion, they are actuated by hypocrisy and cruelty in every fibre of their being. The only rule of cleanliness enjoined in the *Manusmriti*¹ is that one should avoid touching a woman while she is in her period and with a *chandal* while he is engaged in his unclean work. The most that the Shastras enjoin is that after touching a person in whose circle of relatives a death has occurred, or a *chandal* or a woman in her period, one must take a bath. If so, what is the justification for all this oppression? Why special residential localities for *Dheds*? Why the boycott of *Dheds* and *Bhangis* in every matter? We follow these practices and still claim to be descendants of Narasinh Mehta, pretend to perform devotions with the *Navakar mantra*². Your claims will avail you little till your hearts have become compassionate. Even if the whole country said that I was not a true Hindu, I would claim that I was the only true Hindu, and assert that others who held the practice of untouchability to be a part of dharma were false Hindus. Even at the moment of death, I will keep repeating that this thing is a sin. There can be no *moksha* for me, for I am passionately attached to this cause. But who am I to eradicate this practice? I do indeed want Hinduism to be purged of cruelty, to be free from the practice of untouchability, from immorality and from sin. That is my wish, and I express it on every occasion. When I have

¹ The code of Manu, an ancient Hindu jurist

² A Jain prayer

the strength to bring this about merely by wishing it, I shall retire to the Himalayas. For the present, however, my life is a life of activity. But in the midst of all this activity I am not restless, I shall sleep in peace. Whether you are *Vaishnavas* or *Shaivas*, let all Hindus understand this: the fate of your religion is hanging in the balance. You do not know that in every part of the world Parsis, Christians and Muslims ask: Which religion is true, which has more of compassion and love in it, which enjoins worship of one God? At a time like this, you should understand that you will not succeed if you try to preserve Hinduism in an unclean box. All your sacred marks on the forehead and your temples will avail you little so long as your hearts are not saturated with love for all human beings, all creatures. This explains why the women did not raise their hands against admitting *Antyajas*, a fact which shows that the virtue of pure womanhood is still alive among us. I have seen all over the country that it is only the women who follow the right path. Why don't you understand, then? Why don't you understand that sixty million people cannot be treated as *Antyajas*? Malaviyaji and the Shankaracharya of Karvir-Peeth also say that this is impossible.¹ That friend believes that what I am saying proceeds from ignorance, and I believe that he is talking in ignorance. Who will judge between us? People will judge only after both of us are dead. I confess that I am an imperfect man. I do not follow my own definition of truth. If I did, would I have to argue with people? If I had perfect non-violence in me, would this friend possibly feel hatred for me? Would he have been angry?² I only wished to say, my friend, that my non-violence was imperfect, for you had become angry. If, however, what you say is true and you were not angry, that proves that I do have in some measure the spirit of non-violence in me. I do believe that I have a modicum of ahimsa. What I am saying proceeds from love, it is one hundred per cent gold.³ No one should lose self-control while speaking to him. Those who raised their hands in my favour are under a double obligation to tolerate even this friend. I have said all this to restrain your anger, and also to win over a little to my side those who oppose me. But, how can I expect to succeed in this in one evening? All I shall say is, we shall not secure swaraj till we

¹ Gandhiji was interrupted at this stage by a member of the audience.

² The person in question protested to say that he was not angry and had spoken calmly.

³ The critic again interrupted Gandhiji.

have made our hearts like the pure ocean.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 19-4-1925

79. NOTES

TO PROVINCIAL SECRETARIES

I hope that Provincial Secretaries will continue to send to the General Secretary and to *Young India* office the returns of membership from week to week and with such further details as may throw light on the working of the franchise. It is the easiest thing for Congress organizations to defeat the purpose of the new franchise. But they are expected to put their whole heart into it, to make it work successfully. Nor is mere enlistment the sole or even the chief part of the work. To keep up the membership requires ceaseless watching and continuously improved organization. It is no easy thing for those who have hitherto satisfied their national conscience by simply flinging a few rupees or a few annas into the Congress cash-box to think of the nation day after day and to labour for it even though it be for half an hour per day. Ten thousand such spinners will revolutionize our national life and bring light to the dim eyes of millions of paupers of India. These ten thousand spinners must be voluntary in every sense of the term—not the semi-starved spinners who spin for a living but who would give also perhaps half an hour to the nation free. I want these, too, if they will spin without undue pressure. But the real khaddar atmosphere—the atmosphere of action rather than speech, of self-help rather than helplessness—will be produced only by ten thousand spinners drawn from the middle class men and women who today belong to the Congress and work the organization.

KHADDAR IN KATHIAWAR

The Working Committee of the Kathiawar Political Conference has arrived at an important decision regarding khaddar propaganda. It resolved to collect cotton from the various districts of Kathiawar for distribution among spinners and get it spun. It had already received promises of over 300 maunds from donors. Now it had resolved to

collect at least 800 maunds or, which is the same thing, Rs. 19,200 for the work. The idea is to get this cotton spun and woven into khaddar. Kathiawar is a poor peninsula with a very small rainfall. In some places there is a chronic famine condition. Thousands of women would spin for supplementing their slender resources. It has also thousands of weavers among untouchables, who for want of their hereditary occupation are obliged to go to Bombay or elsewhere and work as scavengers in order to keep body and soul together. Khaddar at the present moment is not as cheap as it might be. It has, therefore, been resolved to find out families that would spin for their own clothing if they had a supply of silvers at cheap rates and facilities for getting their yarn woven also at cheap rates. The Parishad has, therefore, in order to encourage such families, undertaken to supply silvers at 6 annas per lb., no family to be supplied with more than 10 lbs. during the year, and to pay half the cost of weaving. The khaddar will cost the consumer a little over a third of the cost of $3\frac{1}{4}$ annas per yard instead of 9 annas which is the usual rate ruling in Kathiawar. Thus he will have 50 p.c. bounty in order to induce him to spin and wear the khaddar woven out of his yarn. To put it another way it is proposed to clothe out of Rs. 19,000 worth of cotton at least 2,750 families consisting of husband, wife and child. The following wages will have been distributed or earned before the cotton becomes khaddar:

Ginning	800 Mds.	Rs. 1,000
Carding	800 Mds.	Rs. 4,000
Spinning	700 Mds.	Rs. 7,000
Weaving	675 Mds.	<u>Rs. 6,750</u>

Total : Rs. 18,750

In the process of carding the weight will be reduced from 800 to 700 and in spinning it will be further reduced to 675 mds. In length the khaddar will be 67,500 yards and 30 inches in width. The count will be on an average 8. This is an experiment which is fraught with important economic consequences. The cotton, it will be noted, will be hand ginned. I hope to summarize the results of the experiment from time to time. I must mention here that it is possible to contemplate an experiment of his nature only because Kathiawar has got three well-managed khaddar centres with trained workers. The money has still to be collected and it must be inside of two months' time. I hope that every Kathiawari will help either by contributing his labour or funds.

FROM UPANISHADS

Borodada¹, who is ever watchful of the happenings in national affairs, sends me the following:

In corroboration of what you have said in one of your excellent articles about the sinfulness of committing brutal crimes said to be sanctioned by high religious authorities of one's own sect I quote with the greatest pleasure the following injunction of a Guru to his disciple given in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*:

थान्थनवद्यानि कर्माणि। तानि सेवितव्यानि। नो इतराणि।

थान्थस्माकं सुचरितानि। तानि त्वथोपास्थानि। नो इतराणि।

“Those actions which are irreproachable shalt thou practise, and no other. Whatsoever good actions we perform, those shalt thou look up to with reverence as examples to be followed, and no other.”

KHADI WORKER'S DIFFICULTIES

Sjt. Adi Narayan Chettiar who is in charge of organizing Congress members in Tamilnad has put a series of questions to which he would like me to reply. His first question is:

Do you wish to discourage the enlistment of C class members hereafter, or do you advise the stopping of such enlistment altogether?

I have no right to *discourage* the enlistment of C class members, i.e., those who buy yarn. They have as much right under the constitution to be enrolled as class A, i.e., self-spinners. But I will not encourage such enlistment. If I was a canvasser I would put forth my best efforts exclusively to the enlistment of A class, but gladly take in the others when they offer themselves for enlistment.

The second question is:

There are a large number of women in places like Tirupur, Pudupalaiyam, Tendiruperali, Adarampatnam, Kallakurichi, etc., who spin for their livelihood. Do you think some of these may be enrolled as Congress (A class) members—after explaining to them that by joining the Congress as members they throw their half an hour's labour into the Nation's begging bowl—only labour, for, I propose that the Congress Committees should supply them with the requisite cotton for spinning 2000 yards of yarn per month, *gratis*.

I would certainly enlist these sisters as members if they understand what the Congress is and if they wear khaddar.

¹ Dwijendranath Tagore, elder brother of Rabindranath Tagore

The third question is:

What is your advice as regards the employment of paid propagandists to stimulate hand-spinning and the enlistment of such spinners as Congress members as per Belgaum resolution?

Paid workers may be certainly engaged wherever funds permit and funds should be obtained by begging cotton.

The fourth is:

Some want loans—and loans in my experience end in gifts for what of proper accounting and collecting agencies—of charkhas and even cotton as a condition precedent to their commencing to spin. I must say some of them are really poor people. Do you advise compliance with this request? If so, on what terms?

Loans of charkhas, etc., ought to be given wherever necessary and reasonable security should be taken for return of the materials. Charkhas may be sold even on hire-purchase system.

“TO BE ATTAINED”

A friend writes:

You have always preached that swaraj must be *attained* and not *obtained*. In this connection I send from Daniel’s *Life of Woodrow Wilson*, the following apposite passage, thinking it will interest you.

“In his (Wilson’s¹) minds, the *means* of bringing about democratic Government comes from within not without, *by moral, not by physical, force*.”

“I have not read history” he said, “without observing that the greatest forces in the world, and the only permanent forces are the moral forces.”

Young India, 9-4-1925

80. COW-PROTECTION

It will be remembered that at the Cow-Protection Conference held at Belgaum a committee was appointed to frame a constitution for the founding of a permanent All-India Cow-Protection Organization. In consequence of the resolution, the Committee met in January at Delhi and framed a draft constitution in Hindi which will be submitted to a general meeting to be held in due course. The following² is the translation:

Young India, 9-4-1925

¹ 1856-1924; President of the U.S.A., 1913-21

² *Vide* “Draft Constitution of All-India Cow Protection Sabha”, 24-1-1925.

81. MY FRIEND, THE REVOLUTIONARY

The revolutionary whom I endeavoured to answer¹ some time ago, has returned to the charge and challenges me to answer certain questions that arise out of my previous answers to him. I gladly do so. He seems to me to be seeking light, even as I am, and argues fairly and without much passion. So long as he continues to reason calmly, I promise to continue the discussion. His first question is:

Do you really believe that the revolutionaries of India are less sacrificing, less noble or less lovers of their country than the Swarajists, Moderates and the Nationalists? May I challenge you to keep before the public the names of some Swarajists, Moderates of Nationalists who have embraced the death of a martyr for the sake of the motherland? Can you be bold, any, arrogant enough to deny it in the face of historical facts that the revolutionaries have sacrificed more for their country than any other party which professes of serve India? You are ready to make compromises with other parties, while you abhor our party and describe the[ir] sentiments as poison. Will you not tremble to use the same word of intolerance for the sentiments of any other party which is decidedly inferior in the eyes of God and men to us? What makes you shrink from calling them misguided patriots or venomous reptiles?

I do not regard the revolutionaries of India to be less sacrificing, less noble or less lovers of their country than the rest. But I respectfully contend that their sacrifice, nobility and love are not only a waste of effort, but being ignorant and misguided, do and have done more harm to the country than any other activity. For, the revolutionaries have retarded the progress of the country. Their reckless disregard of the lives of their opponents has brought on repression that has made those that do not take part in their warfare more cowardly than they were before. Repression does good only to those who are prepared for it. The masses are not prepared for the repression that follows in the trail of revolutionary activities and unwittingly strengthen the hands of the very Government which the revolutionaries are seeking to destroy. It is my certain conviction that

¹ Vide "A Revolutionary's Defence", 12-2-1925.

had the Chauri Chaura murders not taken place the movement attempted at Bardoli would have resulted in the establishment of swaraj. Is it, therefore, any wonder that, with such opinion I call the revolutionary a misguided and therefore, dangerous patriot? I would call my son a misguided and dangerous nurse who, because of his ignorance and blind love, fought at the cost of his own life the physicians whose system of medicine no doubt did me harm but which I could not escape for want of will or ability. The result would be that I would lose a noble son and bring down upon my head the wrath of the physicians who, suspecting my complicity in the son's activities, might seek to punish me in addition to continuing their harmful course of treatment. If the son had attempted to convince the physicians of their error, or me of my weakness in submitting to the treatment, the physicians might have mended their way, or I might have rejected the treatment, or would, at least, have escaped the wrath of the physicians. I do make certain compromises with the other parties because, though I disagree with them, I do not regard their activities as positively harmful and dangerous as I regard the revolutionaries'. I have never called the revolutionaries "venomous reptiles". But I must refuse to fall into hysterics over their sacrifices, however great they may be, even as I must refuse to give praise to the sacrifice of my misguided son for his sacrifice in the illustration supposed by me. I feel sure that those who through insufficient reasoning or false sentiment, secretly or openly, give praise to the revolutionaries for their sacrifices, do harm to them and the cause they have at heart. The writer has asked me to quote instances of non-revolutionary patriots who gave their lives for the country. Well, two completed cases occur to me as I write these notes. Gokhale and Tilak¹ died for their country. They worked in almost total disregard of their health and died much earlier than they need have. There is no necessary charm about death on the gallows; often such death is easier than a life of drudgery and toil in malarious tracts. I am quite satisfied that among the Swarajists and others there are men who will any day lay down their lives if they felt convinced that their death would bring deliverance to the country. I suggest to my friend, the revolutionary,

¹ B. G. Tilak (1856-1920); patriot, politician and scholar.

that death on the gallows serves the country only when the victim is a “spotless lamb”.

“India’s path is not Europe’s”. Do you really believe it? Do you mean to say that warfare and organization of army was not in existence in India, before she came in contact with Europe? Warfare for fair cause—Is it against the spirit of India? *Vinashaya cha dushkritam*—Is it something imported from Europe? Granted that it is, will you be fanatic enough not to take from Europe what is good? Do you believe that nothing good is possible in Europe? If conspiracy, bloodshed and sacrifice for fair cause are bad for India, will they not be bad as well for Europe?

I do not deny that India had armies, warfare, etc., before she came in contact with Europe. But I do say that it never was the normal course of Indian life. The masses, unlike those of Europe were untouched by the warlike spirits. I have already said in these pages that I ascribe to the *Gita*, from which the writer has quoted the celebrated verse, a totally different meaning from that ordinarily given. I do not regard it as a description of, or an exhortation to, physical warfare. And, in any case, according to the verse quoted it is God the All Knowing Who descends to the earth to punish the wicked. I must be pardoned if I refuse to regard every revolutionary as an all-knowing God or an avatar. I do not condemn everything European. But I condemn, for all climes and for all times, secret murders and unfair methods even for a fair cause.

“India is not Calcutta and Bombay” May I most respectfully put it before your Mahatmaship that the revolutionaries know the geography of India enough to be able to know this geographical fact easily. We hold this fact as much as we hold that a few spinners do not form the Indian nation. We are entering villages and have been successful everywhere. Can you not believe that they, the son of Shivaji, Pratap and Ranjit, can appreciate our sentiments with more readiness and depth than anything else? Don’t you think that armed and conspired resistance against something satanic and ignoble is infinitely more befitting for any nation, especially Indian, than the prevalence of effortlessness and philosophical cowardice? I mean the cowardice which is pervading the length and breadth of India owing to the preaching of your theory of non-violence or more correctly the wrong interpretation and misuse of it. Non-violence is not the theory of the weak and helpless, it is the theory of the strong. We want to produce such men in India, who will not shrink from death—whenever it may come and in whatever form—will do the good and die. This is the spirit with which we are entering the villages. We are not entering the villages to extort votes for councils and district boards, but our object is to secure co-martyrs for the country who will die and a stone will not tell where

his poor corpse lies. Do you believe like Mazzini that ideas ripen quickly, when nourished by the blood of martyrs?

It is not enough to know the geographical difference between Calcutta and the villages outside the railways. If the revolutionaries knew the organic difference between these, they would, like me, become spinners. I own that the few spinners we have, do not make India. But I claim that it is possible to make all India spin as it did before, and so far as sympathy is concerned, millions are even now in sympathy with the movement, but they never will be with the revolutionary. I dispute the claim that the revolutionaries are succeeding with the villagers. But if they are, I am sorry. I shall spare no pains to frustrate their effort. Armed conspiracies against something satanic is like matching satans against Satan. But since one Satan is one too many for me, I would not multiply him. Whether my activity is effortlessness or all efforts, remains perhaps to be seen. Meanwhile, if it has resulted in making two yards of yarn spun where only one was spinning, it is so much to the good. Cowardice, whether philosophical or otherwise, I abhor. And if I could be persuaded that revolutionary activity has dispelled cowardice, it will go a long way to soften my abhorrence of the method, however much I may still oppose it on principle. But he who runs may see that owing to the non-violent movement, the villagers have assumed a boldness to which only a few years ago they were strangers. I admit that non-violence is a weapon essentially of the strong. I also admit that often cowardice is mistaken for non-violence.

My friend begs the question when he says a revolutionary is one who "does the good and dies". That is precisely what I question. In my opinion, he does the evil and dies. I do not regard killing or assassination or terrorism as good in any circumstances whatsoever. I do believe that ideas ripen quickly when nourished by the blood of martyrs. But a man who dies slowly of jungle fever in service bleeds as certainly as the one on the gallows. And if the one who dies on the gallows is not innocent of another's blood, he never had ideas that deserved to ripen.

One of your objections against the revolutionaries is that their movement, is not mass movement, consequently the mass at large will be very little benefited by the revolution, for which we are preparing. That is indirectly saying that we shall be most benefitted by it. Is it really what you mean to say? Do you believe that those persons who are ever ready to die for

their country—those mad lovers of their country—I mean the revolutionaries of India in whom the spirit of *nishkama karma*¹ reigns, will betray their motherland and secure privileges for a life—this trifling life? It is true that we will not drag the mass just now in the field of action, because we know that it is weak, but when the preparation is complete, we shall call them in the open field. We profess to understand the present Indian psychology full well, because we daily get the chance of weighing our brethren along with ourselves. We know that the mass of India is after all Indian, it is not weak by itself but there is want of efficient leaders; so when we have begot the number of leaders required by constant propaganda and preaching, and the arms, we shall not shrink from calling, and if necessary, dragging the mass in the open field to prove that they are the descendants of Shivaji, Ranjit, Pratap and Govind Singh. Besides we have been constantly preaching that the mass is not for the revolution but the revolution is for the mass. Is it sufficient to remove your prejudice in this connection?

I neither say nor imply that the revolutionary benefits if the masses do not. On the contrary, and as a rule, the revolutionary never benefits in the ordinary sense of the word. If the revolutionaries succeed in attracting, not “dragging”, the masses to them, they will find that the murderous campaign is totally unnecessary. It sounds very pleasant and exciting to talk of “the descendants of Shivaji, Ranjit, Pratap and Govind Singh”. But is it true? Are we all descendants of these heroes in the sense in which the writer understands it? We are their countrymen, but their descendants are the military classes. We may, in future, be able to obliterate caste, but today it persists and therefore the claim put up by the writer cannot in my opinion be sustained.

Last of all, I shall ask you to answer these questions: Was Guru Govind Singh a misguided patriot because he believed in warfare for noble cause? What will you like to say about Washington, Garibaldi and Lenin? What do you think of Kamal Pasha and De Valera? Would you like to call Shivaji and Pratap, well-meaning and sacrificing physicians who prescribed arsenic when they should have given fresh grape-juice? Will you like to call Krishna Europeanized because he believed also in the *vinasha of dushkritas*?

This is a hard or rather awkward question. But I dare not shirk it. In the first instance Guru Govind Singh and the others whose names are mentioned did not believe in secret murder. In the second,

¹ Effort without desire, the principal teaching of the *Gita*

these patriots knew their work and their men, whereas the modern Indian revolutionary does not know his work. He has not the men, he has not the atmosphere, that the patriots mentioned had. Though my views are derived from my theory of life I have not put them before the nation on that ground. I have based my opposition to the revolutionaries on the sole ground of expedience. Therefore, to compare their activities with those of Guru Govind Singh or Washington or Garibaldi or Lenin would be most misleading and dangerous. But by test of the theory of non-violence, I do not hesitate to say that it is highly likely that had I lived as their contemporary and in the respective countries, I would have called everyone of them a misguided patriot, even though a successful and brave warrior. As it is, I must not judge them. I disbelieve history so far as details of acts of heroes are concerned. I accept broad facts of history and draw my own lessons or my conduct. I do not want to repeat it in so far as the broad facts contradict the highest laws of life. But I positively refuse to judge men from the scanty material furnished to us by history. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*¹ Kamal Pasha and De Valera too I cannot judge. But for me, as a believer in non-violence out and out they cannot be my guides in life in so far as their faith in war is concerned. I believe in Krishna perhaps more than the writer. But my Krishna is the Lord of the universe, the creator, preserver and destroyer of us all. He may destroy because He creates. But I must not be drawn into a philosophical or religious argument with my friends. I have not the qualifications for teaching my philosophy of life. I have barely qualifications for practising the philosophy I believe. I am but a poor struggling soul yearning to be wholly good—wholly truthful and wholly non-violent in thought, word and deed, but ever failing to reach the ideal which I know to be true. I admit, and assure my revolutionary friends, it is a painful climb but the pain of it is a positive pleasure for me. Each step upward makes me feel stronger and fit for the next. But all that pain and the pleasure are for me. The revolutionaries are at liberty to reject the whole of my philosophy. To them I merely present my own experiences as co-worker in the same a cause even as I have successfully presented them to the Ali Brothers

¹ Of the dead say nothing but good.

and many other friends. They can and do applaud whole-heartedly the action of Mustafa Kamal Pasha and possibly De Valera and Lenin. But they realize with me that India is not like Turkey or Ireland or Russia and that revolutionary activity is suicidal at this stage of the country's life at any rate, if not for all time in a country so vast, so hopelessly divided and with the masses so deeply sunk in pauperism and so fearfully terror-struck.

Young India, 9-4-1925

82. MESSAGE TO "DESH"¹

[Before April 12, 1925]

The work which I am doing at present is better than satyagraha. It is difficult to make people realize that, but it is true. Satyagraha means general civil disobedience but we must develop the capacity of disobey laws. At present, I am trying to acquire that fitness. Spinning and wearing khaddar is a vital part of this effort. Without them, it is impossible for us to launch civil disobedience. My request to all leaders in the country is to spin at least for half an hour a day and to become habitual wearers of khaddar.

[From Bengali]

Ananda Bazar Patrika, 12-4-1925

83. TO KATHIAWARIS

The last meeting of the Working Committee of the Kathiawar Political Conference held in Amreli was attended by 26 members. It was held in two sessions and lasted six hours. Some very important decisions were taken at this meeting. They are as follows:

1. Any individual or family that agrees to wear cloth woven exclusively from self-spun yarn should be supplied slivers subject to a maximum of ten pounds, at half the cost price and arrangements should be made to get their yarn woven at half the normal rate. The following members of the Committee undertake to enlist volunteers who will always wear self-spun khadi:

Shri Shivji Devshibhai	500	Volunteers
Shri Ramjibhai Hansraj	1000	„
Shri Chhotalal Tribhovandas	100	„
Shri Devchand Uttamchand Parekh	1000	„

¹ A nationalist weekly, now defunct, founded in Patna by Rajendra Prasad

Shri Jagjivandas Naranji Mehta	100	„
Shri Manilal Paramananddas	50	„

Gandhiji should collect 800 maunds of cotton needed for this purpose or should collect Rs. 19,200 as its cost. The amount already collected, less Rs. 1,000 spent out of it already, should be deducted from this sum.

Further, every person who gets cotton from the General Secretaries should maintain in the required manner an account of the quantity received by him and should send the account to the Secretaries.

Resolution relating to enrolment:

2. The following members of the Conference undertake to enrol additional members as noted against their names:

Shri Chhotalal Tribhovandas: 251 members (with provision for 3 pounds of cotton in lieu of one member)

Shri Shivjibhai Devshibhai: 151 members (no provision about cotton)

Shri Ramjibhai Hansraj: 101 members (no provision about cotton)

Shri Jagjivandas Naranji: 151 members (no provision about cotton)

Shri Shivanand: 101 members (with provision for cotton in lieu)

Persons doing enrolment work will have the right to get the yarn spun by them woven into khadi and to sell that khadi at cost price; if they cannot arrange to get the yarn woven, they may send it to the Central office.

3. If the Khadi Centres at Wadhwan, Madhada and Amreli cannot sell the khadi produced by them, the Conference should buy it up at cost price (which should not include more than $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent as overhead expenses).

These resolutions provide three ways of popularizing khadi and spinning. The first and the best is to induce some Families to wear cloth made from yarn spun by themselves. The second is to have a class of members who would spin for half an hour daily and would always wear khadi, buying their requirements from the market. The third way is to produce khadi for those who wear it though they themselves do not spin.

Though the last two steps in this are important, they call for no discussion. But the first one does. It is the best way for popularizing khadi. It involves a little expenditure, however. I say “a little” advisedly, because compared to the consequent benefit the money

required is very little. The plan is to get 2750 families to spin and wear khadi, at an expenditure of Rs. 19,200. One family is estimated as consisting of a couple and a child, making a total of 8250 persons. The benefit is evident enough. Yarn produced from ten pounds of slivers will give sufficient cloth for a family to last for a year. After this, no further effort will be required to create love of khadi in those who have worn it for a year.

But the special advantage of this method is that people will be employed in work at home. A family which is so employed will be free from the fear of famine. Hence Shri Devchandbhai has described this plan as an insurance against famine, and he is right.

The plan is estimated to cost Rs. 19,200. That is 800 maunds of cotton will be distributed among workers, who will get khadi made from it and also find buyers for it. The expenses to be incurred over the necessary arrangements for this will be met from the sum mentioned. They have been estimated for one year. The plan will benefit ginners, carders and spinners, and will produce 67,500 yards of khadi of 30 inches width. The aggregate wages for the workers will be as follows:

Ginning 800 maunds of cotton:	Rs. 1,000
Carding „ „ „	Rs. 4,000
Spinning 700 „ „	Rs. 7,000
Weaving 675 „ yarn.	<u>Rs. 6,750</u>

Total : Rs. 18,750

These figures do not include overhead expenses. There will of course be such expenditure, but it will be so little that it can be met from the Rs. 19,200 to be collected. The explanation for this lies in the provision for expenditure on spinning. We have to include this in the total cost of production, but actually we shall be paying nothing to the spinners. They count their labour as part of the cost of the cloth. The organizers are in a sense spared this expenditure, and they give a corresponding concession to the consumer-spinner. That is, though slivers cost them 12 annas a seer they supply these to the spinner at 6 annas a seer, and though they pay weavers at the rate of Rs. 10 a maund of yarn they charge the consumer-spinner Rs. 5 a maund. In other words, a person spinning one maund of yarn gets ten rupees plus a maund of cotton as a gift.

We can put the same thing in another way and say that khadi for

which one pays $9\frac{1}{2}$ annas a yard in the stores costs this person only 3 annas a yard, leaving out of account his own labour. We can expect, therefore, a large number of people to agree to wear such cheap khadi.

But where is the money to come from? Devchandbhai has undertaken to enlist a thousand families or, failing that, to collect money or cotton. I myself cannot stay in Kathiawar. If the money is to be collected, it will have to be either by Devchandbhai or by me. As I too must share in the work, I have undertaken to collect the money. I have done this because of my full confidence in Kathiawaris. About 300 maunds of cotton has already been offered. This had brought in Rs. 1,000. The balance remains to be collected. Even against the one thousand collected a like sum has already been spent and the amount, therefore, should not be taken into account. Hence, my demand is for the full sum of Rs. 19,200. Kathiawaris should find this sum for me, and that in two months. That is the active season. We shall have to get 800 maunds of cotton ginned by hand. The work is going on in Wadhwan, and the money for the cotton has to be paid immediately. Ginning can be continued only up to the end of Vaishakh¹.

This appeal is for donation of cotton, but it is more convenient to receive money. Moreover, the cotton which we buy for ginning is collected from one place and is, therefore, soft, so that in carding it half the labour required for carding the pressed cotton of bales is saved. I have actually seen some samples of cotton which could be used for spinning without first being carded.

With these advantages in mind, I appeal for contributions in cash. I hope I shall not be disappointed. People may send anything they wish. Contributions will be acknowledged in *Navajivan*. According to me, the responsibility of providing this money is especially of those who are not engaged in any active work. I hope every Kathiawari, wherever he may be living, will send whatever he can afford. I think I should also state that this sum of Rs. 19,200 represents the minimum amount which will need to be spent. If we get people who will spin, as contemplated in the Resolution many more families will come forward. If so, it will be the duty of the people in Kathiawar to meet their needs. Everyone, therefore, should give right now as much as he can. I hope readers of *Navajivan* will respond to

¹ A month in the Indian calendar, roughly corresponding to May

this appeal of mine as generously as they did to the appeal for the Malabar Fund. Many Kathiawari women live outside Kathiawar. I expect something from them too.

I need not, of course, say that the Conference will maintain a complete account of how this money is spent. In every place, moreover, where cotton is distributed, accounts will be maintained under the supervision of the Conference Secretaries.

[From Gujarati]

Navanjvan, 12-4-1925

84. TO N. D. K.

It is not easy to explain the difference between violence and non-violence. But this can be said in a general way, that what counts is the spirit in which the person concerned acts. Arsenic given out of love may have the effect of *amrita*¹ on some and benefit them, but, given in hatred, it will act as poison and cause death. Lord Buddha left his innocent queen, and so attained his soul's salvation and helped that of the world. His action was a perfect expression of love. The action of the gambler who leaves his sleeping wife and goes out to play springs from violence and ignorance. Between these two instances fall all those given by you.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 12-4-1925

85. POLITICS

Most probably, this will be my last tour in Kathiawar this year. During this year I have given, I believe, as much attention to Kathiawar as was possible for me. I have collected all the information I could, and have not directly interfered in politics anywhere. This is true, of course, with regard to the whole of the country. Politics in the ordinary sense is not out of my mind, but I believe that there is much work which the people need to do among themselves.

I look upon spinning as the centre, or the foundation, of such work. Hence, I have concentrated all my attention on it. I attach equal importance to Hindus serving the *Antyajas* and have, therefore, given attention to that item too. What I have heard about the political policy

¹ Mythological drink of the gods, supposed to confer immortality

being adopted in Gondal and Jamnagar has engaged my attention, but I have stated publicly my view that the problem there should not be, cannot be, dealt with through the Political Conference. I am still of this view.

“ANTYAJA” SCHOOL

One reason why I gave the first place of Botad during my present tour of Kathiawar was that even at the time of the last tour I had wished to visit the *Antyaja* school there but did not have time then. This school is run by Shri Dudabhai. I look upon him as a man of character among *Antyajas*. I have always admired his devotion to duty. I have brought up his daughter as mine. I have received an excellent opinion about Dudabhai from his superior. It was his desire, and mine, that I should personally see his work. I had heard, moreover, that the *Mahajan* at Botad was indifferent to the welfare of the *Antyajas*. And so I thought that, taking the opportunity of a visit to the *Antyaja* School, I would plead with the *Mahajan*.

The school was indeed a fine institution. The pupils would be second to none in regard to cleanliness or intelligence. Many of them were dressed in khadi. Most of the *Antyajas* here have given up meat-eating and liquor. They have a temple of their own, too, in running which they have to face considerable financial difficulty. They are without the amenity of a well and have difficulties about houses too. A well is being dug by the State, but there is not enough water in it. These are the hardships which the *Antyajas* live with. Many of them are actually weavers.

The *Mahajan* had also arranged a public meeting, which was very well attended. No one in the meeting opposed my views. It is my request to the *Mahajan* that those who disapprove of my activities should publicly express their opposition. If they do so with restraint, it will be easier for me to explain my views to them. Even if, however, they express their opposition in any terms and in any manner that they choose, I am in duty bound to put up with it. I am constrained to say this because I know that there are persons who oppose my views and do so with bitterness and exaggeration. I do not wish to say that those who support the movement for the removal of untouchability are also not guilty in the same way. Exaggeration and bitterness

deserve to be condemned, wherever they may be found.

FREEDOM OF OPINION

From Botad, we had to go to Ranpur of *Saurashtra* fame. Were it not that *Saurashtra* was being published from there, I doubt if we would have visited the place. Shri Amritlal Sheth knows my enthusiasm for the songs, the *rasas*¹ and the *bhajans*² of Kathiawar. He had invited some women who took delight in these, and had also arranged for the presence of a band of *bhajan* singers. I stayed there listening on, without feeling tired for a single moment. I was absorbed in the sweet music and words of the *bhajans* and the sound of the cymbals.

Ranpur's contribution of cotton has been good. They had promised me a spinning-wheel, but I did not get a good one. Shri Amritlal produced before me one which was supposed to be good. But a spinning-wheel is not an editorial in a newspaper for him to judge its worth. And so this thing had a cord which would hardly hold, to what one might. About the spindle, the less said the better. It was no more than a kind of thick needle, of the kind which was common in old days. The pulley looked like a pillar. What sort of yarn, then, could it produce?

I was something of an expert, and so could operate this wheel somehow. But I also thought that if I could pay some money and become a Director of *Saurashtra*, I should like to do so, and then, with the support of others' votes, I would promptly give short notice to Shri Amritlal to the effect that unless, within a specified time, he acquired the same proficiency in plying the spinning-wheel which he displayed in wielding the pen, he should cease to be the editor of *Saurashtra*. But, as the phrase goes, could one ever hope to see such a day? Who would give me money for this purpose? Even if some enemy of Amritlal should give me the money, what guarantee was there that other Directors would support me? Supposing they agreed, where would I be if it turned out that Shri Amritlal, as the founder of *Saurashtra*, was beyond the authority of the Directors according to its Articles of Association? Thus, while spinning, I was, on the one hand, making many schemes to punish Amritlal; but on the other hand, I was being restrained by my regard for non-violence and the *bhajans*

¹ A folk dance in Gujarat accompanied by singing and circular movement

² Devotional songs

which were going on and the thought of their having been arranged by him had also a softening effect on my uncharitable impulse.

Meanwhile, someone talked of my giving “blessing,” to *Saurashtra*, and I saw placed in my hand an article captioned “at the Feet of Mahatmaji”. Let alone dismissing Amritlal for his ineptitude in spinning, here was a suggestion for blessings! This was indeed adding insult to injury! There was, besides, Kathiawari courtesy. How to wriggle out of this wed? I felt that I had been swept into the current, was being carried along helplessly and sinking. How could I give blessings to *Saurashtra*—a paper whose editor did not spin or card or persuade others to do so? But the Beloved One came to help. There were two or three sentences in “At the Feet of Mahatmaji” which enabled me to give my blessings, to preserve my non-violence, to respect truth and also incidentally write for *Navajivan* an article containing a mixture of sweet and bitter on the subject of the spinning-wheel. How could I have thus exposed Amritlal’s weakness if I had not been able to give my sincere blessings?

That article captioned “At the Feet” had hinted that everyone should be free to express disagreement with me. I have, it said, always encouraged people to express sincere difference of opinion in a non-violent manner, how is it, then, that an attitude of intolerance has come to prevail among those who surround me—and so on. I liked these remarks and, though I had been requested merely to say a few words by way of blessings, I gladly spoke, instead, several sentences, for I believe that if we do not encourage complete freedom of opinion this country will never progress. Whether it be a so-called mahatma, like me, or King George V, even the humblest among the humble should be free to express his disagreement with him. If the mahatma does not listen with patience and courtesy to such expression of dissent, he would be in reality *alpatma*¹; if the Emperor does not listen to it, the crown on his head would begin to shake that very instant and the time approach, one may be sure, for its fall.

Everyone cannot be of the same mind, and none is perfect. People holding different views on the same question can all be right each from his own point of view. It is necessary for progress that people understand all this. I, therefore, not only liked the remarks by the workers of *Saurashtra* but actually welcomed them.

¹ A small soul, the opposite of mahatma

“May *Saurashtra* defend truthfully and non-violently true freedom of the individual, no matter if, for that purpose, it opposes the spinning-wheel or any of the other things which for me are my very life—the paper has my blessings despite such opposition.” Having thus given my unreserved blessings, I have earned the right to advise Amritlal and all the other workers of *Saurashtra* to take up the spinning-wheel. They should all card and spin, and persuade others to do likewise.

CHARKHA ASHRAM

The Ashram for whose sake I was invited to visit Sonegarh is not named Charkha Ashram. It is in fact called “Mahavira Ratna Ashram”. Its chief object is to popularize the spinning-wheel and khadi. Its founder leader is Munishri Charitravijayji. He himself always wears khadi. A number of buildings have already been put up, and a few more are to be built. The aim of the Ashram is to admit and educate pupils, and also to provide shelter to Jain monks. It is intended to instruct these monks not only in religion but also in spinning. In fact, some monks now living there spin regularly. I was extremely glad, and also surprised, to see all this. I saw in the whole thing the catholicity and courage of the Munishri in matters of religion.

Hence, in my reply to the address presented to me there, I explained how it was right and proper that sadhus should take up spinning, etc., and urged on them to remain firm in their plan, having made a happy beginning with it. It is my conviction that every sadhu and sannyasi in this age should ply the spinning-wheel. None of them can completely refrain from action and work. We cannot avoid these as long as we are in this body. Eating, drinking, breathing, going the rounds begging alms, preaching, all this is work. But sannyasis are not asked to refrain from these activities, for they are done in a disinterested spirit and for the service of others. It is the duty of sadhus and sannyasis in this age to ply the spinning-wheel in the same disinterested spirit and for the same end. Since they obtain the means of livelihood from society, it is their duty to help preserve society. If they do not serve people afflicted with the plague, who else should? If a sadhu sitting in contemplation and hearing a cry for help does not immediately get up and run, he is no sadhu. Seeing a man stung by a serpent, a sadhu is in duty bound to suck the poison out of the wound and to run the risk of being poisoned himself. And, likewise, he is

bound, for the general welfare, to ply the spinning-wheel in order to provide work to people in a country afflicted with unemployment and starvation, and so help in ending both. A Jain sadhu can chant the navakar mantra with con-centration while plying the spinning-wheel and can feel one with the world. It is likely enough that many sadhus, while sitting in contem-plate, involuntarily let their thoughts roam on many things. A mantra chanted absent mindedly will be almost ineffective. But a sadhu who repeats the mantra as he plies the spinning-wheel will, even if he does not become absorbed in the mantra, be doing public service by the amount of yarn he produces, will to that extent be helping to end the starvation in the country and adding to its wealth. Selfless service is the only true worship.

With these words, I urged the Munishri to remain firm in the plan which he had adopted after careful thinking, even if there should be opposition to it.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 12-4-1925

86. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM GANDHI

Sunday Chaitra Vad 4 [April 12, 1925]¹

CHI. PURUSHOTTAM,²

I got your letter at Manavadar. May you live long and may all your pious wishes be fulfilled.

I am in Bombay today. Chi. Jamnadas is with me. Chi. Prabudas met me.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

On Tuesday I shall tour the Jalalpur taluk.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 894. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

¹ From the postmark

² Son of Narandas Gandhi, Gandhiji's nephew

87. INTERVIEW TO “THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE”

BOMBAY,

[On or before April 13, 1925]

Questioned whether there was any truth in the suggestion that he had purposely avoided calling the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee, although more than three months had elapsed since the Congress session, Mahatma replied:

The charge is baseless. I have not convened a meeting of the A.I.C.C. for the simple and obvious reason that I have no new policy or new programme to place before the country. Nor have I heard of any new programme to be placed before the Committee by any member. The one that was mapped out at Belgaum is incredibly simple. It has only to be worked out by each province to the best of its ability. If, however, there is a desire on the part of any members for the A.I.C.C. to meet, I shall gladly ask Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to convene the meeting.

Is it true that some Committees are accepting cash value for yarn as subscription from members?

I know, that some Committees are doing it, and my own personal opinion is that it is wrong.

I understand that the secretaries of some Committees act as the buying agents of the members from whom they accept cash and purchase yarn on their behalf to be tendered to the Committees. Would there be anything wrong in such a practice?

It is not a desirable practice for secretaries to encourage.

Questioned whether there was any movement to challenge the representative character of the Swarajists in the Councils and the Assembly, Mahatmaji said that he had not heard of a single No-changer wishing, in any shape or form, to reopen the question. Even if any member desired to reopen it now at a meeting of the A.I.C.C., it was not open to him to do so at this stage. It could only be done at the next session of the Congress.

¹ Lord Birkenhead, in reply to a question in Parliament on March 31, 1925 invited C. R. Das to dissociate himself from revolutionary activities and co-operate with the Government in repressing violence for the realization of responsible government.

Asked to state his views on the Das-Birkenhead statements,¹ Mahatmaji replied that he had absolutely nothing to say, as he had not so far taken any part in the discussion.

Do you agree with the interpretation put by the Anglo-Indians and Europeans on Mr. Das's manifesto on non-violence?

No. I don't think it is a recantation of his former views on the subject. Mr. Das has merely reiterated his faith more clearly and more precisely.

What have you to say regarding Earl Winterton's² suggestion that Indians must first enlist the support of the Government of India and the local Governments for any proposals they have to make before approaching the Imperial Government or British Parliament?

In my opinion, the suggestion is a euphemistic way of saying that no proposals coming from the Nationalists would be considered by the India Office. Virtue lies in the India Office considering suggestions, irrespective of the *imprimature* of the Government of India, and even though they may come from, say, the revolutionaries.

What are the prospects of inter-communal unity at present?

I do not see any immediate prospect of achieving much. I am inclined to leave the question to work itself out. There are some diseases which, medical men tell us, are best left alone. The more they are pampered, the worse they become. This communal trouble appears just now to have developed that character.

The Bombay Chronicle, 13-4-1925

¹ On April 3, C. R. Das in a statement replied that the Bengal Act would not finally eradicate the evil and that he could do nothing unless a "favourable atmosphere" was created by the Government itself; *vide India in 1925-26*, pp 2-3.

² Under Secretary of State for India. On April 6, he had rejected in Parliament a suggestion that C. R. Das, Gandhiji and other Indian leaders should be called to London for consultations during the Viceroy's visit.

88. *LETTER TO KHWAJA ABDUL MAJID*

April 13 [1925]¹

MY DEAR KHWAJA SAHEB,

Mr. Birla writes to me that he is sending the money to Hakim Saheb. I do not know whether the money has been received there. Please let me know what has happened. I do expect to hear from you now and then and have a report about the progress of the Institution. If the money has not been received, please let me know at once. My permanent address is the Ashram. But you may overtake me earlier by following my tour. I do not know whether anything appears in the papers about my movements. I am never anywhere for more than two days as a rule.

How are you now?

Remember, if you are now without funds, it will be your fault entirely. If the money is not received, give me the dates and I shall see to the money being handed.

My regards to you and Khurshed Begum.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

Please see that Mr. Birla's name is not published anywhere as donor.

From the original: A. M. Khwaja Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

89. *LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA*

Monday, Chaitra Krishna 5 [April 13, 1925]²

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your two letters to hand. You have discontinued giving dates in your letters. Please do give the dates, for if you don't, I cannot know during my tour which letter was written when.

Hakimji has gone to Europe. I have enquired of Khwaja Saheb

¹ The year has been inferred from the contents of the letter; *vide* "Letter to G. D. Birla", April 13, 1925.

² From the circumstances mentioned, it is evident that the letter was written in 1925.

if the money has been received. Please let me know when you get any news.

On making enquiries from Jamnalalji's firm I learnt that they have so far received Rs. 30,000. The accountant acknowledged receipt for Rs. 10,000 on 1-11-24 and for Rs. 20,000 on 5-1-25.

If the doctors are hopeful, why do you have any apprehensions about your wife dying? I know from experience that it is very difficult to control our passions; but then that is our duty. In this age of *Kali*¹ I regard *Ramanama* as a most invaluable thing. I know of friends who have attained great peace by repeating *Ramanama*. *Ramanama* is only God's name. The [*dwa*] *dashamantra* also gives the same result. It is better to chant a name to which one is accustomed. One is always confronted with the question: How can the mind be controlled in this passion-ridden world? I am very sad to read journals that are published nowadays propagating birth-control. I find many writers holding the view that sex-enjoyment is our duty. In such an atmosphere my upholding the doctrine of self-restraint must seem very queer. But how could I disregard my own experience? I have no doubt that one can become completely free from passion. It is the duty of everyone to try to do so. Of all the means for this, the most potent is the chanting of *Ramanama*. Chanting *Ramanama* the first thing in the morning and praying to Him to make one passionless does certainly make people passionless—some today and others tomorrow, provided the prayer is sincere, from the depth of one's heart. The main thing is that God's formless image should be constantly present in our mind, before our eyes. This can easily be done with practice.

I shall reach Bengal on the 1st and will leave Calcutta for Faridpur the same day.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6111. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

¹ Darkness; strife

90. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BOMBAY

April 13, 1925

Mahatma Gandhi said they had heard three speeches that day and Mr. Patel had asked him to place such a programme before the country as would enthuse the people, or that they should find out for themselves such a programme.² He did not think that the people had anything to seek beyond charkha to enthuse them to a proper pitch, as well as to make them fit for a fight with the bureaucracy. They had failed because they were not really earnest in their aims. The charkha taught them to have immense patience, and it also taught them to be brave. It taught them to do their work bravely and with faith. Yet the people were unable to spin for even half an hour a day. He was firmly of the opinion that if they would merely spin, they would get all they wanted. Since 1919 he had been telling them about these things, and what more could he tell them now? If they really sought enthusiasm let them take to spinning, as without spinning they could not get swaraj. They would go on with their fighting between Hindus and Muslims, between Brahmins, and non-Brahmins, *avarnas*³ and *savarnas*—he had learnt these terms in Travancore—and there were also other communities to fight with. The country had to make sacrifices for swaraj and for satyagraha. He was the originator of the term satyagraha and he knew something about it.

Without satyagraha, Mahatmaji continued, they would never get swaraj. He would be satisfied even if they practised satyagraha between Hindus and Muslims and so on, but the people were not ready even for that small thing. The people were ready, however, for *duragraha*⁴ and they were ready to break each other's heads, and after doing it, they wanted to run away. Those were not the ways of winning swaraj. For satyagraha, they must have a peaceful atmosphere and that was not there. He was not ashamed to own up that their meeting was held in the Congress House grounds because they did not expect to get a large number of people if they had their meeting on the Chowpatty. He himself had never lost hope despite the present position, for

¹ Under the auspices of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee at the Congress House, Girgaum to observe the Jallianwala Bagh Day. Sarojini Naidu presided.

² Patel had referred to the reduction in the number of Congress members from 25 lakhs to 11 thousand as a result of the spinning franchise.

³ Those outside the four castes

⁴ Improper and wilful insistence; the opposite of satyagraha

as long as there was satyagraha in the country they were sure of winning swaraj. The only thing was that the necessary peaceful atmosphere was not there. In spite of all their disappointments, he was of opinion that they had not lost anything during the last five years; on the other hand, they had gained something. It would never do to lose heart or do nothing. They must go on with redoubled efforts and that was essential if they were bent upon winning the fight. Even if there were ten true men in the Congress, he would be quite satisfied; on the other hand, it was no use having lakhs of men who did not mean business. Formerly, they had a four-anna franchise and they had lakhs of members and yet they had not got swaraj. Because he was convinced that they would not get swaraj by these means, he had got the franchise altered, for he knew that as long as there were not even a few men who were ready to make sacrifice for the country, they would never hope to win in the end.

They must, proceeded Mahatmaji, be resolved to win in spite of all obstacles in their way. They knew that the Government were determined that Indians should fight with each other. But how many people were there in this country who were equally determined not to fight whatever happened? Only the charkha could give them sufficient enthusiasm for satyagraha, and they had to prepare themselves by spinning. If they wanted to offer satyagraha, they might do so on their own account, but he would be no party to it. He knew something about satyagraha, for he was the author of it. If he did not resort to satyagraha, it was not because he did not want it, but because he knew that the country was not ready for it. As long as they had not done the three things that they were required to do, they could not be said to be ready for satyagraha. Although it was always possible to offer individual satyagraha, he did not think that the country was ripe for a mass satyagraha. Between the 6th and 13th April a whole cycle's history was written, and when he found that they were ready for satyagraha, he would be the first man to tell them so, but he did not believe in bluffing the Government as this Government was not to be bluffed by such threats. It was a difficult thing to fool the Government. Speaking for himself, he would say that he would never give up the struggle as long as his object was not won. If they wanted to call themselves satyagrahis, he would ask them to unite with each other, take to charkha, and remove untouchability. If they did that, they were sure to win.

Summarizing his speech in a couple of sentences in English, the Mahatma said for him there was no swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity, the charkha and the removal of untouchability. Without those three things there could never be swaraj. Satyagraha meant the strictest adherence to truth and *shanti*¹ and ahimsa and without these there could not be satyagraha. There could be a satyagraha without these three things, but in the satyagraha which he wanted these three were the indispensable things.

The Bombay Chronicle, 14-4-1925

¹ Peace

91. TELEGRAM TO HARIHAR SHARMA¹

[On or after *April 15, 1925*]²

PRESENTLY GOING BENGAL. AM WRITING BAJPAI AGAIN.

GANDHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 11293

92. SPEECH AT KARADI

April 15, 1925

I am surprised as well as happy to see the quiet in the meeting. I have lost my voice and hence am unable to talk audibly. I feel therefore happy that just now you are all sitting quietly. I liked the children playing cymbals while chanting the name of God. Only those who have attended *bhajan* parties know the charm of cymbals; and I know it very well.

Many of you are wearing white caps and I like that very much. I don't know if you have only put these on for today's meeting. Since your caps are of khadi, I assume that your other clothes too are of khadi. If they are not, I would advise you to have these made of khadi. You must realize that much time has been wasted; we should not be thinking of these things now. We should have no love for foreign and mill-made cloth and we should not be ashamed of wearing khadi. We should not find it heavy. How can the cloth made by our poor spinners and weavers be heavy? It is our fault if we spin thick [yarn]. Good cotton from which thin yarn can be drawn is available, then why should we wear coarse clothes? I do not see women here wearing khadi. Women should not need foreign or mill-made cloth. It is not nice to come here wearing mill-made cloth. If you are going to do that, it is much better for me to sit at Sabarmati. But I have yielded to temptation in coming here. My co-workers have been similarly tempted by the same desire and said, "Invite him, perhaps good may result from his coming" I want swaraj and so do

¹ Formerly of the Ganganath Vidyalaya, Baroda; also called "Anna" (brother)

² This was in reply to the addressee's telegram dated April 15, 1925 from Madras which read: "Sammelan insists depositing money its own name opinion differs other matters also making position awkward definite settlement indispensable wire here when shall I meet you postponement harmful."

you. How it would come, no one knows. Take it that swaraj without khadi would be useless. Without khadi, the purity and independence necessary in life cannot come. I know that those who wear khadi can also be fraudulent and unclean. But we should know what we are doing when we wear it. As long as we do not put it on we can do neither our religious nor our secular task.

As long as we keep the *Antyajias* at arm's length, the rest of the world would do the same to us. Untouchability has no place in our religion. In the matter of toilet let there be untouchability. To say that a man is born untouchable is dishonest, immoral and monstrous. A man who says that man is untouchable by birth is wrong.

Thirdly, there is alcohol. *Kolis* and *Dublas* are given to drinking. Imagine what a deadly enemy alcohol must be that it won't let go of you. It must be given up. The best recourse for giving it up is to take the name of Rama early in the morning. Weep before God and ask to be delivered from foreign goods, meat-eating and loose-living. It was God who rescued Prahlad¹. If you want to pray to Him by another name, do so. But let me tell you that pray you must.

The work of Hindu-Muslim unity has received a setback. I have myself been defeated. The whole of yesterday Shaukat Ali and Shuaib were with me. I could not bring them here because they are undergoing penance in order to dispel the fears the people of Bombay have about Khilafat. I have washed my hands of it. At present my advice won't be of any help. My advice is for mainly men and not for cowards. If someone swears at me, not to swear in return, if someone hits me, not to hit him back; that is my dharma. I can't expound this to other people, so I have given it up. The Muslims have gone mad and so too the Hindus. They enrae each other. If I sit down to sum up [the position] in India, Muslims are more to be blamed than Hindus. Should I give up their friendship for that reason? A father knows the defects of his son but can he give him up for that reason? The father does not curse him. I shall tell him that he goes to women of ill fame and drinks, and that he should reform himself. Surely I won't tell him to go and drown himself in the sea. Similarly

¹ A devotee of God cruelly persecuted by his unbelieving father Hiranyakashipu, a demon-king. Hiranyakashipu was eventually killed by Narasinha, an incarnation of Vishnu, who emerged from a pillar of his palace to rescue Prahlad.

I cannot disown Muslims even if they harass Hindus for no fault of theirs. I shall try to please them. I shall go on telling them that what they are doing is *adharm*a and not Islam. I will keep on saying so while facing their kicks. There is none today to listen to this advice of mine. I affirm that there is no way out for the two communities but to unite some say. Were I to die tomorrow, you would still go to one who says he same thing. One must, of course, give up fear. This is a movement for overcoming fear. That is all I had to say. It is not that one has to touch an *Antyaya* always. It is also enough if you cleanse your heart about Hindu-Muslim unity. It is easy to unite with the *Antyaj*as. It is also not difficult to see that it is your dharma to wear khadi.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol.VII, pp. 347-49

93. NOTES

TO CORRESPONDENTS

I have before me a pile of correspondence from all parts of the world which demands my personal attention. That part of it which can be disposed of by my assistants receives prompt enough attention. But there is a daily growing accumulation which demands personal perusal and replies. My travelling this year has become far more intense than during any other period. The correspondence can only receive attention during the odd moments I can spare after writing for *Young India* and *Navajivan*. The result is that the correspondence has grown beyond my capacity for response. I have still four to six months' programme of travelling cut out for me, unless I become incapacitated. My correspondents will therefore please forgive me if I do not answer them in time or at all. They will understand that the delay or the omission is not due to want of will or courtesy.

The foregoing remarks apply, too, to the correspondence I receive for *Young India* or *Navajivan*. I should like to give it more time than I do. But I am helpless. I know that I have often to neglect important communications. This rush is the evil of modern life. It recoils with double effect upon an ambitious man like me. Some of my dearest friends have often advised me to throw overboard some activities and rest and be thankful. But I daily realize to my cost the truth of the saying that man is a creature of circumstances. The saying connotes only half the truth. But the half that is true is potent enough

to compel this apology to my correspondents. But I may tell them that I am trying to reform myself and insist on taking time for correspondence. I must try to re-impose on myself more days of silence than one per week. I must plead with the Bengal friends to lead the way.

THE BENGAL TOUR

This lame apology brings me to the Bengal tour. Telegrams before me tell me that the programme extends to five weeks. I hope that the organizers have taken the Mondays into account. These are days of obligatory silence and freedom from movement as a rule. But I would like the organizers, if possible, to leave Wednesdays too for silence so as to enable me to cope with all the writing I have to do from week to week. It was my wont to carry a spinning-wheel with me. I have now altered the arrangement and ask those who feed me to provide me with a wheel too in working order. I find that the new arrangement enables me to examine the local wheels and as generally my host tries to provide me with the best working wheel, it enables me to gauge the capacity of the place visited for yarn production. For, when I find the best available wheel to be an indifferent piece of furniture, I know that the production is poor. I hope therefore that at every place the host will kindly provide me with the best wheel available in it, and find me time for spinning. Thirdly, I hope that instructions will be issued to the crowds of people gathering not to shout or make noise and to keep a clear passage to the platform. Often there is a frightful waste of time in passing through these vast crowds. When volunteers have to form themselves into chains, it shows that the people have not yet been disciplined to obey the rules regulating crowds. I know that it is possible to discipline the crowds if leaflets giving detailed instructions are distributed beforehand and instructions are given repeatedly by word of mouth from the platform before the commencement of meetings. Crowds should also be instructed not to touch my feet. I have no desire for such homage. The homage I do desire is, for people who wish to honour me to practise what they profess to like of my preaching. It is enough if they stand erect with chests forward and salaam, or bow, if they wish to, with folded hands. If I could have my way, I would discard that too. There is no difficulty in reading affection in the eyes. No further gesture is necessary. But what I would love to see is that the crowds I expect to see in Bengal will be all clad in khaddar. Not that a single

person who is not so clad should be turned out. Those who do not believe in khaddar may come in their foreign or mill-spun and mill-made cloth by all means. But the vast majority who I understand believe in khaddar should at least practise what they believe. Let them demonstrate their belief in their own persons. Lastly, I hope that all parties will attend these meetings. I would love to see people belonging to all the different schools and different races not excluding English-men. May I also add that it will be better if the local organizers will arrange more for personal and private (not secret) chats than for huge gatherings for speech-making? That spectacular part may be necessary, but it should occupy the least time. I would naturally meet the students. Ladies' meetings are a feature everywhere and I would now like a meeting of untouchables too in every place. And if, as in these parts of India, there are separate quarters for them in Bengal, I should like to visit them. In a word, let the tour be a business tour and the mission one of peace and goodwill.

ALL-INDIA COW-PROTECTION SABHA

This movement for founding a permanent All-India Cow-Protection Organization has advanced a step further. The readers will see, if they have not done so already, an advertisement convening a meeting in Bombay of the general public for the purpose of considering and, if found desirable after consideration, of adopting the constitution. The reader has a rough but accurate translation of the constitution which is drawn up in Hindi. The meeting is to take place in Madhy Bagh justly famous for initiating such movements, precisely at 8 p.m. on the 28th instant. I trust that everyone who appreciates the constitution and the methods recommended therein for ensuring cow-protection as far as it is humanly possible and along the lines of least resistance will attend. The protection is to be ensured not by energetic or even wild appeals to non-Hindus but by ridding Hinduism of the blemishes and corruption that have crept into it. The constitution insist upon and emphasizes its economic character and if successful it will provide cities within a measurable distance of time with the cleanest and perfectly sterilized milk that they have hitherto had. It is designed to annex tanneries to the institutions that might be founded or affiliated by this organization. I invite all, big and small, Rajas and Maharajas, whoever may see these lines to study the constitution and if they find that it is generally acceptable to them, to attend the meeting and bless it by their presence. And those who cannot for some

unavoidable reason attend the meeting will oblige the organizers by sending letters of sympathy or even their contributions, whether in kind or in cash.

Young India, 16-4-1925

94. MY POSITION

It was for the first time and in Bombay that I heard, the other day, some complaint about my not having called a meeting of the A.I.C.C. A press reporter came to me and tackled me on the question to which he seemed to attach the highest importance. I could not understand his agitation for some minutes for I was innocent of any newspaper controversy on the subject. My incessant travelling has practically cut me off from the newspaper world. It was only when Mr. Shastri¹ told me in Madras, some days after the event, that I knew Sir Abdur Rahim was superseded. I do not regret this gross ignorance of mine on current events. I know that I am apparently useless for making any impression on such events. I can show no immediate remedy for such ills as the supersession of Sir Abdur Rahim. My ignorance of current events, therefore, does not matter much. I must apply myself to preparing efficient non-violent self-sacrificing workers with a living faith in hand- spinning and khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity and, if they are Hindus, in removal of untouchability also. For the current year at any rate, this is the national programme and no other.

I do not need to worry about the purely “Political” programme which the Congress has entrusted to the Swarajists who are an integral part of it. As a time economist I would be foolish if I bothered my head about things which with my eyes open and full trust I have handed over to a body of men who are at least capable as myself, if not much more, in the domain which they have specially selected for themselves. It is enough for me to watch from a distance with admiration the valiant effort of Pandit Motilal Nehru in the Assembly, the brilliance of Deshbandhu who at the cost of his health pitted himself against an all-powerful Government and came out victorious each time the Government gave him battle, or the

¹ V. S. Srinivasa Sastri (1869-1946); scholar and statesman; president, Servants of India Society, 1916-27

marvellous cohesion of the Swarajists in the Central Provinces, or the courteous and almost unperceived encroachments of Mr. Jayakar. I would not insult these great workers by my officious and indifferent attention. I help them by my prayers for their success and by ceaseless effort to prepare the nation from within in the only manner I know.

I know of no division in the Congress ranks. I shall be party to no division. The Working Committee has a majority which does not wholly share my views. It is there to keep me straight. I shall never do a single thing during the year which my precious colleagues do not endorse. I am in correspondence with them as to the advisability of holding a meeting of the Working Committee. I am anxious not to take their time unnecessarily. Similar considerations guide me in not worrying the A.I.C.C. It is a body which has to be summoned only for giving new directions or framing new programmes. There are no new directions or framing new programmes. There are no new directions to be given, no new programme to be settled. It is no light thing to bring from long distances nearly four hundred men, the majority of whom are poor and all of whom are or should be busy. I have, therefore, purposely refrained from convening the A.I.C.C. But if there is a large body of members who wish to have a meeting called, and if they would name the purpose, I would have it summoned without avoidable delay.

What is most necessary, however, is for Provinces to organize themselves. Their Committees may meet frequently. We have practical provincial autonomy in the Congress. Let each Province honestly and industriously work the franchise. There seems to be a disposition to regard its failure as a foregone conclusion. Let me inform the pessimists and alarmists that the spinning movement is gaining, not losing, ground. There are workers all over India who are working at it silently, surely and effectively. The production and quality of khaddar have considerably improved. Many interesting experiments are being made to make khaddar cheaper and more durable. Tirupur perhaps heads the list. But Tirupur is only a sample of what is going on. The Gujarat experiment has only just begun. It has in it immense potentialities. It is an attempt to reduce the price of khaddar from nine annas to three annas per yard and at the same time to improve its quality. The indirect effect of the franchise has been already great. The direct effect depends upon the capacity and integrity of those who are working it. My advice to them is:

1. Canvass only for those who would spin themselves, but take

in all who would bring their own yarn.

2. But be detached even regarding self-spinners. You must not pamper them. The franchise is a privilege. Those only are to be valued who will value the privilege and work to retain it.

3. Do not be disappointed if you have only a few members so long as they are true members.

4. Do not take money for yarn for you to convert it into yarn. Throw the burden of supplying the yarn on those who want to become members. You may open yarn depots for the sake of those who may want yarn. Let the Provincial Khaddar Boards undertake the supply of yarn.

Let me make my position clear. I am wedded to the threefold programme. I cannot tease Hindu-Muslim unity into life. It, therefore, requires no outward activity from me. As a Hindu I shall serve as many Mussalmans as will let me serve them. I shall advise those who seek my advice. For the rest, I cease to worry about what I cannot mend. But I have a living faith in unity coming. It must come even if it has to do so after a few pitched battles. If there are men who will fight, nobody on earth can prevent them.

Untouchability is doomed. It may take time. But the progress made is truly marvellous. It is more still in the thought world. But in action too one notices the effect everywhere. It was a glorious sight, the other day, to see in Mangrol not one of the ladies raising her hand against untouchables sitting side by side with them. And when they were actually brought in, none of these brave women moved. It is not a solitary instance. But I know that there is a dark side to the picture. Hindus must unremittingly toil away at the reform. The larger the number of workers the more substantial the result.

But the most encouraging results are to be seen in spinning. It is spreading to the villages. I make bold to say that it is the most effective method of village reconstruction. There are thousands of women hungering to spin, because they want a few coppers to find them food. There are no doubt villages where the villagers do not need any supplementary income. I would not touch them for the time being. Just as I would not pamper self-spinners for the franchise, so would I not pamper spinners for money. They must spin if they need, not otherwise. The greatest difficulty in the way of workers is to induce men and women to spin or to do any other work even though they need some work. They either live on charity or are content to starve to

death. There are millions in India who have lost all interest in life. We can only touch them by ourselves spinning. I am interested in producing the spinning atmosphere. When many people do a particular thing, it produces a subtle unperceivable effect which pervades the surroundings and which proves infectious. I want that atmosphere so that the idle hands I have described will be irresistibly drawn to the wheel. They will be so drawn when they see people spinning who do not need to. Hence the franchise.

But if the Congress workers do not wish to take part in the work, let them revise the programme next year. I shall resolutely refrain from any fight next year either. I shall swear by the franchise even if only a few spin to become members. But I have no desire to retain my hold on the Congress by mechanical means. I simply state my limitations. I cannot work at the reforms without any power behind. That power can only come by organizing the people either for violence or non-violence. I can only try to organize them for non-violence or fail. There is no indication of failure yet. There is every hope of success. Organization for non-violence means giving villagers remunerative work to do and inducing them to give up some of their bad habits and to bring into being consciousness of one nationality by making untouchables proud of their Hinduism and bringing Hindus, Mussalmans and others to believe in and to work for the common cause with a full heart. I have no aptitude for any other work along political lines till the three things are done. I am as keen as the tallest among us to establish swaraj at the earliest moment. I am as impatient of wrong as the most ardent patriot. But I recognize the nation's limitations. I must work according to my lights to remove those limitations. It may be a long and dreary route but I know that it will be found to be the shortest. But all need not think alike, do not think alike. If there is an overwhelming body of opinion in the country that requires a change of methods and change of the franchise even during the current year, they can have it if they can ensure a full house of the A.I.C.C., and secure an overwhelming majority. Though it may be a straining of the Congress constitution I will not stand in the way of a vast majority of the members of the A.I.C.C. altering even the constitution. The A.I.C.C. can take such a drastic step if this urgency can be demonstrated and an overwhelming majority demand it. But if there is nothing to warrant such a change, then it behoves every one of us to rivet our attention to the franchise without interfering with the Swarajist part of the Congress activity in any

shape or form. Half an hour to be honestly given by every Congressman and Congresswoman to the wheel and whole time to its organizing by those who have an aptitude for it, is not an exorbitant demand for the national cause.

Young India, 16-4-1925

95. OUR UNFORTUNATE SISTERS

Of all the addresses I received in the South the most touching was one on behalf of the *Devadasis*—a euphemism for prostitutes. It was prepared and brought by people who belong to the clan from which these unfortunate sisters are drawn. I understood from the deputation that brought the address¹ that reform from within was going on but that the rate of progress was still slow. The gentleman who led the deputation told me that the public in general was apathetic to the reform. The first shock I received was at Cocanada. And I did not mince matters when I spoke to the men of that place. The second was at Barisal where I met a large number of these unfortunate sisters. Whether they be known as *Devadasis* or by any other name, the problem is the same. It is a matter of bitter shame and sorrow, of deep humiliation, that a number of women have to sell their chastity for man's lust. Man the law giver will have to pay a dreadful penalty for the degradation he had imposed upon the so-called weaker sex. When woman, freed from man's snares, rises to the full height and rebels against man's legislation and institutions designed by him, her rebellion, no doubt non-violent, will be none the less effective. Let the Indian man ponder over the fate of the thousands of sisters who are destined to a life of shame for his unlawful and immoral indulgence. The pity of it is that the vast majority of the men who visit these pestilential haunts are married men and, therefore, commit a double sin. They sin against their wives to whom they have sworn allegiance and they sin against the sisters whose purity they are bound to guard with as much jealousy as that of their own blood-sisters. It is an evil which cannot last for a single day, if we men of India realize our own dignity.

If many of the most respectable among us were not steeped in the vice this kind of indulgence would be regarded as a greater crime than the stealing of a banana by a hungry man or the

¹ For Gandhiji's reply, *Vide*, "Speech at Ashram, Pudupalayam", 21-3-1925.

picking of a pocket by a youngster who is in need of money. What is worse of more hurtful to society—to steal property or to steal the honour of a woman? Let me not be told that the public woman is party to the sale of her honour, but not the millionaire on the racecourse whose pocket is picked by a professional pickpocket. Who is worse— an urchin who picks a pocket or a scoundrel who drugs his victim and then makes him sign away the whole of his property? Does not man by his subtle and unscrupulous ways first job woman of her noblest instinct and then make her partner in the crime committed against her? Or are some women, like *Panchamas*, born to a life of degradation? I ask every young man, married or unmarried, to contemplate the implications of what I have written. I cannot write all I have learnt about this social disease, this moral leprosy. Let his imagination fill in the rest and then let him recoil with horror and shame from the sin if he has himself been guilty of it. And let every pure man, wherever he is, do what he can to purify his neighbourhood. I know that the second part is easier written than practised. It is a delicate matter. But for its very delicacy, it demands the attention of all thoughtful men. Work among the unfortunate sisters must be left everywhere to experts. My suggestion has reference to work among the visitors to these houses of ill-fame.

Young India, 16-4-1925

96. ON “STONING TO DEATH”

I had no desire to open the columns of *Young India* to a dissertation on the *Quran* on any subject treated in that holy Book. But having ventured on a discussion myself on “stoning to death” penalty,¹ I could not very well refuse admission to Khwaja Saheb’s article,² in order that the readers of *Young India* may authoritatively know that the *Quran* does not countenance stoning to death in any

¹ Vide “Stoning to Death”, March 26, 1925.

² In this article, Khwaja Kamaluddin wrote:

“The Mahatma has done a piece of service to Islam by entering into the controversy on the penalty of apostasy in Islam. . . .

“The *Quran* admittedly allows freedom of conscience. It respects personal judgment in religion. ‘No compulsion in religion’ is the golden rule promulgated

case whatsoever and does not punish apostasy during man's life on earth. But this shall be the last mention in *Young India* about "stoning to death" penalty.

Young India, 16-4-1925

97. IN DEFENCE¹

To

THE EDITOR, *Young India*,

AHMEDABAD

SIR,

In the course of an article on Travancore² published in your esteemed paper, Mr. M. K. Gandhi refers to the drink evil and says, giving some facts and figures:

"From all one can see the State is looking upon the increasing revenue with philosophic calmness, if not with pleasure."

I am afraid that the above statement is thoroughly unfounded. . . . I shall only place some facts. . . . these are culled from the report published last week of a Committee of officials and non-officials appointed by His Highness's Government to submit their proposals to enable Government to attain success in their declared policy of prohibition by slow and easy stages. . . . For further particulars about the measures taken to minimize the drink evil, I would refer you to *The Times of India* of 31st March, 1925.

A TRAVANCOREAN

I was not unprepared for some such defence. But I remain unrepentant. I have paid unstinted tribute to the Travancore administration. But the *abkari*³ policy admits of no such defence. The extracts quoted read like pages from British Administration reports. Liquor is not a matter to trifle with. No soft and easy-going policy will cope with the tremendous evil. Nothing short of total prohibition can save the people from the curse.

Young India, 16-4-1925

¹ Exclusively by the *Quran*. Apostasy, after all, is a change of opinion in religion. If it is punished, it is compulsion in religion, and therefore contrary to the *Quran*. . . . I agree with the Mahatma when he says that 'everything has to submit to the test of reason.' The *Quran* says the same thing when preaching its truth. . . ."

² Vide "All about Travancore", 26-3-1925.

³ Excise

98. SPEECH AT GURUKUL, SUPA¹

April 16, 1925

Last time I had decided to come here but could not. I have come today; but it will be apparent from my voice that I cannot speak loudly and for any length of time. I am unwell for the last four or five days and am therefore unfit for travel. But I had given promises to many and wanted to fulfil as many engagements as the body would permit. As I am not well, I will have to leave the place immediately. Otherwise I would have passed some time here and left after cultivating closer acquaintance with you.

I am pleased to see the boys. Here there should be no need to honour me with an address. My visit of this place is no unusual event. There are hardly one or two *gurukuls*² which I have not visited. The Kangri Gurukul is the parent of all such institutions and I have visited it several times. My relation with Swamiji³ is of long standing. It dates back to the year 1908, the period of the struggle in South Africa. At that time I had not met Swamiji; but he had sent me an account, with details, of the work done by his students. The bond which was formed then has continued right up to the present day. Please do not be misled by any comments of mine about the Arya Samaj which you may have read, for, as my conscience bears testimony, my criticism is always prompted by love. My relation with the Gurukul is a spiritual bond and is unbreakable. I shall tell you what that work done by the students of the Kangri Gurukul was which created the bond between us.

When the satyagrahis in South Africa were filling the prisons, money was pouring in from India. At that time satyagraha was a new idea. Nobody could believe that Indians, most of them illiterate, would fight against the Europeans and go to jail. But they did. This touched the heart of India and funds began to be collected. The students or the Gurukul asked themselves what they could do. Obviously, they had no money. If they had, they would no have deserved the title of *brahmacharis*. They approached Swamiji. He advised them to do manual labour. A dam was under construction at

¹ In Bardoli taluk, in reply to an address of welcome

² Forest abodes which served as educational institutions in olden times

³ Swami Shraddhanand

the place. Swamiji wrote a note requesting that his students might be employed on daily wages. The contractor was only too glad to do so. He offered the students better wages than what the labourers got. The students were happy. They wanted to remit the money to Africa. The jobber felt that it would be generous to him to pay a little more to the students. A few days passed. The students did more work than the labourers. Even their leaders feared that this might not last long. But the students did not get tired right till the end. They worked with the same energy up to the last day. I advise you to do what these students did. You should engage yourselves in a *Yajna* of manual labour for the country. The work done for the good of others is called a *yajna*. You should perform the *yajna* of manual labour, like those students, for your country. If elders cannot do much physical labour, they may simply work with the pick-axe or clean latrines.

Have you heard the story of the Kangri Gurukul? (If you have not heard it, your teacher should be dismissed). Near it the Ganga flows in torrents. Tigers and leopards infested the area and the forest was dense. Swamiji was tall like a rock. Little boys like you could hardly reach Swamiji's ears even by standing upon one another. He enrolled such boys and got everything done by them. Even now the leopards are there, but the boys were not afraid even of leopards. This is how the Gurukul was established. There is certainly self-interest in making the Gurukul a beautiful place, but the work is also spiritually uplifting. You should do the *yajna* of mental work along with that of physical labour. The mind should be trained, not in order to amass wealth but to serve the country. Even the *yajna* of spiritual striving should be for the service of the country. With every gift we possess we should perform a *yajna* for the service of the country and in the cause of dharma. We can thus engage ourselves in three types of *yajna*. One should remain a celibate up to the age of 25. Unless an institution gives such training that up to that age the student is not disturbed by physical desire, it does not deserve the name of Gurukul. Children and sannyasis are alike. Children drink in purity of mind and self-control with their mother's milk. If one cannot observe celibacy throughout life, there is the stage of married life. One should observe the rules of that stage and lead a life of self-control. I wish that you should learn to lead a life of self-control, and bless you that you may.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, VII, pp. 357-59

99. REMARKS IN GURUKUL VISITORS' BOOK

April 16, 1925

Thank God that my long felt desire to see this Gurukul is fulfilled today. May the institution prosper and the students studying there turn our true workers for the religion and the country.

The Bombay Chronicle, 30-4-1925

100. SPEECH IN "ANTYAJA" ASHRAM, NAVSARI

April 16, 1925

Your duty is twofold. It is your duty as *Antyajias* to serve others. You are all boys and generally it is believed that boys do not act on their own responsibility. They are led by their teachers or those in charge of the institution. But this rule does not apply to you. Although you are boys, you are also grown-ups. There is a girl named Lakshmi accompanying me. I would tell her that a great responsibility lies on her, that other *Antyajias* would be judged through her. You have to show to the world, which at present holds down the *Antyajias*, that there is no difference between them and others. There are good and bad people among both. Hindu society does not understand even this simple thing. This Ashram is a means of educating it so that it may understand that. If it succeeds, the problem of untouchability may be solved to some extent. What is children's duty? You should not eat forbidden articles. Banish from your mind the very thought of doing so. A person who is accustomed to eat unwholesome things will not like to eat good things, if offered. It is your duty to remain scrupulously clean. You should brush your teeth properly. They should be as white as milk. Eyes and nose should also be kept clean. On rising from bed, you should start repeating Rama's name. The air where we live should be kept pure. You should maintain internal purity and always speak the truth.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, VII, pp. 360-61

101. SPEECH AT PARSIS' MEETING, NAVSARI

April 16, 1925

Another interesting item during the visit to Navasari was the meeting with the Parsi friends. Gandhiji delivered himself of his whole soul before them. I dare say it stirred the Parsi friends through and through. His friendship with and debt to the Parsi community, said Gandhiji, was an old story. It was Parsi Rustomji who, at grave risk to his life and property, gave him refuge whilst the Europeans in South Africa lynched him and wanted his head on a charger. It was Dadabhai Naoroji whose feet he sat when he first went to England. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta guided his footsteps when in 1896 he returned from South Africa. Even today amongst his closest associates were grand daughters of Dadabhai Naoroji, and Mithubhai Petit and Mr. Bharucha who think of naught else but the propagation of khaddar. How then could he find any fault with that community? If at all he could get into closer touch with it he would feel himself blessed. It was Ratan Tata² whom Gokhale asked him to look to when he wanted money for South Africa, and he responded magnificently. At the time of the Swaraj Fund collections it was a Parsi who headed the list of donors. Dodds had placed Parsis at the top amongst the benefactors of mankind, for charity is a quality of the soul and they excelled in it. If they had given out of the largeness of the charity so much in the past, would they not go a step further? He wanted no money, but charity in the noblest sense of the term. He wanted the Parsi sisters' heart for the poor of the land. He wanted them to give up their silk saris and take to the exclusive use of khaddar. Mrs. Perin Captain, Mrs. Nargis Captain and Miss Mithubai Petit were devoting themselves heart and soul to getting fine khaddar embroidered by poor Parsi women, and to selling it to rich Parsi and Hindu sisters. Would they not purchase khaddar from these sisters? But all were not rich. The majority were poor, and the thing that even the poorest could give was half an hour's labour on the spinning-wheel everyday. That was the only way in which they could identify themselves with the poor.

His other request to the community was to give up the use and sale of liquor. He knew it was a difficult thing to give up liquor. It was with very great difficulty that he could persuade his friend Parsi Rustomji to take a vow not to touch liquor. And even he, brave as he was, went back on his vow, after a certain time. But the attempt must be made and seriously and once for all. They must understand that the community could not have an exhaustless

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's article "With Gandhiji in Gujarat".

² 1871-1918; Parsi philanthropist who sent large sums of money for the satyagrahis in South Africa; *vide* "Public Letter to Ratan J. Tata", April 1, 1912.

stream of Tatas and Readymoneys and once a vicious habit contaminated it, the spring was sure to dry up. It would mean the ruin of a little community like theirs. It was not difficult for them to give up dealing in liquor. Theirs was an enterprising community. They could find any amount of other business to do. It was far easier for a little community like theirs to carry out the reform than for an unwieldy community like the Hindu. His heart wept to see Parsis in charge of liquor shops wherever he went. He hoped they would lay his advice to heart, and put him at ease so far as boycott of foreign cloth and liquor were concerned.

Young India, 23-4-1925

102. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI M. PATEL

*Chaitra Vad 10 [April 18, 1925]*¹

BHAISHRI DAHYABHAI,²

Owing to my weak health I have to postpone this time my visit to Dholka. For this I feel ashamed and unhappy. But I have become helpless. By taking rest, I wish to conserve whatever strength I have for the long tour in Bengal. Therefore I hope the men and women of Dholka will excuse me. My resolve to visit Dholka still stands and I shall go there at the first opportunity and satisfy the people. Please on my behalf give them this assurance. Meanwhile I wish everyone to promote the use of charkha and of khaddar, to contribute cotton or its equivalent in money and bear love towards the untouchables.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 2689. Courtesy: D.M. Patel

¹ The letter must have been written before Gandhiji left on his Bengal tour towards the end of April 1925.

² A public worker of Dholka taluk in Gujarat

103. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Saturday [April 18, 1925]¹

LET ANAND² HAVE SERVICE FROM US AS LONG
AS SHE PLEASES.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p . 80

104. LETTER TO JETHALAL G. SAMPAT

SABARMATI,
Chaitra Vad 10 [April 18, 1925]³

BHAI JETHALAL,

You will have informed Lakshmidas of your decision. Only if he agrees should you leave Ramesara. I am going to Bengal in a few days, so I cannot say when we shall meet. I do not even know how long I shall be able to stay at the Ashram.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9840. Courtesy: Narayan Jethalal Sampat

105. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, JAMBUSAR⁴

April 18, 1925

I am pained to observe that you have been guilty of neglecting *Antyajās*. Where this small but important section of society is neglected, the municipality does not deserve its name. No matter how closely bound we feel with our brethren, we should not go with them even an inch if a principle is involved. You ignored this rule. You forgot it in your eagerness to delude yourself into believing that you

¹ The printed source has given the date as Saturday, 19-4-1925, but Saturday was the 18th.

² Addressee's mother

³ The postmark bears the date "April 19, 1925". *Chaitra Vad 10* in 1925 corresponded to April 18.

⁴ In Gujarat

had given me an address. You cannot split the life of a man to whom you wish to present an address, by taking into account one side of his life and ignoring another. I have said, not once but many times, that I regard it my first duty to eradicate untouchability. I would not regard myself a true Hindu if I did not talk about this subject day and night. If Hinduism harbours untouchability, the 22 crores of Hindus will perish, which means India will perish. If, therefore, the persons who arranged this address were opposed or indifferent to the movement for the removal of untouchability, they had no right to do what they have done. An address should reflect the real sentiments of the heart. Perhaps there would have been some justification for showering flattery on me if I had been an officer or a chieftain. But I am neither; I am only a *Bhangi*, a *Chamar*, a farmer, and a servant. You can, of course, present an address even to a servant like me, but only if you approve of what is the most important aspect of my service. It is quite true that we cannot win swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity. But what would it matter if they continue to fight with each other? Hinduism is not likely to perish in consequence. After we have done enough of fighting, one day we shall become united. Hinduism is not likely to perish even if khadi and the spinning-wheel are wholly forgotten, though, of course, we shall pay for our folly and starve. But unless the practice of untouchability is rooted out, we shall perish, Hinduism will perish, we shall have to hang our head in shame before the whole world. We shall have to face its challenge and people everywhere will laugh at our preaching a universal religion.

This address you have presented is not an address, but a warning signal. How can you accept a person like me, a *Bhangi*, unless you have given up untouchability? You could have instead told me that you did not agree with my views about untouchability and that, if despite that I came, you would welcome me. You have admitted your lack of progress in regard to khadi; but, then, till you have given up untouchability, can you expect any other result than that progress in khadi should be slow? How can you stop consumption of liquor, either, sitting all the time on the fifth or the sixth storey? Unless you descend to the ground floor, you cannot know anything about the fire raging there.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 26-4-1925

*106. SPEECH IN REPLY TO ADDRESS BY LOCAL BOARD,
BROACH*

April 18, 1925

Prompted by your overwhelming love for me, you have used irrelevant epithets in your address. Whether I deserve them or not is a different matter. It is therefore difficult for me to make a fitting reply. Your duties include cleaning of roads and making provision for the education of children, including the children of *Antyajas*. These are certainly public duties, and of considerable importance though seemingly trivial. But the epithets you have used will not help you in their performance. If, on the contrary, you had said, "Kindly join us and take interest in our work. We approve of your movement for social reform. How good it would have been had you not, willingly or unwillingly, entered politics!", I would have been happy. But I shall take it that it is implied in your address and will make a short reply.

I was forced by circumstances to enter politics. My friends tell me that I am a misfit in that sphere because I talk of khadi, prohibition, etc., which are remotely connected with politics. But is it likely that I would not know that roads should be in good condition? I can imagine how many people must be abusing the Local Board when they see the roads in a bad condition. You do not have to suffer from the vast quantities of dust as much as it is my lot to suffer. Today, my patience was taxed to the utmost by this nuisance, and I thought on the way that I would say something about this matter. If, however, I say anything, you will come the reply from you that Government has exhausted the treasury. It would not be proper for you to reply that I should fight and get your treasury filled. You should press the Government hard on the subject. If roads are good, what comfort it would mean for you, me and everyone else! I do not know what sense of responsibility you display in regard to drainage. Besides, the population is predominantly agricultural. Farmers' children should be given such education as would be useful to them in their agricultural avocation. Mere knowledge of letters will not help them. Someone told me once that the education imparted to farmers' children was altogether wasted. It is not the duty of the Minister for Education to think about this aspect of education. He cannot take the initiative in

such matters. You should do your best to solve this problem. To the basketful to epithets which you used for me in your address, this is the only proper reply.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, VII, pp. 370-71

107. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BROACH*

April 18, 1925

Whatever the real reasons for the absence of high spirits and enthusiasm in the country, if people say the fault is wholly mine, for I placed before them a programme which no one could implement, I shall have to plead guilty to the charge. But I had no alternative. If an ailing man calls in a doctor, and suggests various means and remedies, but the patient refuses to employ them, what else can we expect but that the doctor will fail? I am being treated like a doctor to whom the patient clings even after such failure. You will not employ the means I suggest, you invite me, want to hear me but do not want to carry out my programme—such is the difficult position in which I am placed. Shri Chandulal said that the people here are affectionate. Certainly they are, but what should I do with your love? I wouldn't mind if the people of Broach did not love me; let them only throw yarn at me, even in anger, thinking that I am a crazy man, who should, however, be kept quiet and so they should spin and fling some yarn at me—I shall be satisfied with this. I am always talking about yarn because the money we shall earn through it will go to the walking skeletons in the country. It will not go to the shareholders in Manchester, Bombay and Ahmedabad. They don't need me, the skeletons do. . . . The spinning-wheel is the foundation, the centre of our work for our uplift. We have at present lost our good name and to regain it we should serve the people. This is why I go on touring from place to place, and do not feel ashamed talking about the spinning-wheel anywhere and everywhere nor lose faith in it. On the contrary, my faith becomes stronger day by day. It was with this very aim that I suggested regular spinning as a condition for the right of voting. If people who do not spin do not, therefore, join the Congress, the ship will not sink. It will not matter if only a few thousands, just five or ten, join it. I shall be able to solve the economic problems of the country through them. I can, on the other hand, do nothing through people who have no appreciation of the

economic condition of the country, even if there should be crores of them. They can be of no use to me.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 26-4-1925

108. MY NOTES

A CORRECTION

Writing about the wedding of Shri Devchandbhai Parekh's daughter, I said that Shri Trikamlal alone had formed the bridegroom's party.¹ But he informs me that he had gone merely in conformity with the practice in his community, that is, accompanied by twenty-five or more persons. I felt unhappy when I heard this. He also felt sorry to have to correct my error. But whether or not one feels sorry, an error is an error and must be corrected. We cannot create examples by imagining what never happened. Shri Trikamlal need not have taken twenty-five persons with him. But, having already carried out many reforms, he did not have the courage to attempt one more and so took with him such a large party. Even so, he followed one rule very firmly, and that is, that no one in the party accepted even a pie by way of customary gift from the bride's father.

HARDSHIPS OF "ANTYAJAS"

During the present tour of Kathiawar, I have come to know more about the hardships of *Antyajas*. They cannot get water from wells in the villages. They are permitted to draw it only from troughs meant for cattle and other animals. They complained to me at many places about this. This is, certainly, no small hardship. It is well-nigh impossible to dig separate wells for them in every village. In the hard soil of Kathiawar, where water is struck only at very great depth, digging a well may cost as much as three thousand rupees. In such circumstances, how many new wells can we afford to dig? Everyone has a right to water. To exclude *Antyajas* even from this is the very limit of hatred. If people are afraid of being polluted by contact with them, separate hours for drawing water may be fixed for them. I cannot see any trace of religion in such hard-heartedness.

¹ Vide "My Notes", 29-3-1925.

EVILS AMONG “ANTYAJAS”

If I saw more of the cruelty towards *Antyajas* during this tour of Kathiawar, I had also some bitter experience of the evils prevalent among them. While talking with the *Antyajas* of Dhasa, Hadala and Mangrol, I came to know that they eat carrion. They call it ‘dust’. When I pressed them to give up this unclean habit, they replied that it was an old practice and was difficult to give up. I tried hard to persuade them, but to no effect. They admitted that the practice should be given up, but pleaded that they did not have the necessary energy and said no more. However earnestly one may plead with Hindus, it will be extremely difficult to remove the general aversion against those who eat rottent meat. Perhaps people may tolerate this unclean habit of the *Antyajas* but they will never mix with them with real love. Whatever the difficulty in the way, the *Antyajas* should make a determined effort to get rid of this habit. They and their sadhus should start a vigorous movement and must end this extremely disgusting practice. One *Antyaja*, while admitting his weakness, was frank enough to tell me that if they were never asked to remove dead cattle, they would give up eating their flesh. I asked him if *Antyajas* would agree to the Durbar Saheb passing a law forbidding any chamar from removing dead cattle, and he immediately answered they would.

“But, then, how would you live ?”

“We shall manage somehow, perhaps take up weaving, but will not come to you with our difficulties.”

I knew that it was necessary to study the chamar’s profession and remove the drawbacks in it, but I realized this all the more clearly after the above conversation.

Another evil among the *Antyajas* is that *Dheds*, who are weavers, avoid touching chamars and the latter avoid touching *Bhangis*. In this way, the practice of untouchability has spread as between sections of the *Antyajas*. The logical meaning of this is that we should have separate wells, schools, etc., for chamars, *Bhangis* and so on. It is extremely difficult to satisfy all sections among six crores of *Antyajas*. The only way out of this is that we should mix freely among the communities regarded as the lowest among them and, whatever we do to help *Antyajas*, should be for the benefit of these communities and only in places where their needs are likely to be served. Then all distinctions will disappear automatically.

For these evils, it is the so-called high-caste Hindus who are responsible. They kept away from the *Antyajas* completely, and the latter, for want of opportunities of advance, fell very low. In giving them a helping hand, we shall be raising ourselves. Unless one comes down, one cannot raise others. In raising the *Antyajas*, the caste Hindus will be raising themselves.

MODEL VILLAGES

Chalala, a village at a little distance from Amreli, is in many ways a model village. A meeting was held there in the early morning. The utmost quiet prevailed and the arrangements made were the finest. The people of the village have, with their own unaided efforts, reared trees on the road and so we saw there beautiful *neem* trees such as are rare in those parts. The village has a school which runs very well. *Antyajas* are freely admitted to it. They attended the meeting and sat mixed indistinguishably with the rest of the audience. There is a school for khadi work in Chalala, in which people spin, some more, some less. Very few people were dressed in khadi, but when I appealed to them to take a pledge quite a few hands were raised. The village owed these reforms to four or five persons, and chiefly, as others told me, to the ceaseless efforts of Shri Hargovind, a school teacher, and Manibehn, his sister. A visitor to Chalala will discover what the sincere and persevering efforts of one or two persons can achieve.

KATHIAWAR COTTON FUND

I made a real start at Mangrol for contributions to the fund of Rs.19,200 which I have undertaken to collect. The collections there may be said to be satisfactory. I do not remember the names of all contributors; the total collection, however, came very near to 2,000. I earnestly hope that the collection at Manavdar will not be less. As the work of collecting contributions had not been completed up to the time of our leaving Manavdar, I hope to give the authentic figures of collections at the two places next week. The following are the names of persons who sent in their contributions after reading *Navajivan*.

P. M. Parpiya Rs. 100

Vithaldas Jerajani Rs.111

I am writing this note while on tour. I have, therefore, mentioned only the sums I have received in the course of my visits to places.

DELICATE

There are young men among us who are much too soft in every way, soft in body and soft in mind. Some of these delicate friends have addressed letters to me after reading my article. "Is this Non-co-operation?"¹ The substance of their letters is that I have not listened to and tried to understand the non-co-operators, side of the story and have done them injustice. The correspondents believe that my criticism was aimed at them. I do not know against whom it was aimed. I did not have any particular person in mind when writing the article. I merely used letters of criticism from other correspondents and tried to remove some misconceptions. There is not a single sentence in my criticism which can be interpreted to mean that I have credited the statements of those correspondents. When I receive any criticism of a person, and doubts arise in my mind, I generally place my doubts before him and only then do I make any statement. In this particular case, I do not even remember the names, except one. I do not understand how these friends who have written to me thought that the criticism in my altogether objective article fitted them. If they deserve the criticism, they have no reason to feel hurt. If they do not deserve it, they should see that it is not meant for them.

These correspondents should not think that this explanation, too, is aimed at them. It is aimed at the softness common among us, at our sensitiveness. Public workers should know that they are certain to be criticized. It is one of the qualities necessary in such workers that they should be able to bear criticism. People who criticize do so with pure motives. There are exceptions, of course; some persons criticize through spite. One should bear even their criticism. My criticism was, and is, about a certain state of mind which is quite common.

THE PLAGUE

I had to return through Rajkot at the end of my recent tour of Kathiawar. From friends who met me at the station I heard that the city had been completely deserted because of the plague. I will not discuss at the moment whether it is right for people thus to leave a place out of fear or to remain there and observe the rules of cleanliness and take other suitable measures. This, however, I can say, that it

¹ Dated April 5, 1925

should be quite easy to protect a city like Rajkot against the plague.

But the report which pained me most was that some persons are even afraid of performing the funeral rites of plague victims, and these rites, therefore, have to be attended to by the Seva Samiti or the State. However much one may fear death, one is bound to nurse one's own people. It is one's sacred duty to perform funeral rites. If people thus do not attend even so their ordinary duties, social bonds will lose their force and society will perish altogether.

CART FOR CARRYING THE DEAD

In this connection, I recall Bhai Chhotalal Tejpal's suggestion for a cart to carry the dead. He has, in fact, gone crazy over his idea. As I see a panacea in the spinning-wheel, so he sees one in such a cart. We need not however, pay attention to his habit of exaggeration or to his craziness. We should only consider the valid elements in his argument. He argues that carrying the body of a dead person on shoulders in a hardship, that it requires the attendance of many person at the funeral and that it is an almost impossible task for the poorest sections in society. He suggests, therefore, that the right thing is to use a cart for carrying a dead body. With this idea, he has actually designed a cart for use in Rajkot and lends it free of charge to the common people. We may leave aside for the moment the question whether on every occasion of death we should carry the body in a cart. But in situations like an epidemic of the plague, when men are not available in sufficient number and those who carry the bodies run a risk, it is wisdom to use a cart whenever necessary. It has not been laid down that the body of a dead person should always be carried by men on their shoulders. It is only a matter of custom. In places where the cremation ground is at a distance or there is extreme heat or the number of persons to carry the body is very small, the cart can be a great help. The cart designed by Shri Chhotalal can be drawn by men and does not require a horse or any other animal. Just one or two persons can draw it all the way without getting fatigued. I would advise everyone to use this cart wherever necessary.

TO THOSE WHO WEAVE KHADI

The quality of khadi produced in Gujarat has been improving during the last four years. But there is room for further improvement. Its width is much too narrow. As the quality of yarn improves, it

should be broader. Our ultimate aim is, and ought to be, that every province should meet its own needs of every variety of khadi.

SPINNING-WHEEL FOR RELIEF OF FLOOD-VICTIMS

Relief work is aid of those who lost their all in the floods in Malabar is still going on. Some part of the money sent through me for this purpose is being spent for providing help through the spinning-wheel. Since the women there are not familiar with it they have to be trained in every process. The situation in the Punjab is quite the opposite. There, too, some areas had suffered much destruction. The spinning-wheel has proved a boon to the affected people. At first, they were given doles of flour. Then someone thought of making the people ply the spinning-wheel. There was a spinning-wheel in every house, and the women knew spinning very well. It was decided to pay them wages at more than the prevailing rate. The work is now proceeding well. Had the control been in the hands of a spinning-wheel expert it seems the work would not have had to suffer the losses which it does at present. If the use of khadi becomes universal, it would be very easy to provide relief through the spinning-wheel.

ALL-INDIA COW-PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

A public meeting will be held in Bombay, at Madhav Bagh, at 8 p.m. on the 28th, for starting this society. Readers of *Navajivan* know the genesis of the idea. I earnestly hope that all those to whom the cause of cow-protection is dear, who regard it as a sacred duty, will attend. The aims of this movement can be realized only if a large number of voluntary workers take up the cause of cow-protection. One universal feature of Hinduism is its concern for cow-protection. But cow-protection cannot be ensured merely by wishing it; it can be ensured only by applying our mind to the problem and taking suitable measures. There should be, therefore, a public body which will give thought to the problem and plan necessary measures. This meeting is being held with the object of bringing such a body into existence. I hope it will be attended by a large number of voluntary workers in the cause of cow-protection.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 19-4-1925

109. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Sunday [April 19, 1925]¹

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter. I am returning the papers about C.P.

The thing about the educational institution is correct. Please settle the matter.

Anand can take service as long as she wishes.

My health is all right. I did not get fever again.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

110. TELEGRAM TO KANTIPRASAD C. ANTANI

SABARMATI,

April 20, 1925

KANTIPRASAD ANTANI

ANJAR

TILL TWENTY-SEVEN ASHRAM AND BOMBAY. MAY JUNE
BENGAL.

GANDHI

Purush arthi Kantiprasad, pp. 72-3

111. LETTER TO KALYANJI MEHTA

Chaitra Vad 12 [April 20, 1925]²

BHAI KALYANJI,

Herewith Pragji's³ letter addressed to Parvati⁴ and to me. Send Parvati's reply to me and return my letter, too, so that I can send an acknowledgement to Pragji. If there is anything else to be

¹ The addressee received the letter on April 20, 1925. The Sunday preceding this date fell on April 19.

² Pragji Khandubhai Desai referred to in the letter was in jail at this time.

³ Gandhiji's colleague since South African days.

⁴ Pragji's wife

communicated to Pragji, let me have that a lso. Are you going to see him?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2675

112. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

Chaitra Krishna 12 [April 20, 1925]¹

BHAI BRIJKRISHNA²

I have your letter. I liked it very much. I shall write something about Delhi on the strength of the letter. I hope your mind is quite calm.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2349

113. TELEGRAM³

[On or before April 21, 1925]

I HAD MALARIAL FEVER, BUT I AM BETTER NOW.
I HOPE TO REACH CALCUTTA⁴ ON THE 1ST MAY
BY THE NAGPUR MAIL.

The Hindu, 21-4-1925

114. NOTES

VYKOM

The reader will be glad to learn that the Travancore Government have released Sjt. Karur Nambudripad and withdrawn the prohibition order against Sjt. Ramaswamy Naicker. I understand too that the Travancore Government is giving full effect to the agreement arrived at

¹ *Vide* "Work in Delhi", 23-4-1925.

² Co-worker of Gandhiji; author of *At the Feet of Bapu*

³ Sent to Calcutta from Sabarmati

⁴ In connection with the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpur

between the Commissioner of Police and myself. I tender my congratulations to the Travancore Government on the admirable spirit with which it is acting in the matter of the long delayed reform. Let me hope that before long the prohibition against the use by 'untouchables' of public roads surrounding temples will be a thing of the past. I need hardly point out to the satyagrahis the absolute necessity of a scrupulous observance of their part of the compact.

BENGAL AGAIN

I am looking forward to the Bengal tour in great hope. Bengal has the finest imagination. The Bengali youth are keenwitted. They are self-sacrificing. Letters received from all over Bengal are most enticing. I wish I had the health to stand the strain that the tour should involve. My Kathiawar tour has given me malarial fever which though brought under subjection has left me very weak. I hope to pick up strength during the nine days that still remain at my disposal. But I ask the organizers to make my daily labour as light as possible. I repeat once more that I would like the whole tour to be thoroughly business-like. Bengal is said to lack business capacity. Let the charge be falsified. When business-like habits are added to a keen and imaginative intellect the combination carries everything before it. May Bengal show the combination. I expect, in every place, full statistical information. If every address, instead of reminding or informing me of my many virtues, were to give a faithful record of the activities of the district or town presenting it, what an education it would be for me? For instance, every address can give me accurate information about the number of self-spinning and other members, the number of spinning-wheels working, the average capacity of each wheel, the counts spun, the monthly output of yarn and khaddar, the number of looms working with hand-spun and other yarn, the number of khaddar depots and the sales in each, etc. The address may also give the number of national schools and colleges with the number of boys and girls attending them. It may add all the information about activity among the untouchables and their condition before and after the commencement of organized work among them. It should describe the Hindu-Muslim condition and finish off with a description of the drink and opium traffic. Even if it be too late to embody all the valuable information in the addresses, it would be well to give me the information on a separate piece of paper. May I also say that it would be wrong to give me costly caskets or frames for the addresses?

I should be satisfied with hand-written addresses on handmade paper or on a piece of khaddar. I need not tell Bengal that it may make an address artistic without making it costly or unportable. In Travancore, in several places, the addresses were traced on delicate little palmyra leaves. I want to reach the heart of Bengal as of India. And where heart is to speak to heart, costly things and even fine phrases are a hindrance rather than a help. I am hungering for deeds not words. Solid khaddar work is dearer to me than heavy gold or silver plate.

MORE TALES OR WOE

The Sikh cup of sorrow is evidently not yet full. Here is a wire from Amritsar:

Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee has received harrowing details of beating not excluding pulling of beards and *keshas* of members 2nd Shahidi Jatha in Camp Jails Nabha on 16th April. Beating inflicted to exact apologies. Committee has also received some hair and beards pulled out. There are now in Nabha one hundred and fourteen cases of sufferers of this beating. Composition as under: serious seven, contusion of head two, face eight, arm ten, thigh seven, shin eight, private parts eight, back five, minor hurts fifty one. Kindly arrange immediate visit Nabha Camp Jail.

Either the statement is true or it is untrue. If it is true, it calls for an open and impartial inquiry. The Government of India cannot plead neutrality. Their own officer is administering the State. To the Sikh friends I can only say every wrong has a remedy. And this wrong, if the allegations can be sustained, will not long remain without a remedy. As a journalist as well as President of the Congress, I plead my present helplessness to render aid beyond giving publicity and tendering my sympathy, but God willing I shall not remain long helpless. Every wound inflicted on innocence is a wound cut deep into every Congressman and every journalist. And these wounds are winged messengers who carry their own tale to the four corners of the earth, pierce through the heavens and reach the great white Throne of Justice.

Young India, 23-4-1925

115. NO SIGN YET

One of the numerous addresses presented to me in the South contains the following remarkable sentence:

Though you have cried halt at Bardoli, we still cherish the hope that you will, in the near future, lead us to the battlefield, wherein we shall all subdue our differences in our fight for swaraj, with the pure and unsullied weapon of non-violent mass civil disobedience, without which, it is well-nigh impossible to attain swaraj from the hands of an unwilling and greedy nation, whose imperialism is nothing but ruthless exploitation.

There is here a slight disappointment over the Bardoli decision. I know that many thought at the time, and still think, that the Bardoli decision was a political blunder of the first magnitude and showed my utter unfitness for political leadership. In my opinion, however, the Bardoli decision was a great service I rendered to the country. It showed on my part, not lack of political judgment, but abundance of political foresight. The lessons that we have learnt since were well worth learning. If we had then earned a cheap victory, it would have cost us dear, and British Imperialism would have consolidated itself with fresh vigour. Not that it is not consolidated enough now. But the consolidation then would have been far more effective.

Critics may say this is all argument based on probability. And so far it is. But for me the probability borders on certainty. Anyway, the Bardoli decision enables me to hope for a day, not far distant, when a fight will become a great probability. Any fight now to be undertaken must be a fight to the finish. But I must freely confess that there is nothing today on the Indian horizon to warrant the hope of early mass civil disobedience. For one thing, there are not enough workers for organizing such a struggle. It requires closer touch with the masses than we have yet shown ourselves capable of. It needs greater, warmer and continuous service of, and identification with the masses than we have yet felt desirous of. We must feel and be one with the masses before we can expect successfully to lead them to a peaceful victory. Indeed when we have arrived at that stage, mass civil disobedience will hardly be necessary. But we must have that confidence in ourselves. Today I, at any rate, have none. Any attempt at the present moment at mass civil disobedience must result in undisciplined sporadic violence which will be put down the instant it breaks forth. But civil disobedience does not admit of any violence or countenancing of violence directly or indirectly. The spinning-wheel

is undoubtedly designed to bring about that peaceful and calm atmosphere of solemn determination. It is the symbol of social service of the highest order. It is the cement to bind the masses to us national servants. It is a precursor of conscious co-operation on a scale hitherto unknown to the world. If the wheel fails, it means blank despair and starvation for the masses. Nothing can so quickly put the masses on their legs as the spinning-wheel and all it means. It is resistless in its march. It is innocence personified. It adds dignity to the poverty of the masses because it relieves it of its worst features. The wheel is marking progress but not rapid enough for our purpose—not even for bringing about exclusion of foreign cloth from the country.

But there is no cause for despair. The wheel will weather many a storm and will come through them all scatheless. And as I have no other means but truth and non-violence for fighting India's battle for freedom, I must swear by it. Though, therefore, mass civil disobedience is practically an impossibility, individual civil disobedience is a possibility, at any time. But even that time is not yet. There are too many dark and threatening clouds on the horizon that threaten to overwhelm us from within. The faith of the out-and-out believers in charkha, removal of untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity has still to be tested to warrant a positive knowledge of who is who.

Young India, 23-4-1925

116. VARNASHRAM AGAIN

A correspondent writes:

If your recent Madras speech¹ you have re-stated your faith in the our *varnas*. But should the *varnas* be strictly hereditary? Some people think that you favour rigid adherence to the hereditary principle; others that you do not. From a perusal of your writings I am inclined to agree with the former. For instance, what else does your dictum, that the 'untouchables should be classed with Shudras' and that they should enjoy all the rights of non-Brahmins, indicate? Why this constant reiteration of the old arbitrary distinction between Brahmin and non-Brahmin as if the two belonged to biologically different species? If an untouchable can become a non-Brahmin, can he not also become a Brahmin in this very life? Again, if it is possible for an untouchable to become a Shudra, how is it impossible for a Shudra to

¹ Vide "Speech at Public Meeting, Madras", 22-3-1925.

become a Vaisya, for a Vaisya to become a Kshatriya or for a Kshatriya to become a Brahmin in this very life? Why do you hurl the Law of Karma in the face of those who believe it to be possible? Is there a better Brahmin than Sree Narayana Guru Swami, the *Ezhava*? I have no better Brahmin than Gandhiji, the Bania. I know also of hundreds of other 'non-Brahmins' who are better Brahmins (in the best sense of that term) than most birth-Brahmins.

If you did not favour strict application of the principle of heredity, you would not seek to prohibit intermarriages between people of the same race professing the same religion and following the same customs as are several members of the three *Dwija*¹ castes. Nor would you so strenuously oppose inter-dining between, say, vegetarian Brahmins and vegetarian non-Brahmins.

Of course, heredity is a great law of life, but there are even greater laws controlling its mysterious processes. One of them is the law of variation in the phraseology of Evolutionary Biology. Heredity is the *static* and variation is the *dynamic* principle of the universe. The latter it is that holds the key to what we call 'Progress' for want of a better name. No social system can ignore the law of heredity with impunity; neither can a social system ignore the law of variation except at its peril. The history of the caste system in India affords enough proof of this. It proves above all that the worst form in which the law of heredity can be applied in any social organization is of create a *hereditary clergy* to be the sole custodians of its intellectual and spiritual affairs and trustees in perpetuity of its religion.

Even Babu Bhagwan Das, than whom there is no more orthodox Brahmin and who has done some hard thinking on the subject of social reconstruction in India, conceded some years ago that the hereditary principle in Varnashrama Dharma must be considerably relaxed. It would be indeed, strange if you of all men championed rigid adherence to it. As a great many people do not know what exactly you think of it all, I hope it will be possible for you to publish this letter with your reply in your esteemed journal.

I fancy that I have answered all the arguments advanced by the correspondent against *Varnashram*. But evidently readers have short memories or only those who are concerned for the moment read what is written for them. Thus, for instance, I have often shown the distinction between *Varnashram* and untouchability. I have

¹ Literally twice-born—the term refers to the ceremony of investiture with *Upanayama* (sacred thread) which was denied to the Sudras but considered obligatory for the Brahmins, Vaisyas and Kshatriyas.

defended the one as a rational scientific fact and condemned the other as an excrescence, an unmitigated evil. I may be that my denseness sees a distinction where none exists. It may be, too, that I see science where there is ignorance or superstition. But I do regard *Varnashram* as a healthy division of work based on birth. The present ideas of caste are a perversion of the original. There is no question with me of superiority or inferiority. It is purely a question of duty. I have indeed stated that *varna* is based on birth. But I have also said that it is possible for a Shudra, for instance, to become a Vaisya. But in order to perform the *duty* of a Vaisya he does not need the label of a Vaisya. Swami Narayan Guru does not need to be called a Brahmin in order to enable him to be, what he reported to be, a Sanskrit scholar. He who performs the duty of a Brahmin will easily become one in the next incarnation. But a translation from one *varna* to another in the present incarnation must result in a great deal of fraud. The natural consequence must be the obliteration [of] *varna*. I have seen no reason to justify its destruction. It may be a hindrance to material ambition. I must be excused from applying material considerations to an institution that is based on religious considerations.

Nor is the correspondent happy in his analogy. I have asked that a *Panchama* should be regarded as a Shudra because I hold that there is no warrant for belief in a fifth case. A *Panchama* does the work of a Shudra and he is, therefore naturally classified as such when he ceases to be regarded as a *Panchama*. I do believe that this constant confusion between untouchability and *Varnashram* and attack on the latter in the same breath as the former retards the progress of reform regarding untouchability.

It is now clear that the law of variation is left untouched by *Varnashram*. Nay it is provided for. Only, types do not vary in a few years or even in a few generations. There is no fundamental difference between a Brahmin and a Pariah, but he who runs may see that class considered, there is a marked and noticeable difference between Brahmins and Pariahs or for that matter all the four castes. What I would like my correspondent to join me in is a fight against an arrogant assumption of superiority whether it is assumed by Brahmins or others. It is the abuse of *Varnashram* that should be combated, not the thing itself.

Young India, 23-4-1925

117. WORK IN DELHI

A Delhi correspondent writes saying that during the Satyagraha Week¹ some workers decided to hawk khaddar. They approached the task in fear and trembling, for they were not sure of response from divided Delhi. To their agreeable surprise, however, the hawking and the *bhajans* that accompanied it, took effect. All the common folk bought khaddar with pleasure and the volunteer hawkers had on difficulty in disposing of their stock from day to day. This experience has a lesson of its own. The general body of people are still sound, if the facts given by my correspondent are facts. I have no reason whatsoever to doubt their accuracy. Will the Congress workers try to enlist members more systematically and with more confidence than hitherto? Nothing can be a greater tribute to Hakim Saheb than that in his absence Delhi has come up to her former level.

Young India, 23-4-1925

118. PRIZES FOR SPINNERS

I gladly make room for the following from Meerut:²

Young India, 23-4-1925

119. KHADDAR IN ANDHRA

I have said in my previous writings that the khaddar movement is slowly but surely penetrating the villages. I take the following extracts³ from the Nellore District Khadi Board Report:

Spinners should note the care the Nellore women are bestowing on the slivers. Good carding and good slivers are half the battle.

The following⁴ from Ongole makes equally interesting reading:

The foregoing is merely an extract from a detailed report of work in the five villages selected by the Company.⁵ The output during the period under review⁶ was 18,522 yards and the sales, Rs. 13,452-12-1.

Young India, 23-4-1925

¹ The National Week which was observed from April 6 to 13

² Not reproduced here. The report mentioned the names of prize-winners at a spinning competition held at the Navchandi Fair.

³ Not reproduced here

⁴ *ibid*

⁵ For khaddar production and sale business

⁶ July to December 1924

120. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI

TITHAL,
April 23, 1925

MY DEAR BHUR-R-R,

Yes, I had five days' go at fever but I am all right now. I am a bit weak yet. I came to Tithal this morning to have five days' cool air. On 28th I reach Bombay which I leave on 29th for Bengal for five weeks' tour. Yes I heard about the incident from Vallabhbbhai. These incidents will happen in life. It is an eternal duel between Hyde and Jekyll.

With love to you all,

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 9552

121. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

TITHAL,
Vaishakh Sud 1 [April 23, 1925]¹

CHI. VASUMATI²,

I have your postcard. The weather here is of course fine. How nice it would be if you were here. If I had to stay here longer, I would certainly have sent for you. But my stay is for four days only. Even so, I would advise you to come and stay here, in case you do not go to Hajira. The weather is pretty cool and the water is considered to be good.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I shall reach Bombay on the 28th and leave for Calcutta on the 29th. My address there is: 148 Russa Road, Calcutta.

CHI. VASUMATI DHIMATRAM
KELAPITH
SURAT

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 461. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

¹ The postmark bears the date "24 April 25"

² An inmate of the Sabarmati Ashram; daughter-in-law of Navalram Pandya, a well-known literature of Gujarat

122. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

TITHAL,

*Vaishakh Sud 1 [April 23, 1925]*¹

I hope Anand is calm. If she has any fear of death, let her rid herself of it.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 80

123. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

*Vaishakh Sud 1 [April 23, 1925]*²

CHI. MAGANLAL,

Chi. Chhotelal is not likely to have peace here. He wishes immediately to return to the Ashram. He says he is ready to do as you wish. But he wants to have some work all the time. I feel that Chi. Chhotelal should be put either on carding or on weaving. Let him card or spin the whole day. We do need such workers also. Under the arrangement Chi. Chhotelal will not have to come frequently into contact with others and will be able to remain at peace. Nevertheless, if you can think of any other work more suitable for him, you may certainly give him that.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati Original : C.W. 6093. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

¹ As in the printed source, except that the date has been corrected to tally with the *tithi*

² The letter has on it the words “Ashram file” with the date 27-4-1925, evidently the date of receipt

124. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

TITHAL,
*Vaishakh Sud I [April 24, 1925]*¹

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Please have the enclosed letter passed on to Maulana Saheb. The letter of the playwright is not indicative of the tolerant attitude of Hinduism; it is indicative of his cowardice. I find the attack on him unbearable. I have read only two articles. Who knows how many such articles have been published and where.

I am enjoying the change of air at Tithal. I came here yesterday morning. I shall reach there on the 28th.

Anand must be calm. If she is having even the slightest fear of death, it should be removed.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

125. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

April 25, 1925

MY DEAREST CHARLIE,

I have horribly neglected my correspondents including you. Most precious letters have remained unanswered. But I have been perfectly helpless. I have been moving from place to place at break-neck speed. And I am recuperating for four days at Tithal in anticipation of the Bengal ordeal². That enables me to overtake at least a part of the heap of correspondence lying in my bundle.

Salutation of the national flag is in my opinion unobjectionable. I see nothing inherently wrong about it. A national spirit is necessary for national existence. A flag is a material aid to the development of such a spirit.

¹ The addressee received the letter on April 25, 1925. The date has been inferred from the reference to Gandhiji's reaching Tithal the previous day. He arrived at Tithal on April 23.

² The forthcoming tour of Bengal in connection with the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpur.

Military training in universities is, I think, inevitable. I do not think India will tolerate compulsion. I do not anticipate, at least in our generation, a complete cessation of the warlike spirit, i.e., even to the extent of banishing punishment of robbers and raiders. All I am aiming at is non-violence in regaining national freedom and possibly cessation of war as between nations as a natural or necessary corollary. Beyond that I have not the confidence to preach.

About birth-control, I should like to study the Holland figures and conditions. But even supposing that they are all that they are claimed to be, the posers I have suggested remain unanswered. The inevitable result of admitting that indulgence is a virtue or a necessity loosening of the marriage bond is a matter of course or the ideas about marriage must be so revised as to banish chastity from all consideration [*sic*]. And I have heard protagonists of birth-control arguing against regarding chastity as a virtue. And personally, if I were to admit that indulgence is a virtue, I do not see how we can escape the natural deduction that free love is also a virtue. That is my difficulty. I never knew that birth-control by artificial means had so seized the imagination of the Indian youths.

I hope to meet you at Faridpur.

With love,

Yours,
MOHAN

[PS.]

I have your wire. I did have a mild attack of malaria. But it was nothing. I had thirty grains of quinine after the attack. There is no cause for anxiety. I have replied by wire. Love.

MOHAN

From a photostat : G.N. 964

126. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

April 25, 1925

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I am in Tithal, a place somewhat like Juhu, resting for four days to fit myself for the Bengal ordeal. I am trying here to overtake my correspondence in which I find your letter referring to the article

“God and Congress”¹. I sympathize with you in your difficulties. True religion being the greatest thing in life and in the world, it has been exploited the most. And those who have seen the exploiters and the exploitation and missed the reality naturally get disgusted with the thing itself. But religion is, after all, a matter for each individual, and then too a matter of the heart, call it then by whatever name you like, that which gives one the greatest solace in the midst of the severest fire is God. Anyway, you are on the right track. I do not mind reason being the sole test even though it often bewilders one and lands one in errors that border on superstition. Cow-protection to me is infinitely more than mere protection of the cow. The cow is merely a type for all that lives. Cow-protection means protection of the weak, the helpless, the dumb and the deaf. Man becomes then not the lord and master of all creation but he is its servant. The cow to me is a sermon on pity. As yet we are merely playing at cow-protection . But we shall soon have to grapple with the reality.

I hope you have received all my previous letters. I have a doleful letter from Mr. Satyapal². I wish you could go to the Punjab even if it is only for a few days. Your visit will hearten him. I wish Father would have two months in a quiet and cool place. And why will you not go to Almora for a week or so and combine work with a breath of cool air?

Yours,

BAPU

A Bunch of Old Letters, p. 42

¹ Dated March 3, 1925

² A medical practitioner and Congress leader of the Punjab

127. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Vaishakh Sud 2 [April 25, 1925]¹

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have decided to leave by the fast train on Monday night. So I shall reach Grant Road at 5 a.m. Inform Maulana Saheb and Shuaib. This time neither you nor they should come to the station, I shall alight at Gamdevi.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI
93 BAZAR GATE STREET
FORT, BOMBAY

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

128. ROADS IN GUJARAT

The control of Local Boards is gradually passing into the hands of Congressmen. People should get the benefit of this. They can get it in two ways, through improvement of roads and children's education. I can claim to have travelled a great deal on Gujarat's roads. I have travelled on almost all the roads in the districts of Kaira, Broach, Surat, the Panch Mahals and Ahmedabad. All of them can be described as more or less unsatisfactory. They are dusty beyond description. Villages have practically no roads. This is a great hardship both to human beings and cattle. I have heard the complaint that Local Boards lack funds, and there may even be considerable substance in the complaint. I have not studied the problem how to raise funds. But those whose duty it is to make and maintain roads should resign if they are without the necessary resources or cannot raise them.

The same is true about education. We must strike out a new path in education. Farmers' children should generally attend schools in villages. They are not going to become, should not become, clerks. Their education, therefore, should centre round their agricultural

¹ The postmark bears the date "April 26, 1925", in which year *Vaishakh Sud 2* corresponded to April 25.

work. So long as children's education is not related to their surroundings, it will not have full or beneficial results on society. A country without a sea coast can derive no benefit from naval education, which means that such education would be a waste of effort; much the same is true about the present education of our children. If, however, city children's education is wasted, it is chiefly the cities whose interests will suffer, but the education of the children of crores of farmers wasted will mean total ruin for the whole country. Crores of children cannot become clerks; if they are also rendered unfit for agriculture, who will attend to it? This, therefore, is a problem of great importance for the Local Boards.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 26-4-1925

129. MY NOTES

BURDEN ON ME

A Kathiawari friend writes:¹

I see nothing but delusion behind this suggestion. I don't think that many people will, if I give away yarn spun by me, take to spinning or do it with greater devotion. All the same, if this friend is right in what he thinks, I am ready to spin more for the sake of other workers. It is quite easy for me to spare a few bundles of yarn for gifts. But only those who spin regularly will get them. My own wish, however, is that people should spin for the sake of spinning. I can see no advantage in their spinning provided they get yarn spun by me. The right thing is that people should realize the duty of spinning and do it.

“WITH SUFFERING HEART”

A friend from Kathiawar writes:²

How can I believe that a person who gives money cheerfully and with a smile on his face and persuades others to give it, does so with

¹ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had suggested that Gandhiji should present yarn spun by himself to khadi-workers with whose work he was satisfied. This, he had argued, would inspire greater devotion in them and would help in popularizing khadi.

² The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had said that people who contributed to the fund which he was collecting did so very unwillingly.

suffering heart? How did the correspondent come to read the hearts of all such person? How is the merchant-class being deceived? Is it ever likely to be deceived? If no from this class, from which other class can we get or collect money? If we cannot improve the economic condition of the country with the help of traders, through whose help can we hope to improve it? Upright traders admit that conditions have deteriorated because of their class, and that is why some of them give away money as some sort of atonement. The experiment, moreover, of distributing khadi among the poor is still to be carried out. How, then, can anyone argue that the money collected does not pass on to them? I am convinced that the persons who are in control of the Conference are unselfish men, and I believe that the fund will be managed by them, or under their supervision, with care and honesty. They will do nothing wrong, at any rate deliberately. The question in the letter, "If that is the aim, can those who claim to serve draw Rs. 75 a month?" is irrelevant to the other question whether or not the money is being distributed among the poor. Is it not surprising, the salaried men should administer funds to the tune of lakhs? I do not know, moreover, whether, those who claim to serve get Rs. 75 a month, or any other sum, though I know that some workers get this amount. Why grudge them that? All workers are not rich. Persons who give their whole time to public service are entitled to accept payment. The only questions which can be asked are; Whether the payment a worker receives represents his needs; whether the needs of an ordinary person amount to what the worker gets; how much he would earn elsewhere; and, finally, whether he is honest and whether the public needs his services. If the answers to these questions are satisfactory, the public worker commits no crime in taking Rs. 75 a month. The people will require thousands of workers, and all of them cannot be honorary.

"INDUCEMENT"

The same friend further writes:¹

In the first place, the word "inducement" was used with inn-

¹ The remarks are not translated here. The correspondent had asked Gandhiji whether he was right in suggesting in his speech that people should be offered inducement to wear khadi.

ovent intention. I see nothing wrong in inducing the poor to wear khadi by supplying them slivers at low cost. I am a salesman of swaraj. I am a devotee of khadi. It is my duty to induce people, by every honest means, to wear khadi. This, according to me, will help us in securing swaraj. Have the authorities done wrong in countries where people are given “bounties” for promoting the sale of certain articles? Germany offered large bounties to help the consumption of her sugar in all countries, and she derived nothing but profit from the practice. New industries in our country should be helped either by the government or by the people. I do not believe that the help which the people are giving to khadi is anything very big. What is being done is but a beginning. The results are bound to be beneficial. There is nothing wrong in selling khadi at less than the cost price. We do not have a large stock of it now. We need to produce khadi worth not lakhs but crores. The question, “What about the interests of traders in khadi” is certainly pertinent. But we do not have even as many such traders as can be counted on the fingers of a hand. Finally, it is not likely that the Conference itself will organize the sale of khadi. The time when this can happen has not yet come. Under the scheme adopted by the Conference, only those who spin will benefit and the question, therefore, about the interests of traders does not arise.

NO SPINNING-WHEEL

The friend writes further:¹

I do not believe that work in the khadi centres is being done in a mercenary spirit. The Manager of the Amreli Centre makes no profit for himself but, on the contrary, invests his own and his friends' money in it. In Wadhwan, the organizers have been working purely in a spirit of selfless service. There are allegations about Madhada. The Secretary has been asked to go there and examine the accounts thoroughly. Shri Shivji has agreed to a complete scrutiny of his accounts. I will certainly publish the results of the examination. There are, of course, people who refuse to accept a spinning-wheel even

¹ The remarks are not translated here. He had alleged that people had no genuine interest in the spinning-wheel.

when offered at half the cost price. The only remedy for such suscepticism is for the faithful to strengthen their faith. If faith remains unshaken, scepticism will disappear. Faith is like the sun and lack of it like the night. When the sun rises, the night must disappear. The fact that well-to-do families do not agree to have a spinning-wheel in their homes is itself our real misfortune. It only means absence of the spirit of *yajna*. The spinning-wheel is a means of learning sefless labour. What better form of *yajna*, of service, can I then suggest for young men and women? Many other forms of service may be undertaken along with it, or in addition to it, but it is the foundation.

SHRI JAYAKAR'S SPINNING-WHEEL

In this connection, the reader will be pleased to know that Barrister Jayakar has started spinning regularly. He has sent me the second instalment of yarn spun by him, and has asked for a good spinning-wheel. The one he has at present is altogether unsatisfactory, but even on that he has been spinning regularly. I compliment Shri Jayakar. May he ever remain firm in his resolution.

BENT SPINDLE

While talking with the pupils of a school, I discovered that they were quite eager to ply the spinning-wheel, but that the spindle frequently got bent. I asked the teacher if he did not know how to straighten it. His reply was frank; "I know spinning, but I do not know how to set right defects in a spinning-wheel; in any case, I do not know how to straighten a spindle." Personally, I believe that every teacher in a national school should be an expert in the technique of the spinning-wheel. We cannot engage a special teacher in every school to look after the spinning-wheel. If, therefore, we really want to see the spinning-wheel being plied in every national school, we should encourage the teachers to learn its technique. This means learning to make and fix the belt, to examine the condition of washers and make new ones of leather or some other material, to fix a tape on and straighten the spindle. He is no carpenter who does not

know how to keep his tools in good condition; likewise, he is no spinner who cannot discover and repair the defects in his spinning-wheel. One who does not know the science of the spinning-wheel and having no practical experience of it should no longer be considered fit to be a teacher. Anyone who cares to can learn this thing in a short time and with very little effort.

UNWASHED CLOTHES

During my recent tour of Gujarat, I observed a large number of pupils in the national schools. Many of them were untidy and dirty in appearance. Some of them wore caps which were so soiled with perspiration and stank so badly that it was difficult to touch them. The garments which some of the children wore were also strange to look at. Some had too many clothes on them for this time of the year. Some wore trousers, but had not taken care to button them properly. Some wore clothes which were torn. I think that, as children suffering from contagious diseases are forbidden to attend school, so also children whose clothes or bodies are dirty or who are wearing torn clothes should be forbidden to attend. If it is asked when and where, in that case, the children will learn to be tidy, the reply is simple. A child which comes to the school in such condition should first be taken to the tap and washed there; it should be made to wash its clothes with its own hands and should be provided with other garments from the school while its own are drying. When they have dried, it may change into them, then wash the garments provided by the school, dry them and return them properly folded. If it is feared that this will mean increase in the school's expenditure, the child should be given a note and sent home, and may be permitted to attend when it returns in a clean condition. Physical cleanliness and tidiness should be the first lesson. Even if it is difficult to make a rule requiring all children to attend school in a uniform, it certainly cannot be tolerated if they attend dressed in any kind or condition of clothes.

What has been said about clean clothes also holds good about drill. Children must know how to walk, sit down and stand up, and march thousands together. One child sits stooping, and another with legs jutting out; one is yawning and stretching its limbs in boredom, while another is crying. How, then, can we expect that they will be able to march in step? Children should be taught how to do this right in their early years. They will look smart, raise the prestige of the school

and will feel a new kind of energy in them. Moreover, children who have been taught drill can be taken from one place to another thousands at a time, without difficulty and without any kind of commotion. I can call to mind one or two schools in which 900 pupils came together, noiselessly, within three minutes of a whistle and, when the programme was over, they returned to their classes in the same number of minutes, and were back at work as if they had never left them.

With regard to dress, according to me shorts or a dhoti, a shirt and a cap, all of khadi, should suffice. When especially they are washed, thousands of children in this dress are a beautiful sight to see. Many children wear, in addition, a jacket or a half-coat and attract attention in the midst of the others. They should be saved from this miserable condition.

I know that cleanliness, tidiness, drill, etc., do not exhaust a child's education. The child should, in addition, develop strength of character, and have knowledge of the letters. But we cannot neglect a single aspect of children's education. We should attend to all three aspects—physical, mental and spiritual. Whichever of these three is neglected will be a cause of suffering to the child when it grows up into a man and he will realize and regret the deficiency. Not only this, the neglect will have a very unhappy effect on society too. Even today, we are suffering the consequences of the deficiencies in our education. There is such lack of cleanliness among us that we are unable to root out diseases like the plague. It has become almost impossible to have clean surroundings in cities. We do not know even the fundamentals of civic life, and those who know them do not observe them in practice.

A "RISHIKUL"

The *Acharya*¹ of a certain *Rishikul* does not believe in untouchability, but he fears that if he does not observe the practice in his institution the latter will close down for want of support and, so, though he knows untouchability to be an evil, he harbours it. In my humble view, it is better that *Rishikuls* in which this is likely to happen should not be started at all or, if already established, should close down. How can anyone, knowing that untouchability is a sin, still cling

¹ A type of residential educational institution, generally run by Arya Samajists

² The head

to it in order to run a *Rishikul* ? Where in an institution there is such divergence between precept and practice of the *Acharya* himself, how can it help having a bad effect on the pupils ? How good it would be if teachers who are not ready to practise what they preach give up the teaching profession and earn their living in some other way ? Our experience, however, is that very often persons who are fit for nothing else become teachers.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 26-4-1925

130. LETTER TO V. G. CHERTKOV

SABARMATI,
April 26, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your greetings of 28th February, 1924. I was then unable to write to you. I hope you will keep me acquainted with Tolstoyan activities in Russia and condition of things in general.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 11077. Courtesy: Tolstoy State Museum, Moscow

131. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

TITHAL,
Vaishakh Sud 3 [April 26, 1925]>¹

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. Mahadev must have met you by the time. He has told me nothing. But from your talk about your business, I had understood something. Now, your letter makes everything clear. Don't be in the least perturbed, whatever happens to the business. As for money, you have some today and you may have nothing tomorrow. You have given away plenty of money; now if time takes away what you have, why worry ? He who has may give it and he may also lose it. Your place is always secure with me. Because of the strength of your character, you have become my daughter. Character

¹ Gandhiji was at Tithal from 23rd to 27th.

is a thing that another can neither confer nor take away. I wish you therefore to be fearless and free from worry. Consult me whenever you want to. If you have to do so when I am away or Mahadev too is away, do not hesitate to write to either of us. And you can always consult Devdas¹. He is sensible and can give correct advice. You should not hesitate to write anything to me.

Take good care of your health. You may come to Bombay if you find it necessary while I am there. This letter should reach you tomorrow, Monday. I am in Bombay on Tuesday and Wednesday. I shall go to Bombay by the passenger train.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original : C. W. 546. Courtesy : Vasumati Pandit

132. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

Vaishakh Sud 3, 1981 [April 26, 1925]²

CHI. MAGANLAL

You will find that I have preserved this³ carefully. I have discarded the other portion which was not meant for preservation.

I do not find any violation of the principle in keeping all the tools you have referred to. We may keep them when we feel that they are necessary. But I feel that we do not have the capacity to keep and use them at the present moment. When we do not have the strength to cope with the work we have in hand, why should we take up other activities? Therefore, my reply would be that for saving time on the current activities, we may make use of the tools which are not beyond our means. Ask or write to me if you are not fully satisfied with this reply.

The letter from Lala Vasanalal is enclosed. I am sending it to you as you wanted it back. I have sent him a postcard saying that

¹ Youngest son of Gandhiji

² *Vaishakh Sud* 3 in Samvat 1981 corresponded to April 26, 1925.

³ That is, the last page of the addressee's 5-page letter on which Gandhiji began writing his reply. The addressee therein had chiefly requested Gandhiji to put down in writing his views on agriculture and use of machine tools.

answers to all his questions will be found in *Young India*. If still he wants them, he can ask for them.

Here the air is good but the water does not seem to be good.

You have done a good thing in going to [Mt.] Abu even if it is only for a few days.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original : S.N. 32928

133. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

[April 27, 1925]¹

MOTHER'S PASSING AWAY GOOD. MERITED RELIEF.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 80

134. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

BULSAR,
Vaishakh Sud 4, [April 27, 1925]²

BHAI FULCHAND,

Someone in Amreli has complained that there are stones in the cotton sent out from there; and they are probably included in the weight.

There cotton is quickly sold away; you will therefore see to it that it is secured immediately and no mischief is done.

Hope your mother is well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I am in Bombay on the 28th and 29th. After that Calcutta.

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 2827. Courtesy : Shardabehn Shah

¹ As in the printed source. The original telegram in English is not available.

² The postmark bears this date.

135. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

BOMBAY,
April 28, 1925

His attention being drawn to the objection to the spinning franchise raised in certain quarters on the ground that it seriously interfered with the representative character of the Congress which was slowly drifting into a body representing only a few hundreds of spinners, Mahatma Gandhi said:

About the spinning franchise I retain the same opinion which I held at Belgaum. While it is perfectly true that numerically the Congress has suffered, the masses are still behind it. But as I have said in the pages of *Young India*,¹ if the members do not like the franchise, it is for them to alter it, however much I may deplore such an alteration.

Asked if he thought Dr. Annie Besant's scheme of Commonwealth of India Bill² worthy of being discussed at a Round Table Conference of all parties including Swarajists, Mahatma Gandhi said:

I have promised to study the Bill and give Dr. Besant my opinion upon it. Anything from her must command a respectful hearing. Whether today the people are in a mood to consider any swaraj scheme or not is a different question. . . .

Asked about his health, Mahatmaji said that he was better than what he was at Ahmedabad. It was not true that he was not attending the Bengal Provincial Conference for reasons of health. "Well I am quite fit to go to Bengal," said the Mahatma with a smile.

The Bombay Chronicle, 29-4-1925

¹ *Vide* "My Position", 16-4-1925.

² Mrs. Besant's Bill which was published early in January 1925, contained the following proposals:

¹ Classification of units of administration into a fivefold grade—from the village to the Central Government.

² Definition of the qualifications of voters.

³ A declaration of Fundamental Rights.

⁴ Viceroy's control as King's representative over military forces and foreign relations until the Indian Parliament assumed control.

⁵ Previous approval of the Viceroy before the Central Legislature took any step concerning the Indian States.

The scheme was finally adopted at the Cawnpore Convention, early in April, under the chairmanship of Sir T. B. Sapru; *vide India in 1924-25*, p. 341.

*136. SPEECH AT ALL-INDIA COW-PROTECTION
CONFERENCE, BOMBAY*

April 28, 1925

In presenting for approval the draft constitution of the All-India Cow-Protection Association¹ to the public meeting held at Madhav Bag, Bombay, on the 28th April, Mr. Gandhi made a speech in Gujarati, of which the following is a summary :

I do not think that I have in my life approached any undertaking with the fear and trembling that I experience today. I am regarded as a man who is generally not afraid of taking risks. I have interested myself in cow-protection, almost ever since my childhood, and have given a careful study to the subject during the past thirty years. I have also occasionally written and spoken about it. And yet I have not felt myself equal to the present undertaking, nor do I feel today. Not that I do not know the ways to do it. I do know it. But the successful carrying out takes more than an intellectual understanding of the ways and means. It requires deeper purification and I would have fain added to my modest stock of it before I launched on this new undertaking. But Fates decide my undertakings for me. I never go to seek them. They come to me almost in spite of me. That has been my lot all my life long, in South Africa as well as ever since my return to India. I had not dreamt that the task of forming an All-India Cow-Protection Association would fall to me, when I consented to preside over the Cow-Protection Conference at Belgaum. But those in charge of it had formulated big plans, and as President I had to consider them. We had a meeting of the committee appointed thereto at Delhi, where a draft constitution was prepared and approved by all present there, including men like Pandit Malaviyaji, Lala Lajpat Rai, Swami Shraddhanandji and Dr. Moonje. Even then I was marking time. I waited and watched, before I could decide on taking the final step. But the ever active Chaunde Maharaj would not leave me in peace. I then proposed that we should get the whole constitution approved and accepted at a public meeting of all interested in cow-protection. This meeting then which should have been held in Delhi is held here tonight, more for my convenience than anything else.

The task for which I want your approval and in which I seek your help is immense. It is bigger than perhaps the struggle for swaraj

¹ *Vide* "Draft Constitution of All-India Cow-Protection Sabha", 24-1-1925

inasmuch as it is of an entirely religious character. In my work of a prominently political character, I have often erred and blundered, I have done penance and repaired those errors and blunders. But in the present undertaking an error would be well-nigh irretrievable for the simple reason that the cow we propose to serve is a dumb creature, she cannot complain, she has no voice to raise against what may be against her interests. An untouchable may cry and raise a protest, a Hindu or a Mussalman may raise a protest and even break heads to settle a grievance. But the cow is entirely at our mercy. She consents to be led to slaughter, and to be embarked for Australia and gives her progeny to carry whatever burden we want it to carry, in sun or rain. The task is thus immense and I have undertaken it out of a pure sense of duty.

But I may warn that there are limits to my capacity for undertakings. There are certain limits which are obvious. For instance though I can collect funds for my purposes, and though I know that the love of my countrymen for me is deep enough to find me money for any good undertaking that I take up, I want you to know that I cannot go about from place to place asking for money for the present task. I have not the time nor the energy for it. Then there is the honest, careful and efficient disposal of the funds. I obviously cannot look to or supervise every detail, and the cow won't impale you on her horns for mismanagement or similar blunders. We have, therefore, to do the work in fear of God and with the full consciousness of the sacredness of the task.

I gave at Belgaum¹ my meaning of cow-protection. It includes, as I explained, the protection and service of "both man and bird and beast". It presupposes a through eschewal of violence. A Hindu, if he is a true Hindu, may not raise his hand against a Mussalman or an Englishman to protect the cow. I have, for our present purposes, confined myself to considering the ways and means of protecting the cow merely. For I know that if we once succeed in the protection of the cow proper, we shall some day be able to serve the cow in all creation. And if we succeed in Bombay, we shall also thereafter succeed elsewhere.

But to do so we have to bring both our reason and our heart to bear on the task. We shall have to examine ourselves and realize that it is primarily a Hindu's duty in the matter that this Association seeks to

¹ *Vide* "Presidential Address at Cow-Protection Conference, Belgaum", 28-12-1924.

be fulfilled, we have to realize that we have not so much to save the cow from the butcher's knife as from our own. And, for that purpose, we shall have to grasp the economics of the thing. Nowhere in the world is the proportion of the bovine to the human population so small as in India. Nowhere is the cow so feeble, and her yield so little as in India. Nowhere is she so badly treated as she is today in India by the Hindus. I am saying this not to excite you. I am stating the barest truth, without the slightest exaggeration. It is the Hindus, therefore, who have to fulfil their obligations in the matter. The Mussalmans will do their duty after we have done what is obviously ours. I gave all the help that I could for the Khilafat, because I wanted to enlist the Mussalman's sympathy in the matter of cow-protection. But let us fulfil our obligations first. We are doing nothing today. The little work that is being done by Chaunde Maharaj and others is as a mere drop in the ocean.

Two things I want to invite your attention to as important in the constitution, viz., the establishment of tanneries and dairies. That is too practical, too earthly you will say. But religion which takes no count of practical affairs and does not help to solve them, is no religion. That is what the life of the Ascetic King Janaka teaches us. And that is why I am putting a religious matter before you in a practical form.

We shall have to take control of the milk supply and also of the disposal of dead cattle. You are perhaps shocked as I speak of hides and tanneries. But do you know that because we would not take charge of them the untouchable who does the work today excuses himself for eating carrion and remaining unclean ? Let us show him the proper way of doing things and he will reform his ways. I am suggesting all these things with the fullest consciousness of the meaning of all that I say. I may tell you that it was I who vowed never more to take cow's or buffalo's milk when I learnt for the first time in South Africa the cruel way in which the last drop of milk was drawn out of them. I know that there are beef-eaters amongst Vaishnavas, I know that there are Vaishnavas who do not hesitate to take Liebeg's "Extract of Beef", on the pretext that it is prescribed by the doctor. Should we then hesitate to control tanneries in a religious spirit ? I tell you we have come to this state because we would not take care of disabled and dead cattle and because we exported them to America.

Let us, therefore, establish tanneries and look to the proper disposal of dead cattle. Let us establish dairies and ensure a cheaper

and better supply of milk. I will not hesitate to seek co-operation of the government in this matter, for I know they have got the services of good dairy experts. If we do these two things then alone is it possible to stop the avoidable slaughter of thousands of cattle annually. The other things in the constitution are of a non-controversial character and explain themselves.

We now want a treasurer and a secretary for our work. The treasurer should be such as everyone trusts, as can collect the necessary funds, and can find them himself when they are not forthcoming. The secretary's first qualification is that he should be a *brahmachari* if possible,—not a mere celebrator but a truly religious *brahmachari* who has control over all the senses. He should then have a fair knowledge of the vernaculars and a knowledge of English. He should be an energetic and an active man, for, he would have to go about from place to place and meet different people. Failing a *brahmachari*, even a *grihastha* of high character will do. I hope you will approach the task in the proper spirit and I pray that God may give us the strength and the sacrifice needed for it.

Young India, 7-5-1925

137. INTERVIEW TO A PRESS REPRESENTATIVE

BOMBAY

[April 29, 1925]¹

“I know nothing whatsoever about it”, declared Mahatma Gandhi, when interviewed by a Press representative, before he left for Bengal, with regard to the statement appearing in *The Madras Mail* that, at the Bengal Provincial Conference, he and Mr. Das would finally abandon non-co-operation and state the terms on which they were prepared to co-operate with the Government.

Mahatmaji declared that there was no exchange of correspondence between Mr. Das and himself on the subject, and that he was visiting Bengal with the sole purpose of fulfilling a long-standing promise.

The Hindu, 30-4-1925

¹ Gandhiji left Bombay for Bengal on this date.

138. INTERVIEW TO “NEW INDIA”

BOMBAY,

April 29, 1925

Interviewed by *New India's* special correspondent on the Commonwealth of India Bill, Gandhiji said:

I wish I had the time to study Dr. Besant's Commonwealth of India Bill with the care and attention that it demands. But such study as I have been able to give it has led me to the following conclusion : The recognition of the King-Emperor as Sovereign and Protector of the Common-wealth seems to have been assumed as an indispensable condition. I do not subscribe to it.

I recognize that in any Bill passed by mutual consent, some such provision is necessary, but I could not teach the people that the British connection is an inviolable thing. There should be some provision in the Bill for the immediate participation by Parliament in the defence of the Commonwealth. All the existing financial and other obligations of the Government of India seem to have been taken over under the Bill. I cannot be a party to such a transaction. The moral justice of every commitment and contract of the existing Government should be examined by an impartial Commission, consisting say, of a nominee of the President and a nominee of the British Crown, the two to choose an umpire. The jurisdiction of the Privy Council should be abolished. A local one should be established and the principle of compulsory arbitration in every civil suit should be laid down. The right of the Commonwealth to impose a protective tariff upon all goods, whether British or other, should be clearly recognized, subject to most-favoured nation treatment to Great Britain. Hindi or Hindustani should be the language of the State. The qualification of voters and members of the legislative bodies is too complicated for me. I dislike the graded franchise. The franchise for the villages is too broad. A lunatic, for instance, may be a voter. There is no provision anywhere for labour. My formula is, no labour, no vote; hence the spinning franchise.

Subject to the foregoing amendments and to the co-operation of Mussalmans, I should subscribe to the Bill. My own opinion is that we have not the requisite atmosphere for considering the measure. I

could not undertake to convene an All-Parties' Conference, even if the Bill undergoes the changes submitted by me, but I should gladly attend any Conference convened for the purpose. The more I study the present situation, the more convinced I feel that my function is to work for power from within. Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas¹ tells me that the draft before me is not the final draft, and that another is in course of preparation which will include most or at least some of my suggestions. This final draft, I understand, is to be in terms of the conclusions arrived at recently at Cawnpore. I need hardly state that Dr. Besant's is one of the few schemes now before the public, and as such, deserves careful study by every lover of India. That swaraj is a necessity of national life goes without saying. Any step, therefore, that brings us nearer to it is a welcome effort. Lastly, I cannot help placing on record my opinion that the Bill is most comprehensive and has been drawn with extraordinary care. In some respects, it is quite original.

(The final draft was discussed and passed at Cawnpore and is now in the press, and will be sent to Gandhiji. But I do not think that it can be said to embody his suggestions, as they are very unusual and were not before the Convention. —Annie Besant).

New India, 29-4-1925

139. NOTES

WORTHY OF EMULATION

A teacher of a national school in Bardoli taluk writes to say that he picked during the past four months seven maunds of cotton pods, ginned them and carded the cotton thus ginned and spun eighteen pounds of yarn in weight and 3 lakhs of yards in length. It is a great achievement to have continued the quantity of yarn spun for four months, and this in addition to the work of teaching. The teacher tells me that he is going not only to continue the quantity but to do better during the rest of the year. What this industry means is better illustrated by a report that teachers me from an Amreli worker. He reports the following sentiments expressed by a sixty-year-old dame who had walked four miles to take her share of slivers for spinning :

You people have conferred a great boon upon us. We have had three

¹ Home Rule leader and a member of the All-Party Conference Committee's sub-committee on Hindu-Muslim unity.

successive lean years. We were without any work. And how could one live without work ? Now I have got work and I shall be happy.

The teacher was not without work. He had no need to do the strenuous labour he imposed upon himself. But his example will in the end prove infectious and others who are idling away their time will be engaged in this wealth-producing and necessary national industry. The old dame's, however, is a typical instance. There are tens of thousands of men and women who are famishing for want to work. Many, as in Orissa have passed the working stage and with them idleness has become a habit. There is no other remedy save hand-spinning for dealing with calamity and introducing happiness into millions of homes in this country.

HAVE I PROPERTY ?

Among the many curious inquiries I received, here are some from a correspondent in Guntur District:

People say Gandhiji does not do what he says. He preaches poverty but possesses property. He wants others to become poor, but he is not poor. He advocates simple and inexpensive life yet his is expensive. So answer the questions below. Do you take anything from the A.I.C.C. or Gujarat Congress Committee for your living and touring expenses? If so, what is the amount? If not, how are you meeting the expenses for your long tours and your food and clothing, if you are, as people take you to be, a propertyless man?

There is much more in the letter of the same kind but I have taken out the most salient points.

I do make the claim that I attempt to act as I preach. But I must confess that I am not as inexpensive in my wants, as I would like to be. My food since my illness costs more than it should. By no means can I call it a poor man's food. My travels too cost more than they did before my illness. I am no longer able to travel long distances third class. Nor do I travel, as I did before, without a companion. All this means not simplicity and poverty, but the reverse of it. I draw nothing from the A.I.C.C. or the Gujarat Committee. But friends find my travelling expenses including food and clothing. Often during my tours, railway tickets are purchased by those who invite me and my host everywhere covers me with kind attention which often embarrasses me. People present me during my tours with much more khaddar than I need. The balance goes to clothe those who need it or it is put in the general khaddar stock of Ashram which is conducted in

the public interest. I own no property and yet I feel that I am perhaps the richest man in the world. For, I have never been in want either for myself or for my public concerns. God has always and invariably responded in time. I can recall several occasions when almost the last penny had been spent for my public activities. Monies then came in from the most unexpected quarters. These responses have made me humble and filled me with a faith in God and His goodness that will stand the strain of utter distress if it ever becomes my lot in life. It is open to the world, therefore, to laugh at my dispossessing myself of all property. For me the dispossession has been a positive gain. I would like people to compete with me in my contentment. It is the richest treasure I own. Hence, it is perhaps right to say that though I preach poverty, I am a rich man!

HINDI AND ENGLISH

A Tamil lawyer suggests that I should print *Young India* with Hindi translation in parallel columns so as to enable the Tamilian to learn Hindi without difficulty. I appreciate the motive but I am sorry. I cannot adopt the suggestion. *Young India* has a definite mission. Through its medium I seek to popularize the ideals I try to represent among that large body of men and women who do not understand either Gujarati or Hindi, but who understand English. I must not extend the scope of the paper. But for Tamilians who would understand Hindi, and it is high time they did, I recommend the Hindi Prachar office in Triplicane, Madras. This institution publishes, too, a journal which is printed in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and English. The sole function of the institution is to spread a knowledge of Hindi among those in the South who are patriotic enough to wish to learn it. The enthusiast, if he likes, can also avail himself of the *Hindi Navajivan* which contains translations of the main articles and notes in *Young India* and *Navajivan*.

FOR BIHARIS

My forthcoming visit to Bengal has raised lively expectations in Bihar and correspondents have already asked me to include their places in my Bihar tour. Instead of sending them individual replies I venture to inform them hereby that no date for the Bihar tour has as yet been fixed. If my health keeps after the Bengal tour (I say this because I have not yet regained my former vitality after the recent attack of malaria), I shall endeavour to suit the Bihar friends. But no

date can be fixed before the Bengal tour has well advanced. In any case, my Bihar friends who want me to visit their places should correspond with He will be in charge of the programme on the same conditions as to days of quiet, etc., that I have urged for Bengal.

TRANSVAAL INDIANS

Here is a cable from the Secretary, British Indian Association, Johannesburg :

Mr. Collins, opposition member Ermelo, introduced in the Assembly a bill prohibiting the grant for renewal of trading or business licences within six miles Transvaal municipal or township area to any Asiatic wherein he is not owner of fixed property, also to any Asiatic company corporate or otherwise. Bill if passed will grossly violate Smuts-Gandhi agreement respecting vested rights and sell total annihilation and final extermination of Indians. Association emphatically protests against its passage and urges you adopt means for its withdrawal. H.E. the Viceroy has been cabled.

The cable was received sometime ago but owing to my incessant travelling it has remained unattended to till now. I offer my apologies to the Association. The matter, however, is not stale nor beyond help. This measure is after the style of what General Hertzog introduced and which General Smuts so energetically opposed. In appealing to me, the Association has relied on a broken reed. I can but give publicity to the grievance and hope that the appeal to the Viceroy will not prove fruitless. His Excellency can at least vindicate the position of Indian settlers overseas if he can do nothing else. The proposed Bill is a manifest breach of the Smuts Gandhi agreement of 1914. It is dishonest to mention Asiatic owners of fixed property in the Transvaal, for it is known to everyone that they cannot become owners of fixed property except in Locations and that they are denied the right of owning fixed property even in Locations. Everyone knows, moreover, that to confine Asiatic trade to Locations is to kill that trade. If extermination of the Asiatic is the goal, the honest course would be to bring in an expatriation bill and challenge the Indian Government to do its worst.

WHERE IS IT ?

A correspondent writes :

In your issue of the 12th instant there is a Mussalman's complaint about some mosque at "Lohani". This name does not occur at all in the Indian post Office Directory for British India as well as the States. So it would be advisable for the guidance of workers as well as for verification of complaints, if you made a point while publishing names of small places in such connections, of giving their P.O.s or at least the districts to which they belong. Does Lohani exist at all?

I asked the complainant about the location of Lohani. He refers me to the Delhi Khilafat Committee. I have written to it. But to save time, I seek information from all concerned. I must confess my own ignorance of Lohani.

Young India, 30-4-1925

140. *QUANTITY* v. *QUALITY*

There is at the present moment a note of despondency in the air over the number of Congress members. The complaint is that the members have been never so few as today. The complaint would be reasonable if the franchise being the same, the response was less than before. It would also be reasonable if the influence of the Congress was to be measured by the number of members. Opinions would undoubtedly differ as to the measure to be applied for gauging the Congress influence. For me there is one measure. I attach the highest importance to quality irrespective almost of quantity, the more so for Indian conditions. In the midst of suspicion, discord, antagonistic interests, superstition, fear, distrust and the like, there is not only no safety in numbers but there may be even danger in them. Who does not know how often numbers have embarrassed us during the past four years? Numbers become irresistible when they act as one man under exact discipline. They are a self-destroying force when each pulls his own way or when no one knows which way to pull.

I am convinced that there is safety in fewness so long as we have not evolved cohesion, exactness and intelligent co-operation and responsiveness. One virtuous son is better than one hundred loafers. Five Pandavas¹ were more than a match for one hundred Kauravas². A

¹ Five brothers, heroes of the *Mahabharata*

² Cousins of the Pandavas

disciplined army of a few hundred picked men has times without number routed countless undisciplined hordes. A few members fully satisfying the Congress test can give a good account of themselves, whereas one million members nominally on the Congress register may not be worth the register itself. I do not for one moment suggest that those whom we have now on the register are sound or even sounder than those whom we had before. That can only be verified at the end of the year.

What I would like to drive home is that we should know what we want. Do we believe in the paramount value of the spinning-wheel? Then we must adopt it whether we are few or many. Do we believe in the necessity, in terms of swaraj, of removing the curse of untouchability? Then we may not surrender, though we may be overwhelmed. Do we regard Hindu-Muslim unity as absolutely necessary for the attainment of swaraj? Then we must stake much to achieve it. We may not be satisfied with a sham. We must have the real coin or none.

“But these are not politics. There is no giving battle to the Government in all this”, say some friends. My answer is we cannot give effective battle to the Government till we achieve these things. “But we shall never achieve any single one of these things till we attain swaraj”, say others. I answer that we must evolve the ability to achieve these things notwithstanding Government indifference for opposition, secret or open. Achievement of these things to me means half the battle, if not the whole of it.

“What then of the Swarajist programme?”, say they. That programme must go on side by side with the development of internal strength. The Swarajists are an integral part of the Congress. They are able, they are on the alert, they will shape their policy; in accordance with the exigencies of the situation. Let those who have the aptitude prosecute that programme as well, But let them not forget the internal work. If twelve thousand men and women, nay, two thousand men and women, can be induced vigorously to work the constructive programme, things will immediately wear a different aspect. Throughout my wanderings, I have noticed a lamentable dearth of workers—brave, honest, self-sacrificing, self-reliant and with confidence in themselves and the mission. The harvest is indeed rich but the labourers are few.

Sjt. Srinivasa Aiyengar and I were attending a meeting in Madras. People were bubbling with enthusiasm. We were driving to keep time for another meeting. But my 'admireres' insisted on exhibiting me through a street which was not on the programme. He pleaded, I pleaded, want of time. Sjt. Aiyengar pleaded on behalf of my health. It was all to no purpose. We were driven! —shall I say compulsorily? Both of us realized that these men were no help to the cause, they were a positive hindrance. Things were set right only when I took the law in my hands, declined to be driven, actually got out of the car and defied the crowd to carry me bodily if they wished. Here there was an ocular demonstration of danger in numbers. I can cite a score of such experiences. The people are well-meaning but ignorant and thoughtless. How many well-meaning mothers drug their children to death?

We want not excitement at the present moment but calm constructive work. It is a laborious task, it is stupendous. But it is not beyond our capacity. It need not even take time. What hinders progress is indefiniteness. The verbal assent without practical performance embarrasses. I plead for quality and quality alone. I must, therefore, refuse to trouble the All-India Congress Committee unless I receive a requisition to summon it. The present programe has been framed to arrive at the requisite quality. And so long as it remains, I can but advise every Congress worker to put his or her whole soul into its working so that we might have, at the end of the year, if it is at all possible, a compact body of men and women possessing the requisite qualifications, be the number ever so small.

Young India, 30-4-1925

141. TO P. N. P. (TRIVANDRUM)

You are wholly wrong. My remarks about Christian drinking were based upon the information given by Christians and at their instance. If the information was not correct, I am glad. Your mistake and your sorrow are due to your separating yourself from the other Indians. Why may you not think with me that if a Christian Indian or a Mussalman Indian or a Hindu Indian drinks or otherwise falls, it is as much your shame as it is mine? All of us are members of the same body and if one member suffers the whole body suffers.

Young India, 30-4-1925

142. TO 'REVOLUTIONARY IN THE MAKING'

You will pardon me for not reproducing your letter. I would have gladly published it, if it was a presentable letter—not that the language of your letter is at all in bad taste or violent. On the contrary, you have attempted to present your case fairly and calmly, but the argument is loosely and unconvincingly put. What you want to say is that the revolutionary does no violence because when he takes the life of his adversary, he does so to benefit him, *i.e.*, his soul, even as a surgeon performs a painful operation on a patient for his (the latter's) good. You argue that the adversary has a vile body which vitiates the soul and that the sooner it is destroyed, the better for him.

Now, the analogy of the surgeon is wrong because he is concerned merely with the body. He operates on the body to benefit the body. His science ignores the soul. Who can say how many bodies have been repaired by surgeons at the expense of the soul? But the revolutionary destroys the body for the supposed benefit of the adversary's soul. In the first instance, I do not know a single revolutionary who has ever thought of the adversary's soul. His single aim has been of benefit the country even though the adversary may perish, body and soul. In the second instance, since you believe in the Law of Karma, a compulsory destruction of a body merely paves the way for the creation of a tougher body for the same soul. For the man whose body is destroyed will weave for himself a body after his own longing. That, to my mind, is the meaning of the persistence of evil and the crimes we see about us. The more we punish, the more persistent crimes become. They may change colour, but the substance is the same. The way to serve the adversary's soul is to appeal to the soul. It defies destruction, but it is amenable to appeals tuned to the required pitch. Souls must react upon souls. And since non-violence is essentially a quality of the soul, the only effective appeal to the soul must lie through non-violence. And do we not arrogate to ourselves infallibility when we seek to punish our adversaries? Let us remember that they regard us to be as harmful to society as we regard them. It is idle to drag in the name of Krishna. Either we believe him to be the very God or we do not. If we do, we impute to him omniscience and omnipotence. Such a one can surely destroy. But we are puny mortals ever erring and ever revising our views and opinions. We may not without coming to grief ape Krishna, the inspirer of the *Gita*. You should remember too that the so-called Christians of the Middle Ages

thought exactly as you believe revolutionaries think. They burnt heretics for the benefit of the latter's souls. We of today laugh at the atrocious folly of these ignorant so-called Christians of the Middle Ages. We now know that the inquisitors were wrong, their victims were totally innocent.

I am glad you are turning the wheel. Its silent revolution will bring you peace and bring the freedom you love much nearer than you imagine. Do not mind your fickle friends who have deserted you leaving behind a legacy of "bug-ridden bed born" slivers. If I were you, I would recard these slivers. You may not know carding. If you do not, you must go to the nearest man who knows it and learn the beautiful art of carding. He is an indifferent spinner who knows not how to card. You need not be afraid that the method of non-violence is a slow long-drawn-out process. It is the swiftest the world has seen, for it is the surest. You will see that it will overtake the revolutionaries whom you imagine I have misjudged. To point out errors is not to misjudge. I am devoting so much space to them because I want their exhaustless energy to be directed in the right channel.

Young India, 30-4-1925

143. INTER-DINING AGAIN

A correspondent writes :

You have answered¹ at length an Englishman's 'puzzle' on the question of intermarriage. But what about inter-dining which is a much less vital affair but more frequent in life? Suppose some men of goodwill organize, as one means promoting goodwill amongst all classes, an inter-caste, inter-communal and inter-national dinner on purely vegetarian and non-alcoholic lines; would you from your own *sanatan* point of view object, if any Hindus—say, some members of your caste or of your own family—wished to join that dinner of invitation (and not, of course, on compulsion!) and asked your opinion on it? Similarly, may a Brahmin with *your* view of the *sanatan* (or *maryada*) dharma accept a clean dish of rice and a pure cup of water which a *chandal* or a Mussalman or a Christian has offered him (and not, of course, forced on him), finding the Brahmin wayworn, hungry and thirsty (and almost on the point of fainting, let us say) in a lone wild place? In fine, the question is; Does such a demonstration of goodwill as the "cosmopolitan" dinner or the

¹ *Vide* "Notes", 12-3-1925, sub-title, "A Politician".

offer of a dish by a supposed untouchable to a touchable Hindu and acceptance thereof square with your idea of the *sanatan* or *varnashram dharma* or *maryada dharma*¹ or does it not?

If a Brahmin is in distress he would take, if he wishes to hold on to his body, clean food by whomsoever offered. I would neither object to nor advocate participation in an international or cosmopolitan dinner, for the simple reason that such functions do not necessarily promote friendship or goodwill. It is possible today to organize a dinner party between Hindus and Mussalmans but I dare to say that such a dinner will no more bring the two communities together than the absence of it keeps them apart. I have known deadly enemies dine and chat together heartily and yet remain enemies. Where will the correspondent draw the line? Why does he stop at vegetarian and non-alcoholic meals? A man who regards flesh-eating a virtue and wine bibbing a harmless and pleasurable refreshment, will see nothing but promotion of goodwill in dividing with the world his beefsteak and exchanging with it the sparkling cup! On the argument underlying the correspondent's query, there can be no dividing line. I, therefore, rule out inter-dining as the means of promoting goodwill. Whilst I do not myself observe these restrictions and take food that I do not regard as forbidden at the hands of anyone so long as it is cleanly dressed, I respect the scruples of those who observe the restrictions. Nor do I pat myself on the back for my "liberal" practice as against the others' "narrowness". I may be narrow and selfish in spite of my apparently liberal practice and my friend may be liberal and unselfish notwithstanding his apparently narrow practice. Merit or demerit lies in the motive. Insistence upon inter-dining as part of the programme of promotion of fellowship, in my opinion, retards the growth of goodwill by raising false issues and even false hope. What I am trying to remove is the idea of pollution and superiority. These self-imposed restrictions have a sanitary as also a spiritual value. But non-observance no more dooms a man to perdition than its observance raises him to the seventh heaven. A man who observes the dining restrictions in a most punctilious manner may be a veritable blackguard fit to be shunned by society, and a cosmopolitan omnivorous man may be one ever walking in the fear of God whose society it would be a privilege to cultivate.

Young India, 30-4-1925

¹ Path of knowledge and conduct prescribed by the Shastras

144. IS THERE GOD?

TO

THE EDITOR, *Young India*

SIR,

With reference to your article "God and Congress" I beg to say that while the Charvak school was materialistic out and out, Buddhism is silent on and Jainism doubts the existence of *Ishvara* or any supernatural Entity that may be said to correspond to God, although both faiths believe in the transmigration of the soul and the Law of Karma, in common with Hinduism. (Your friend Prof. Dharmanand Kosambi whom I mentioned may be consulted on this point.) Buddha with Karma, and Jina with Karma, respectively, may be said to take the place of God in the ritual practice of those two religions.

Of modern religious movements, the Deva Samaj of the Punjab which is mostly a humanitarian and social-service body and lays great store by ahimsa is (I believe) frankly atheistic in its creed, but *not* materialistic. I have read that it believes neither in God nor gods. In the light of this, its name of *Deva*¹ Samaj appears rather paradoxical. *Lucas a non-lucendo*!²

Of Bradlaugh you say that his denial of God was a denial of Him as He was known to Bradlaugh to have been described. Was this denial inclusive, or was it exclusive, of that "certain unmistakable sameness" behind all that variety of definitions which there would be if we could all give our own definitions of God, as you say? I presume, it cannot be the latter, for Bradlaugh was learned and observant enough. If the former is the case, what made Bradlaugh deny the existence of God even in the aspect of that "unmistakable sameness"?

I doubt not but that the following excerpt will be of some interest to you in this connection:

The very idea of a god, as creating or in any way ruling the world, is utterly absent in the Buddhist system. God is not so much as denied; he is simply not known. Contrary to the opinion once confidently and generally held, that a nation of atheists never existed, it is no longer to be disputed that the numerous Buddhist nations are essentially atheist; for they know no beings with greater supernatural power than any man is supposed capable of attaining to by virtue, austerity, and science; and a remarkable indication of this startling fact is to be seen in the circumstance, that some at least of the

¹ God

² The grove (*lucus*) is so named from its not shining (*lucendo*).

Buddhist nations—the Chinese, Mongols, and Tibetans—have no word in their languages to express the notion of God. The future condition of the Buddhist, then, is not assigned him by the Ruler of the universe; the “Karma” of his actions determines it by a sort of virtue inherent in the nature of things—by the blind and unconscious concatenation of cause and effect.”

—*Chamber's Encyclopaedia, sub. Buddhism.*

Let me conclude with a *shloka*;

नमस्यामो देवान् ननु हतविधेस्तेऽपि वशगाः

विधिर्वन्द्यः सोऽपि प्रतिनियतकर्मैकफलदः ।

फलं कर्मायत्तं किममरगणैः किं चैविधिना

नमस्तत्कर्मभ्यो विधिरपि न येभ्यः प्रभवति ॥

भर्तृहरिः, नीतिशतके ।

To the gods or angels we our homage pay;

But to sorry Fate subject e'en them we find;

Then, is our worship due to Fate?

Sure *he* yields but the fruit our actions rate.

And the fruit on actions of our own depends;

—Hence small account of gods or angels or of Fate.

Then hail, our actions small or great!

Over whom not even Fate prevails!

—My own attempt at a free rendering of the above from Bhartrihari

—*Nitishataka.*

I am, etc.,

S. D. NADKARNI

Karwar (N. Kanara)

10th March, 1925.

I cannot refuse space to Mr. Nadkarni's clever letter. I must, however, adhere to my opinion that neither Jainism nor Buddhism are atheistic. I present Mr. Nadkarni with these definitions of God: The sum total of Karma is God. That which impels man to do the right is God. The sum total of all that lives is God. That which makes man the mere plaything of fate is God. That which sustained Bradlaugh throughout all his trials was God. He is the Denial of the atheist.

Young India, 30-4-1925

145. "SEEKER AFTER TRUTH"

One who describes himself a seeker after truth sends me his own reflections arising out of my discussion of revolutionary views. He tells me that at first he was a non-co-operator, then, he began to think that non-co-operation was merely a social movement and that the revolutionary was the only true political movement. At Belgaum again, he began to think anew. I condense below his reflections without in any way whatsoever changing the sense or his language:

The Revolutionary is certainly patriotic. He is a Hero. He is prepared to give up his life in the cause of Motherland. But his very aim is wrong.

What is it the Revolutionary wants? Freedom for the country. So far quite right. Why is the freedom required? So that the people may be happy. This also is right. How can the people be happy? By changing the system of Government.

Now here comes the real point.

Let us just consider our state. We Indians have ever so many virtues. But what of our weaknesses? We have become cowards. We have taken to several vices. Amongst the Hindus we have the untouchables. We till the ground and produce grains, vegetables and such things which could very easily feed us all. All the same, the fact remains that the major portion of us are half-starving. We all weave and work in mills. Still we are but half-clad. We have got enough clay. We know how to make bricks and build beautiful houses. Still there are several of us who have no other place than beneath trees to live.

No doubt the foreigners are, to a very large extent, to blame for our difficulties. Wrong though it may be, that is our sincere opinion. But what of our own share of the responsibility? Are we not at all to blame?

Or suppose that we, with the help of the revolvers or such things, do drive away the enemies? Is it not possible for any other foreigner to occupy the position of the present foreigner? After all warfare is but a sort of gambling.

I do not propose to deal with the utility or otherwise of non-violence, maintaining armies and such things. I consider myself absolutely incompetent to discuss this subject. Suffice it to say that I am beginning to understand Gandhiji's views on this subject and his views appear to me to be right.

The United States of America, it is generally said, have a very good Government. What of the several plots, the several murders, dacoities, swindlings, etc., that take place there? The Bolshevik system is considered to be good. Why then the daily increasing capital punishment, riots and such things? Any number of such examples can be given.

To dispose of Gandhiji's ideas as merely idealistic and impracticable is wrong; much more so for a revolutionary to do so. For he has really the welfare of the people at heart.

It is not impossible to bring about a situation where the world will be an abode of happiness. The best thing, of course, is to do good to others. But at present you need not even go so far. Do good to your own self.

Don't you waste a good portion of your time? Don't you send out crores of your rupees to other countries by purchasing their cotton goods? Spin and make good use of your time. Weave your own cloth and use the same and save your crores.

This spinning, I take it, does not merely mean spinning of cotton yarn. I take it to mean home industry. It is a solution as much for any other country as for India.

Removal of untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity and such things are internal. It is self-purification. Everyone has his own dirt to wash. The Hindus have the untouchability, the Indians, the Hindu-Muslim rupture. It is thus for every country to wash itself of its own curse.

The revolutionary will thus see that he has more useful work in spreading this wonderful cure of the world-illness. He serves not only himself and his countrymen, but he serves the whole world.

When you have purified yourself, and when you have become self-sufficient how on earth can anyone levy tax or collect by any other means money from you without your co-operation? It is impossible to govern without the co-operation of the governed. Now we, the governed, are not pure, we are not self-sufficient. But we will soon become such. This is the real meaning of non-violent non-co-operation. Fear none but your conscience. Why do you hide and throw bombs on the foreigner? Come out and tell him boldly that we hold him to a large extent responsible for our weaknesses, fear not if he sends you to jail. Tell him also that you propose as much to change him as your own self. Thus you will be doing good both to your own self and to the person whom you now consider to be your enemy.

Young India, 30-4-1925

146. SPEECH AT NAGPUR

April 30, 1925

Amidst the thundering cries of “*Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai*” the train conveying Mahatma Gandhi *en route* to Calcutta arrived here at exactly 9.25 a.m. . . . Mahatmaji was led to the dais by Sikh volunteers with naked swords in hands. After requesting the audience to remain quiet Mahatmaji delivered a small speech. He said that though he was very glad to see them there, his heart burned within himself to find very few clad in pure khaddar. So long as they did not put on khaddar and all classes of people such as Sikhs, Parsis, Hindus, Mahomedans and others were not firmly united, and so long as the curse of untouchability was not removed, swaraj was impossible. He appealed to the people of Nagpur to bring about real Hindu-Muslim unity and take to spinning. After this speech Mahatmaji was presented by the Secretary, City Congress Committee, with the report of the work done in the city. Mahatmaji left Nagpur at about 10.

The Bombay Chronicle, 1-5-1925

147. ILLUMINATING DOCUMENTS

[April 30, 1925]¹

These notes are being written during the trying journey to Calcutta. This being my first passage through the Central Provinces after my discharge from prison, people are embarrassingly attentive at every station and there is no rest for the wearied limbs. The discarding of khaddar is most noticeable. Instead of a forest of white khaddar caps, I see everywhere the provoking black foreign caps on almost every head. A friend sadly remarked to me that there was hardly one in a thousand who wore khaddar habitually. I am witnessing all along the route a striking demonstration of the fact. All honour then to the one per thousand who remain faithful to khaddar against heavy odds. My faith in khaddar rises as I find this indifference to it not revolt against khaddar.

The demonstration of the painful truth became complete at Nagpur—the centre that re-affirmed the Calcutta resolution of non-violent non-co-operation. There was a vast crowd at the station. The Congress officials had even arranged a meeting just outside the station. The hot sun was beating overhead. The din was terrific.

¹ From the reference to the “journey to Calcutta”, the article appears to have been written on April 30 after the halt at Nagpur. Gandhiji reached Calcutta on the morning of May 1.

Nobody heard anybody, much less listened to anybody. There were volunteers but there was no discipline. No way was kept for me to pass through. I insisted on a way being made if I was to go to the meeting place during the half hour that the train was to stop at the station. The way was made with difficulty. I waded through it in the best manner I could took me over five minutes to reach the platform. Without the crowd pressing from all sides, I could have reached it in half a minute. I took no more than one minute to deliver my message. It took me longer to return to the train than it took to reach the platform, for the crowd had now lost its head completely. The intoxication of affection was now at its height. The shouts of “*ki jai*” rent the sky. I was ill able to bear the din and the dust and the suffocation. “O God! deliver me from this affection” was the silent prayer that went up to the Great White Throne. I reached the train in safety. It was provokingly late going. I stood in the doorway wishing and hoping to talk to the crowd if it would keep still for a while. The Congress officials tried, a big Akali tried, to silence the crowd. It was no use. It had come to have *darshan*. That it was having with delirious joy. Its joy was my pain. My name on the lips and black caps on the heads,—what a terrible contrast! What a lie! I could not fight the battle of swaraj with that crowd. And yet, I know that Maulana Shaukat Ali would say there was hope so long as there was that affection, blind though it was. I am not so sure and therefore I was in agony.

At last, I got a hearing. I demanded the black caps. The response was instantaneous but not generous. From that vast crowd I do not think more than one hundred caps were thrown, four of which were thrown not by the owners. They were claimed and promptly returned. This sight had a double lesson for me. With proper organized work, people could be induced to discard foreign or mill-made cloth. That was one lesson; but there was another. People there were who were yet ready to remove the neighbour’s cap, just the preliminary to coercion. But there should be no coercion in khaddar wearing or in anything else. Those who wear it must do so voluntarily or not at all.

But the most illuminating information was given to me by the documents that the business-like officials had prepared for presentation to me. The documents tell me a truthful, simple, unvarnished story of Congress work. One paper contains information about Provincial Congress Committee activities. In March last, it had a membership of 204 of which 114 were self-spinners and 90 gave yarn

spun by others. In April, the membership fell to 132, self-spinners being 80 and the others 52. Thus there was a big drop among both the classes in one month. What it will now be remains to be seen. The committee reports 4 national schools in the province and donation of Rs. 5,000 from the trustees of the late Harishanker Vyas for untouchables. A sub-committee has been appointed to draft a scheme for the uplift of the untouchables. The paper mentions that, thanks to the effort of Pandit Motilal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Hindus and Muslims “have been maintaining very peaceful relations with one another”.

The second paper is a summary report of Congress activities in the city of Nagpur. It states that in the August of 1924 there were 1,133 members. In March 1925 the figures were:

A	B	Total
37	70	107

In April they were:

A	B	Total
29	30	59

In one month the defaulters were 48.

Number of spinning-wheels working is “about” 40. The average output of yarn is 60 to 70 thousand yards per month. Average counts are 10 to 14. No looms work with hand-spun yarn.

There is one khaddar shop with an average sale of Rs. 500 per month.

The report says “no information can be given about drink and opium” and then, this extraordinarily brief and truthful statement ends thus:

The above-given figures in Congress membership fairly show the future of the spinning franchise. The self-spinning members come mostly from the No-change section of the Congress. The B class members are mainly from the Swaraj Party. Not a single Swarajist is a self-spinner. Out of the five members from this Nagar who hold seats on the A.I.C.C., only one is a self-spinner; one has regularly paid his quota of purchased yarn; two are defaulters and one has even failed to pay his quota for March and is no longer a member of the Congress. Some of those who hold seats on the P.C.C. are also found to be in defaulters, list and some of them hold responsible positions in the P.C.C. This will show how far the franchise is workable. The No-change section, which has faith in spinning and khaddar, is gradually weakening and is, at

present, limited to individuals. The Swarajists of Nagpur are anxious to throw off the franchise and so is the Centrist or the Independent party which at present holds the P.C.C.

A ray of hope: Generally, people (common people) look with love and respect at those who spin regularly and who have sacrificed their careers for the Congress work.

Some of the causes of the slack work:

(a) Want of organization in the workers who have faith in the franchise.

(b) Want of sympathy in big Congress leaders for the franchise and infirmness of the originator of the franchise to maintain it against all odds. Even the workers in the No-change Party have come to believe that the franchise is going to be repealed at the next session of the Congress and this has taken away all the enthusiasm in them for any patient and effective work.

Anti-propaganda: Most of the Congress and public speakers lay greater stress on other matters and point out the weak points about the franchise and scrupulously avoid saying anything in its favour. And this cannot be counteracted for fear of creating controversy which is sure to lead to unhealthy atmosphere and in which no support can be expected from Mahatma Gandhi.

I note the gentle rebuke administered to me for my “infirmness to maintain it (the spinning franchise) against all odds”. But let me tell the authors of the report that I will maintain it against all odds for myself. But, if I have a spark of the democratic spirit in me, I cannot maintain it for the Congress. That must be left to the Congress members. The responsibility must be joint and several. Why should those who believe in the franchise, i.e., in hand-spinning, for the nation, not maintain it all the more when others are lukewarm? And supposing that the Congress next year alters the franchise, what will the believers do? Will they leave off spinning? Or are they going to spin for themselves and vicariously for others also?

The authors of the report are right when they say that I would lend no support to controversy that is “sure to lead to unhealthy atmosphere”. But if anyone is lukewarm, the way to counteract the lukewarmness is not to talk about or against it but to go one’s way and organize what one believes in. Who can prevent those who believe in spinning from organizing it? Let me inform the authors of the report that there have sprung up in the country silent workers who are spreading the message of the wheel effectively and unostentatiously.

There are still two more documents for me to refer to among the

batch that was handed to me at Nagpur. The third is the report on Tilak Vidyalaya. This institution started with 1,000 students and over 40 teachers in 1921. This grand number fell to 150 in 1923-24. In July 1924, it was reduced to 55. Now it is 45 with 8 teachers. Spinning had been dropped. It has now been re-introduced. Carpentry, book-binding, tailoring, etc. are taught in this institution. The total monthly expenses are Rs. 355. The income is Rs. 180, including fees. They had a windfall in the shape of a legacy of Rs. 5,000 from the estate of the late Hari Shanker Vyas of Betul.

The Vidyalaya is said to give religious instruction and physical training.

They need Rs. 1,000 as capital for their technical department and Rs. 10,000 to enable them to run the school for six years.

The story of the fate of this Vidyalaya is about the story of almost every other national school in the country. Disheartening as the story may appear in the reading, there is no occasion to lose heart. If the teachers are determined, competent and self-sacrificing, they can make their small institutions effective and useful from the national standpoint. Numbers are valueless if they do not satisfy the required test, whatever it may be. If the teachers of the Nagpur Tilak Vidyalaya have grit in them and can satisfy the Congress test, I do not think they will have difficulty in finding financial support. I know of no institution that has died for want of financial backing. I know many that have died for want of the requisite quality among the teachers.

I have reserved the most hopeful document to the last. It is a list of those who spun yarn for presentation to me apart from their quota for membership. The list has 41 names of which two are institutions. Therefore, there were more than 41 individual spinners. I find in the list Maharashtrians and Marwaris. I find also four Parsis, one Muslim and four ladies. The list gives the yards and the weight and the counts spun against every name. The length spun is 753,974 yards. The counts range from 96 to 6. I have not yet examined the yarn. But if all of it is weavable, it is a quantity to be proud of. And if all these members have an independent living faith in hand-spinning, I should not despair of success within a reasonable distance of time.

Young India, 7-5-1925

148. MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE

There is no use of glorifying me. If you really wish to please me, follow my advice.

I beg all people, ladies and gentlemen, to buy khaddar as much as your purse can permit.

A few coppers may not mean much to you, but they mean everything to those poor villagers.

M. K. GANDHI

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 1-5-1925

149. INTERVIEW TO “THE STATESMAN”

CALCUTTA,

May 1, 1925

In a room practically devoid of furniture, on the floor of which were spread lengths of carpet, Mr. Gandhi, clad only in loin-cloth, sat cross-legged and, after a greeting, asked to be excused while his spinning-wheel was adjusted. He then expressed his readiness to converse, and proceeded to do so, spinning rapidly and skilfully the while.

Seldom taking his eyes from his work, he answered questions without the slightest hesitation, although his voice, soft and musical, was sometimes almost inaudible through the gentle whirr of the charkha. At the outset he smilingly acquiesced in a suggestion that the charkha was the machine on which he pinned his political faith.

Mr. Gandhi was first invited to express an opinion regarding the attitude of Europeans in the present political situation and the difficulty which many people experienced in defining a clear-cut policy from the maze of political panaceas enunciated from time to time.

He replied that there must be some organization to guide political thought and the National Congress ought to represent the national feeling. There were two sides to the present programme—the internal and the external. The object of the former was to achieve unity among all races, “Hindu-Muslim unity” being a short term to cover all classes—the removal of untouchability by the Hindus, the spinning-wheel and khaddar.

On the external side, there was the activity in the Council represented by the Swaraj Party, which was an integral part of the National Congress. That was the whole of the national programme.

Asked to express his opinion on the general political situation in India, Mahatma Gandhi said :

I am certainly not a pessimist, but I do not see much sign of hope. I shall begin to hope when we meet with demonstrable success in our internal programme. . . . meaning thereby the unity of all races in India, the removal of untouchability and the development of spinning and the use of khaddar.

As a declared “friend of the British”, Mr. Gandhi regretted that he was unable to see a change of heart on their part.

Europeans may well co-operate on the internal as well as on the external side, and I invite them, as I have always invited them, to examine the programme in both its aspects. As regards the external side, if they are satisfied that we mean what we say, that we have absolutely no desire, even if we could, to drive out the English, or to end the British connection they should make common cause with us.

Touching on the question of non-co-operation, Mr. Gandhi said :

The programme of non-co-operation, so far as the nation is concerned, is suspended, but so far as I am personally concerned, it is not suspended, although the individual suspension had little meaning in it today. I never was a Council-goer, but I suppose at the present moment with me it is a virtue of necessity, because my late imprisonment debars my entry into the Councils. I had long suspended my practice, but the Society of the Inner Temple has removed the last vestige of temptation from me.¹

What, therefore, remains of non-co-operation in me is, as Mr. Das² would put it, a matter of “mental attitude”. But it is an attitude that I personally prize because, claiming as I do, to be a friend of the British, I want to tell them that I see no trace yet of any real change of

¹ By striking his name off the rolls; *vide* Appendix “Inner Temple Order”, 21-12-1922.

² Chitta Ranjan Das (1870-1925); eminent lawyer and Congress leader; orator and author; President, Indian National Congress, 1922; founded the Swaraj Party in 1923

heart.

I am a born co-operator, but non-co-operation with me became a necessity; but I am waiting for the opportunity when I can declare that I will again become a hearty co-operator.

Referring to the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity, Mr. Gandhi said :

My travels have shown me that both communities are filled with mutual distrust and fear, but I have not a shadow of doubt that unity is coming in the near future. Each party regards it as a national necessity.

Mr. Gandhi added that there might be a clash before that came about, but whether they escaped that calamity or had to face it, unity was eventually a certainty.

On the subject of Mr. Das's manifesto and his terms on which a settlement might be reached, Mr. Gandhi said :

I prefer to say nothing until I have had a consultation with Mr. Das. But I can say generally that I am bound under the agreement, and even without it, not to embarrass the Swaraj Party or Mr. Das personally in their political activity.

Asked to give his views regarding His Excellency the Viceroy's¹ visit to England, Mr. Gandhi said :

I know nothing of the nature of the negotiations and I do not want to go by the newspapers, especially as I have become, again of necessity, an indifferent reader of newspapers and bazaar talk had never interested me. I do not know what Lord Reading's mission is, I do not know the implications in Lord Birkenhead's² speech, much less do I know what is going on behind the curtain.

The Statesman, 2-5-1925

¹ Lord Reading (1860-1935); Chief Justice of England, 1913-21; Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1921-26; Foreign Secretary, 1931

² Secretary of State for India, 1924-28

150. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS

CALCUTTA,
May 1, 1925

Mahatma Gandhi was spinning when a representative of the Associated Press called on him this afternoon. Referring to the Das-Birkenhead discussions, Mahatmaji refused to make any statement until he had seen Mr. Das personally. He did not want to embarrass his position by any statement at present :

I have come to Bengal not to hinder, but to help Mr. Das, as far as it lies in my power.

As regards the object of his extended visit to Bengal, Mr. Gandhi said he had come here to study the possibility of Bengal so far as khadi is concerned, to study the untouchability problem and to know the Hindu-Muslim relations here. He had been for a long time under a promise to visit certain places in Bengal. As soon as he finished his Southern India tour he took the first opportunity of coming to Bengal. Mahatmaji said that he was feeling well and he expressed confidence that he would be able to fulfil his Bengal programme.

Asked by the representative what attitude he would take if more power was given to the transferred department and the probable date of Dominion Status was announced, Mr. Gandhi smilingly replied :

Why should I accept a mere supposition when I know that I can see Mr. Das tomorrow and discuss with him?

The Hindu, 2-5-1925

151. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CALCUTTA¹

May 1, 1925

FRIENDS,

I have spoken sufficiently in Hindusthani and I hope that a large part of this audience has followed my broken Hindusthani. It is always a matter of deep grief to me that, whenever I go to the South or I come to Bengal, I am obliged in order to be able to make myself understood by my educated countrymen to speak in English. I wish that the people of the South and the people of Bengal would rid themselves of this laziness and make up their minds once for all to

¹ The meeting, held at Mirzapur Park, was attended by about 10,000 persons. Dr. P. C. Ray presided.

add to a knowledge of their own mother tongue a passable knowledge of Hindi or Hindusthani which, and which alone, can become the language of internal commerce in India. Let English be, as it ought to be, language of international diplomacy, the language of intercourse between all the different nations of the world. But English can never usurp the function that specially belongs to Hindi or Hindusthani. You ought to know that nearly twenty crores of the people of India can understand my broken Hindusthani. Let it not be said that ten crores of India want to impose their speech or English speech on the twenty crores of India. I have said in my opening remarks what a deep grief it was to me this morning to enter 148 Russa Road. I know that that house no longer belonged to Deshbandhu Das. I knew that he contemplated making over that beautiful mansion to trustees in order to divest himself of the last vestige of wealth that he possessed in this world. But, man of the world, living still in the world as I am doing, when I actually entered the house with the knowledge that its distinguished owner had voluntarily dispossessed himself of it, I could not help shedding a tear. I felt a wrench within me that the house was no longer Das's, and when I heard that he had not yet been able to repair his broken down constitution, I felt doubly grieved and my grief was still further increased when I received a brief but beautiful and loving message from him, written by him in pencil hand, telling me how it was impossible for him to stand the double strain and why therefore he had gone away to Faridpur in advance. May God grant him health and long life to serve the country which he loves so dearly.

You will not expect me to tell you anything on what is called the political situation. A newspaper reporter told me today about the negotiations that are going on between Lord Birkenhead and Deshbandhu Das. I am totally unaware of any such negotiations. I have no knowledge of any such negotiations whatsoever; but I do know that there is what may be called a political situation in this country today. But that political situation does not interest me sufficiently today. I am an economist of time; I have deliberately given my general power of attorney to the Swaraj Party which is an integral part of the Congress. The Swaraj Party is in charge of the political programme of the Congress and, seeing that I have the fullest faith in the ability of the Swaraj Party to handle the political situation, seeing that I have the

fullest faith in the wisdom of Deshbandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru¹, so far as the Council programme is concerned, it would be impudence on my part to concern myself about it unless they want me to do so and there is absolutely no reason for them to want my interference or to desire my opinion. When they do so you may depend on it that I am always at their service but, what is more, it would be impossible for me to make any effective statement on the political situation unless I have had a consultation with Deshbandhu Das. I have not come to Bengal, I am not travelling throughout the length and breadth of India to embarrass the Swaraj Party or to embarrass Deshbandhu or a single member of that party. I am pledged in the name of God to help that party to the best of my ability. I am pledged not even mentally to interfere with its programme and, if I do not throw myself heart and soul into that programme, it is because of my limitations, it is because I do not see eye to eye with them in their policy. But that does not mean that I must not help them. That does not mean that their policy is inimical to the country. It simply means that there is a difference of opinion as to the weight and the relative importance to be attached to the political programme and the constructive programme. I swear by the constructive programme; the more I examine myself the more I feel that I am more fitted for handling the constructive programme for developing our own power from within than for engaging into diplomatic relations with the matchless diplomats from England. I confess to you that I will be ill at ease in carrying on negotiations with any of those officials unless I feel that we have power from within and I am here to confess to you that we have lost today the power that we thought in 1921 we had in abundance, and therefore I propose to the best of my ability to concentrate solely and exclusively upon the constructive programme. That will be my best contribution to the country and to the Swaraj Party, and I promise to you that if you, the young men and the young women of Bengal, will help me—no matter to what political party you may belong—if you will kindly help me in making this constructive programme a living, a swinging success, you will find that our fetters automatically drop. You will find that those

¹ 1861-1931; lawyer and Swarajist leader; President, Indian National Congress, Amritsar, 1919, and Calcutta, 1928

whom we consider unjustly incarcerated and kept under detention, that those who are today pining away in the Jail at Mandalay, you will find that, if you can make the constructive programme a success, they will be discharged without your asking for their discharge. What is that constructive programme by which I swear? Let me take you through these three items as rapidly as I can. Hindu-Muslim unity, meaning unity between all the races that inhabit the fair land of ours. Is that programme unattainable by us? Is that programme undesirable? But I have admitted my incompetence. I have admitted that I have been found wanting as a physician prescribing a cure for this malady. I do not find that either the Hindus or the Mussalmans are ready to accept my cure and therefore I simply nowadays confine myself to a passing mention of this problem and content myself by saying that some day or other we Hindus and Mussalmans will have to come together if we want the deliverance of our country; and, if it is to be our lot that before we can come together, we must shed one another's blood then I say the sooner we do so the better it is for us. If we propose to break one another's head, let us do so in a manly way, let us not then shed crocodile tears, let us not ask for sympathy from any quarter if you do not propose to give any quarter. That is what I have to say about the Hindu-Muslim unity. Is it a long-drawn-out programme or an impossible programme that we Hindus should rid ourselves of the curse of untouchability? So long as untouchability disfigures Hinduism, so long do I hold the attainment of swaraj to be an utter impossibility. Supposing it would be a gift descending from Downing Street to India that gift would be a curse upon this holy land. If we do not get rid of this curse, it would be a curse added to curse, swaraj without the freedom of the untouchables. But what are the implications of this removal of untouchability? Let the *sanatani* Hindus understand from me who claims to be a *sanatani* Hindu. I do not ask you to inter-dine with anybody; I do not ask you to exchange your daughters with the untouchables or with anybody, but I do ask you to remove this curse so that you may not put him beyond the pale of service. For me the removal of untouchability is the acceptance of the privilege of service to people whom we have kept under bondage in the sacred name of religion. Listen to me the *sanatani* Hindus of Calcutta, that this Hinduism is in the balance and it will go down to

perdition if you do not get rid of this untouchability. So much and so far for untouchability. Then take the third item in your programme, the spinning-wheel and the khaddar. What do I ask of you? The millionaires of Calcutta, the barristers, the M.L.A.s and the M.L.C.s of Calcutta, what do I ask of you? The women of Calcutta, what do I ask of you? Half an hour, in the name of God, for the sake of perishing and famishing humanity of India. Is it too much for you to give half an hour of your time to doing that—to spinning for the sake of these poor people so that you can cheapen khaddar, so that I can tell the villagers of Bengal that the daughters and sons of millionaires are spinning? Why will you not spin? Do you know that the villagers have lost faith in us, in themselves and in God Himself? Because they find that we often go to them, sometimes to collect money, sometimes with one programme and sometimes with another programme. They do not know where we want to lead them and so they are distrustful of us and when we take in our simplicity, the spinning-wheel to their homes, they smile at us the smile of no-confidence. They do not say: “We do not understand this instrument of yours. We do not know what meaning lies behind the spinning-wheel.” So when the villagers have forgotten the use and the beauty, the life-giving beauty of the spinning-wheel, they do not take to it kindly. If you want them to take to this home industry of yours kindly, then it is necessary for you to spin the wheel yourself. And remember again that, unless you take to spinning yourselves, you will not be able to make necessary improvements on it, you will not be able to re-establish this almost lost industry of India. No agricultural country in the world has yet lived which has not added a supplementary industry to it. And I defy any Indian, no matter how distinguished an economist he may be to show me an effective substitute for the millions of India who are scattered all over the land which is 1900 miles long and 1500 miles broad and scattered in 700 thousand villages most of which are outside even the railway tracts. I defy anybody to propose or to show any effective substitute. But till such an effective substitute is placed before you, do not idle away your time, do not grudge the poor, down-trodden humanity of India, the half an hour that I ask of you, the Congress asks of you. And then, if you take to the spinning-wheel, what about its product? Why is this spinning-wheel a necessity? Because we want

clothes made not in Manchester or Japan, made not in Ahmedabad or Bombay which did not stand Bengal in good stead at the time of Partition, but we want beautiful khaddar manufactured in our own village homes which always stands us in good stead. We want the villagers to be smiling with plenty; we want the people of Khulna, when again they have got famine, to know that they are not to live on doles of rice thrown at their face by a Dr. Ray¹, but I want the people of Khulna to feel that they do not need the assistance of even a Ray, because they have got the spinning-wheel to fall back upon. Let them not become beggars when they have got ready in their hands an instrument of living, an instrument which shall be an insurance, a permanent insurance against famine. That is why I ask you to take up the spinning-wheel and khaddar and that is what has brought me to Bengal.

I do not want to interfere with the politics of Bengal or India today. There are men who are able enough to handle it, but I regard myself as a charkha expert; I regard myself as a khaddar expert. I believe that I have something to say to every man and woman in connection with this message of khaddar, and therefore, while I have yet life left in me, whilst Bengal is yet ready and willing to listen to me, I want to redeliver my message to Bengal with all the power at my command and say if you want freedom for your country do anything else you like but at least lay a firm and stable foundation on which you will be able to erect a proper and firm structure, and remember the words of this old man speaking to you again and again in Calcutta and will speak again and again throughout his tour in Bengal that, if you do not lay this sure and certain foundation, remember that any reform that you get, any liberty or freedom that you think you possess will be nothing but a house built of cards which is going to topple down under the first gust of wind. Therefore, I pray of you to work up this message, the living message of khaddar and spinning-wheel. Hindus, remove this curse of untouchability. Hindus and Mussalmans, if it is at all possible for you without shedding a drop of blood, do come together and embrace each other as brothers in arms.

I thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 2-5-1925

¹ Prafulla Chandra Ray (1861-1944); professor of Chemistry at Presidency college, Calcutta; author of *History of Hindu Chemistry*; educationist and patriot

152. SPEECH AT INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION, FARIDPUR

May 2, 1925

In declaring the exhibition open Mr. Gandhi said, as a son of a cultivator, he claimed to know something of agriculture. He had considerable experience of the peasantry of India and of South Africa where he had spent more than 20 years of his life. He had seen working in Agricultural Departments in these two countries and he could say that this department was anxious to help even ordinary poor peasants. Unfortunately, nothing was practically done in this direction. It had been said, though he did not agree, that peasantry of India were lethargic. In fact he admitted they remained idle for about 6 months in the year. This was not because they were lethargic but because they had no work to do. They could very well take to spinning during these months and thus ameliorate their condition. He was prepared to proclaim with all emphasis that he could command that the salvation of India lay in the spinning-wheel. There could be no difference of opinion about it.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3-5-1925

153. SPEECH AT ALL-BENGAL HINDU SAMMELAN¹

FARIDPUR,
May 2, 1925

I am requested by President to address you on three things. Firstly, Hindu-Muslim unity is a vital question on which I have bestowed a good deal of thought. I pray to God that He might give us the peace we so much desire. Now the Hindus and Muslims are at loggerheads and fighting bitterly and there is no unity of heart; I tried my best to bring about the unity and I am not ashamed to own my failure. I only wished they fought like men, but of course not go to court and then only know that one community cannot exterminate the other nor the whole of India can be converted either into Hinduism or Mahommedanism. Thus the much-desired-for unity will come automatically.

¹ P. C. Ray, who presided over the second session of the Sammelan requested Gandhiji to speak "on the burning questions of the day". Gandhiji spoke in Hindi.

As regards untouchability, my views are well-known and I have spoken from a thousand platforms. I believe that so long as there is untouchability among Hindus no good can come to them. It is a great sin and has no religious sanction behind it. How can Hindus be great when they condemn millions of their brothers as untouchables? I therefore appeal to everybody present here to remove the blot of untouchability and induce others to do so. The removal of untouchability does never mean destruction of *varnashrama*¹ dharma which is a very beautiful and beneficial thing and never a bad one. But I know, in the name of *varnashrama* dharma, many wrongs are being done which must be removed. This does not mean that we are to inter-dine and inter-marry amongst each other. You must never forget the distinction between untouchability and *varnashrama* dharma.

As regards charkha and khaddar, charkha is the life of Hindustan and I have compared it to the *Sudarshan Chakra* and *Kamdhenu*. The destruction of charkha meant the beginning of poverty in India, and to drive [away] poverty we must reinstate charkha in its proper place. Charkha should be given the first place in Indian homes. Let the wheel be plied in every home every day for half an hour in the name of God for the salvation of his or her starving brothers. The educated people should first adopt it so that others may follow. When, in the morning, I opened the industrial exhibition, I noticed many defects in construction of the spinning [-wheel] which can only be remedied by the educated applying their brains to it. You know the improved wheels, I mean the mills of Manchester, they spelt disaster for the Indian masses and it is my earnest desire that no home should be without charkha. I appeal to you to wear khaddar. Four years ago when I visited Dacca, my heart yearned for the Dacca muslin which is now made of foreign yarn coming from England or Japan. Wear such khaddar as your place produces. The other day a young Bengali girl named Aparna Devi, who could spin very fine counts of thread, came to see me and I rather considered myself fortunate enough to see her. I appeal to Bengali ladies to exert themselves so that they might clothe their husbands and sons with fine khadi.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3-5-1925

¹ The division of society into four *varnas* or castes and of the individual life into four ashramas or stages

154. SPEECH AT BENGAL PROVINCIAL YOUNG MEN'S

CONFERENCE

May 2, 1925

The President¹ requested Mahatmaji to speak a few words of advice to the young hopefuls of the country assembled there. Mahatmaji spoke for a pretty long time and, in the course of his speech, referred to the part played by the youth in the regeneration of the country. He was tired of speeches, he said, but wanted to have a heart-to-heart talk with them. Young men should banish all evil thoughts from their mind and the motto of their life should be service, or, in one word, the indispensable condition of life should be *brahmacharya* and the message of *brahmacharya* was not confined to the Hindu religion only—it was, in fact, the corner-stone of all religions in all ages. He then cited the instance of a certain brilliant young man who had been spoilt for ever for want of *brahmacharya*, and wanted an assurance from every one of them that they would lead a pure life.

He then referred to Non-co-operation movement as nothing but a movement for self-purification and advised them to surrender themselves completely to God's will. He thereupon passed on to what he described as his eternal message, viz., khaddar, removal of untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity. He emphasized the capacity of the charkha as a means of concentration and self-purification—two things essentially necessary at the present moment. He blessed the young men and prayed to God so that they might act up to the noble traditions of India.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 8-5-1925

¹ Jitendra Mohan Roy

155. TALK WITH UNTOUCHABLES

FARIDPUR,

[On or before May 3, 1925]¹

Gandhiji first sought information about “untouchability” in Bengal, and he was told about the different sections—*Shahas*, *Kaivartas*, *Namasudras* and *Mehtars*—and the canker of superiority that had entered even amongst these sub-sections. Then he asked about the disabilities they had to undergo. The gentleman admitted that there was no untouchability of the kind we find in West or South India, but the feeling of superiority was there. A *Namasudra* could enter the house of a “superior Hindu”, but could not enter the room where water was kept; no Hindu would accept water at his hands; he would not be allowed to enter a temple, he could not get the services of a barber or a washerman. “How are we to remedy these disabilities, Sir?” he asked.

That’s a nice question that you have asked. Now there are ways and ways. There are some who would use violence against the offending party and wrest reform from them. I met such friends in Poona. They wanted to present an address to me. It was not in Marathi or Hindi but in English, as the function was arranged by an English-knowing lad who claimed to be their leader. In the address they said that, if the higher classes did not mend their behaviour towards them, they would use physical force and teach them a lesson. That is one way. I told them that that was the surest way to lose all sympathy of sober men and to defeat the ends they wanted to achieve, as also to frustrate the efforts of the reformers to help them. There is another class of people—I met them in the South—who threaten to leave Hinduism and take to Christianity or Islam. I said to them that, if they had any religion in them, it was only now that it was on trial and, if they renounced it because they were ill-treated, their religion was not worth a moment’s purchase. I was excommunicated, and I think wrongly, when I went to England, but for that reason, should I have renounced my religion? The third way and the only pure way, to my mind, is that of self-purification, i.e., being free from all the charges

¹ Gandhiji was at Faridpur from May 1 to May 4. May 4 being a Monday was Gandhiji’s silence day. This talk, therefore, must have been given on or before May 3.

that are levelled against you.

I understand it all. Violence and the kind of threats you have described are no good, echoed the *vakil* friend.

Yes. Self-purification is the way. I wonder if you eat carrion?

No,—very few amongst us use meat at all. The *Vaishnavas* amongst us do not eat meat at all. We do eat fish though.

Well then; you have to do less than others by way of self-purification. What little there may be of the idea of superiority among yourselves you must get rid of. Try to rid yourselves of all that the orthodox Hindus have, perhaps with some reason, to say against you and you will overcome their prejudices. Not that they have no vices. But it is not yours to point the finger of scorn at them. It may be a long process, but it is a sure one. I know you can bring them to their knees by drastic measures at times. In cities like Calcutta, for instance, if the sweepers go on strike saying they would not resume work unless their disabilities are remedied, I am sure they would succeed, but the minds of the opposite party will not be changed. Their hatred will increase all the more. The only way is to be above reproach yourselves and leave the rest to reformers. As you know, I am fighting the evil with all the energy at my command. It is an entirely religious question for me.

You want us to trust the reformers. We trust you, but how may we trust the others? They talk of untouchability today because we are useful pawns in their political game, but the moment their political ends are achieved, they will leave us in the lurch. We do not think, in their heart of hearts they believe that it is a question of purifying themselves, nor that swaraj is useless without the removal of untouchability. Dr. Ray is there who, I admit, is fighting hard for us. His feeling for us is intense. But I am not sure of others. There is Deshbandhu Das, of course, but he too is hardly doing all that he could.

But I assure you he has nothing against you, and he wants the reform as much as I do. Do you know why he cannot interest himself in it as much as I?

I know, Sir. He has many things to do and he has hardly any time.

Yes, that is it. And there is another thing. He feels that no work can be done unless by swift political action we obtain our freedom. That is the only difference between him and me. But he is absolutely in earnest about the question, and he wants the removal of the curse as soon as you and I.

I agree. But, then, would you want us simply to rely on the reformers? You know it has so happened that whenever we have shown fight they have come down, and whenever we have sat supine they have looked on with unconcern, . . .¹ says we should refuse to have anything to do with them. Let us also refuse all social intercourse, let us refuse water from them as they refuse water from us.

He is hysterical, you know. Don't do anything of the kind. You will antagonize the caste Hindus all the more. You may not feel any love for them. But I do think you can rid yourselves of all hatred against them. Maintain a dignified attitude. Dignified attitude and not vindictiveness.

How can we join the national programme in these circumstances?

Why not? What is the national programme today? Removal of untouchability by the Hindus, khaddar and Hindu-Muslim unity. I think all the three items are calculated to help a solution of your difficulties. Even Hindu-Muslim unity means more or less a solution of the untouchability question too, and khaddar can unite us as nothing else can. Yes, if people come to you with schemes of swaraj in which there is no provision for you, and to which they want your assent just for the political exigencies of the hour, or if missionaries come to you with all sorts of schemes in which special rights are asked for you, you will be on your guard. You will brush both aside.

I have come across such missionaries and you are quite right. Our disabilities are various and we are handicapped almost everywhere.

They will end. There are many workers in the field. Many high-class Hindus are devoting all their time and energy to the question. And you have to trust to the good sense inherent in human nature too. When you have purified yourselves, your opponents are bound to awaken to a sense of their duty. I have passed through the same disabilities as you in South Africa and I want you to do as I did. You know what I did? The European barbers refused to serve me. I got a pair of clippers one fine morning and began to crop my hair standing before a looking-glass. A European friend peeped in just then and found me in the midst of the operation. "What are you doing?" he said. "If European barbers won't serve me," I said, "I will serve myself." Then he offered his services, with the result that my hair was cropped in a most amusing fashion—patches of hair here, patches there and bare spaces in between!² With regard to sending my children

¹ The name is omitted in the source.

² *Vide An Autobiography*, Pt. III, Ch. IX.

to school there was the same difficulty. They said, an exception could be made in favour of my children who would be allowed to go to an English school. I said, "No, unless all Indian children with clean habits were free to go to English schools, I won't send mine." And I kept my children without school education, even incurring the charge that I was neglecting their education. Oh! There were any number of disabilities. I can feel as one of you because I have passed through exactly the same difficulties. I boarded a bus once and took my seat. For refusing to leave the seat that was given to me I was kicked and brutally mauled about. The other passengers were so alarmed at this man's behaviour that they remonstrated with him, and out of sheer shame he left me.¹ But you know that I lived down these prejudices in course of time, not by retaliation but by suffering. I verily believe that the treatment of our countrymen overseas is a just nemesis for the ill-treatment you receive in India. That is what I mean when I repeat everywhere that we have made ourselves pariahs in the Empire and that Hinduism will be blotted out of the face of the earth if we don't take care betimes and get rid of the curse.

I know, Sir, you have said that often, and one does feel like that. But untouchability has persisted so long. How will it be destroyed now?

Why? Was there not cannibalism in some parts, and the custom of Suttee, in India? Do you think Hinduism could have endured if those things had also persisted? They had to disappear. Thinking minds revolted against these horrors, and now that the consciousness of the horror of untouchability has been aroused everywhere, it is bound to go. The consciousness is growing upon every one of us that Hinduism is on its trial and if it is not to be found wanting, it must rid itself of the curse.

Then, you think we must join the Congress?

You should and help as much as you can in the national programme. Do the national work, take to the charkha and wear khaddar, and purify yourselves. Above all realize the inherent effectiveness and value of character. It is your character that will tell in the end.

"We are very thankful indeed and shall try to carry out the suggestions. Please

¹ *Vide An Autobiography*, Pt. II, Ch. IX.

pardon us for having troubled you at this late hour,” said he, as they were taking their leave. Gandhi very cordially said :

No, it has been a perfect pleasure to me—this talk with you. Had it not been so, I should not have talked at such length with you.

Young India, 14-5-1925

156. REPLY TO ADDRESS¹

[On or before *May 3, 1925*]

I thank you sincerely for the address you have given me, and more for the trouble you have taken to come here.² I sent the message half in jest and had hardly expected that you would respond to it. I am delighted that you have come. I wanted to give you a demonstration in spinning, an object-lesson, and explain to you that it was essential that you take up spinning as a religious duty to bring about the regeneration of the country. Today you see only a thread coming out as I turn the wheel and draw the sliver. But it is my conviction that, with every thread that I draw, I am spinning the destiny of India. The conviction is growing upon me that without the spinning-wheel there is no salvation for this country of ours, and I ask you, as I am turning the wheel, to set apart half an hour each day from your talking, writing or playing and devote it to spinning. The evil of untouchability that has entered Hinduism and is eating into its vitals and killing the spirit of nationalism from within is more infectious than even the plague. It has affected the Parsis, the Christians and the Muslims, too, and in consequence all of us have become untouchables outside India. How can this evil be eradicated? I told the friend who met me that this can be done only by the efforts of the caste Hindus. He then told me frankly that he was afraid we might use the *Antyaj*³ as pawns in the game, that after we had secured swaraj we might leave them to their fate. What would be their lot then, he asked. There was an element of truth in his criticism. We must assure people who think like him that there is no political motive in the movement for the uplift of the

¹ Presented by students who attended the Students' Conference in Faridpur; the first paragraph has been reproduced from *Young India*, 14-5-1925.

² The address was to have been presented in a theatre; Gandhiji, however, sent a message through J. B. Kripalani that he would like to receive the address at his camp where he was busy spinning. So the students went to Gandhiji's camp and presented the address there.

³ Hindu communities traditionally regarded as untouchables

Antyajās, that the motive inspiring it is the religious one of doing one's duty and atoning for one's sins. If we do not pay this debt, we shall be guilty in the eyes of God and shall remain neither Hindus nor human beings.

A young man asked me what would happen to him if he should be excommunicated for working for *Antyajā* uplift. I told him that, if he had some standing in his community, I would be very happy to hear that he was excommunicated. But we are not ready to sacrifice our position in society for such a cause. I visited a place in Kathiawar where thousands of people gave me the impression that they did not approve of the practice of untouchability. When leaving the place, I asked a friend, who is a very good worker, to visit it. He is a Brahmin, but he takes with him an *Antyajā* child so that it may help him in his work. That child is so clean in his habits that, upon seeing him, you would not notice any difference between him and the cleanest child among you. When I had asked those people to keep both these with them, they had felt happy because they needed such persons to serve the *Antyajās* of that town. But when the worker and the *Antyajā* child went there, the person who had invited them there got frightened and did not receive them. That was a moment of trial for him and he was found wanting. He failed and betrayed his Hinduism. I expect courage from you at such a time.

Moreover, eradication of untouchability does not mean destruction of the *varnashrama* system. Surely, you ought to understand this thing. It is not necessary for me, in order that I may serve humanity, to eat in the company of any person or to give my daughter in marriage to him. Neither Andrews¹ nor Shaukat Ali² eats with me, and yet I look upon them as more than my blood-brothers. I cannot eat with Shaukat Ali because he is a non-vegetarian. If I ate any type of food which Shaukat Ali regarded as forbidden, he too would not eat in my company, but that would make no difference at all to his love for me. Restrictions about eating and marrying do not come in the way of our serving others. Even if God should forbid me to serve a living being, I would disobey Him. But let me clarify a point further. I do not desire that you should eat or enter into marriage ties with

¹ Charles Freer Andrews (1871-1940); English missionary, author, educationist, and a close associate of Gandhiji

² Shaukat Ali (1873-1938); Muslim leader who, along with his brother Mahomed Ali, took a leading part in the Khilafat movement

Antyajas or the *Namasudras*¹ but I certainly want you to maintain the relations with them which you do with other Sudras. I have heard that Hindus do not accept water from a *Namasudra*. If you can drink water offered by a Sudra, it is wrong not to accept it from a *Namasudra*. I heard that the *Namasudras* do not get the services of barbers and washermen. This is a crime against humanity. It is not a very noble sentiment which forbids you to serve a living creature.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 10-5-1925

157. COW-PROTECTION

We have taken one step forward. The Bombay meeting² in Madhav Baug has approved by a majority the constitution of a body for cow-protection, which has been published in *Navajivan*. Four persons had raised their hands against the constitution. One of them wanted to oppose a particular clause in it. I could not permit him to do so. All I could do was to advise him that, if he objected to the principle underlying it, he should oppose the entire constitution, but that, if he had no objection to the principle, he should accept the constitution. It is my humble view that, at such meetings, we cannot go ahead with the work in any other way. I wish that everyone will understand the reason behind my ruling. The meeting was held in order to start a new body. It could have been inaugurated even without a public meeting, since the constitution was drawn up by a committee appointed by the Cow-protection conference³ and it could have after adopting the constitution, proceeded immediately to set up the proposed All-India Cow-protection Society. Instead, to invest the event with greater importance a public meeting was convened for adopting the constitution. In such a meeting no one can oppose particular clauses. But anyone who does not approve of the proposed body or constitution has a right to oppose either, and as chairman I conceded that right to the person who had objected.

I wish to draw the reader's attention to my speech⁴ (published elsewhere in this issue). To me the cause of cow-protection is dearer

¹ A community in Bengal

² Held on April 28, 1925, with Gandhiji in the chair

³ Held at Belgaum on December 28, 1924 under Gandhiji's chairmanship

⁴ Vide "Speech at All-India Cow-Protection Conference, Bombay", 28-4-1925.

than anything else. It is my view that we have not given careful thought to this important problem of cow-protection. How can we stop the *adharma*¹ that is going on in the name of cow-protection? My reason does not function when I start thinking about it. Religious-minded Hindus donate lakhs of rupees for cow-protection, but their aim is not served. In a country in which protection of the cow is a sacred duty, the cow is least cared for! Neither cow-slaughter nor cruelty to the cow is stopped. Those who sell cows for being slaughtered are Hindus, as also those who inflict cruelty on them. Not a single measure out of the many adopted for cow-protection succeeds, or promises to succeed. Why is it so?

This all-India body must think about the problem. But whose responsibility will it be to think? Should the president or the secretary think or the committee as a whole deliberate about it? Thinking about the problem presupposes study. What is the condition of the cow and of the bullock? What is their number? Are they really a burden to the country, or are they put to service? What are the reasons for their being slaughtered? Why are they weak? These and many other related questions will have to be considered.

Who should spare the time? Is there anyone who takes so much interest? Unless people take interest, how can they accomplish anything? I explained, therefore, that cow-protection required *tapas-charya*² restraint, study and so on. Hence I shall expect not only money from those who wish to serve the cause of cow-protection, but also thought and study.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 3-5-1925

158. MY NOTES

KATHIAWAR'S CONTRIBUTION

Shri Manilal Kothari has been touring Kathiawar to complete the collection of Rs. 20,000, which is its quota. According to a telegram from him, further contributions have been collected as under

¹ Opposite of dharma

² Voluntary suffering as moral discipline

Other contributions from Manavadar	Rs. 1,100
Shri Jivanlal, Chorwad	„ 2,500
Other contributions from Chorwad	„ 200
Veraval	„ 2,500
Total	Rs. 6,300

I hope that Kathiawar will contribute its share within the allotted time. I am looking forward to receiving the contribution of Kathiawaris residing in Bombay. I wish Kathiawaris to remember that this sum of Rs. 20,000 will be spent entirely in Kathiawar itself.

“BONDAGE OF CASTE”

I have accepted caste as conducive to self-control, but in this age we find it to be a bondage and not a means of self-control. Self-control gives dignity to a person and makes him free. Bondage, being like shackles, brings disgrace. Caste as understood at present is neither wholesome nor sanctioned by Shastras. The latter do not know the word “caste” in the sense in which it is used nowadays. They recognize *varnas*, but there are only four of them. Even among the innumerable communities there are sub-castes and we find a growing tendency to prohibit marriage between members of different sub-castes. These are signs not of progress but of degradation. These reflections have been prompted by the following letter :¹

If true, this report is saddening. Why should there be fighting for the positions of president and secretary? Why should there be differences of *Surati*, *Agri*, *Damani*,² etc.? When I attended a meeting of the Lad Yuvak Mandal³ I came away with a very good impression. Presidentship offers an opportunity for service, it cannot be used for acquiring honour. A secretary is the servant of the society. Even if there is a contest for that office, it should be a friendly one. I hope that the two parties will come together and end the conflict described above. Why should not all *Vaniks*⁴ combine and form one single caste? Nowhere have I seen it laid down as dharma that members of

¹ Not translated here. The correspondent had stated that in his *Lad* community there were many sub-castes and differences of opinion became so grave, at times, as to lead to fighting.

² Names of the sub-castes of the Lad community

³ Lad Youth Association

⁴ Business communities

Vaisya communities may not marry among themselves. I respect to some extent the division into sub-castes as a matter of social convenience. But when I come across instances like the one described above, I feel that we should actively shake ourselves free of these bonds and persuade others to do so.

BOTH "IDOLATER" AND "ICONOCLAST"

I once said in a speech that I was both an idol-worshipper and an idol-breaker. If the speech in which I said this had been reported in full, my meaning would have been easy to understand. I have not seen its report. A correspondent quotes my remarks and writes :¹

Here the word idol has different meanings. If we take it to mean a physical object of worship, I am an idol-breaker. If we take the word to mean an object which helps us in contemplation, or a means of showing honour or of cherishing a memory, I am an idol-worshipper. An idol does not mean merely a physical object. Those who blindly worship even a book are idol-worshippers or idolaters. To believe in everything which is supposed to be stated in the Vedas, without using our reason, without discriminating between the essential and inessential and trying to determine the meaning of the text—this is idol-worship and should be rejected—it is, in other words, idolatry. Tulsidas² who worshipped an idol in the presence of which he felt a thrill running through his limbs and became absorbed in the vision of God, of Rama, was pure in his idol-worship and, therefore, deserves to be revered and his example is worthy of being followed.

Superstition in every form is idolatry, that is, idol-worship which deserves to be condemned. Those who believe in any tradition as sacred are idol-worshippers of this kind, and in respect of them I am an idol-breaker. No one can convince me, with the help of quotations from Shastras, that untruth is truth, cruelty is kindness and hatred is love. In that sense I am an idol-breaker. I am an idol-breaker because no one can, by quoting ambiguous or interpolated stanzas or by holding out threats, persuade me to shun or slight the *Antyajās* or to regard them as untouchables. I can see the wrong even of my parents as wrong and, therefore, despite my great love for my country, I can

¹ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had requested Gandhiji to explain his meaning for the benefit of persons like himself who had lost faith in idol-worship and yet respected it in some of its forms.

² A sixteenth-century Hindi poet, author of the *Ramacharitamansa* (*Ramayana*)

see and publicly expose its evils, and hence, I am an idol-breaker. But generally I feel a very high and quite spontaneous veneration for the Vedas and other holy books; I can see God even in a piece of stone and, therefore, I instinctively bow my head before statues of saints; for this reason I regard myself as an idol-worshipper.

Thus, it is the emotions in the heart which are good or bad rather than outward actions. Every action is to be judged by the emotion of the person acting. Touching one's mother with an impure emotion will send the son to hell, but touching the same mother with a pure emotion will take him to heaven. A wound inflicted with a knife through hatred will take the victim's life; a cut made with the same knife through love will save life. A cat's teeth which protect her kittens are fatal to a mouse.

There is nothing obnoxious in idol-worship as such; it is worship without understanding which is so.

DUTY OF PETLAD SATYAGRAHIS

When the struggle of Petlad satyagrahis ended happily, I was on tour and did not know about the result. Now I hear that some of the satyagrahis repudiate the resolution which was adopted by the leaders. If this is so, it is a matter for regret. The most important virtue of a soldier is that he should accept everything which the leader does even if his action is wrong, so long as he is acting in good faith. They have a right to remove him or repudiate his action only when it can be positively asserted that he has proved himself a traitor. If this rule is not observed, the nation's capacity for collective action will not last. Not only that, but the nation will cease to be a nation. In this particular incident, however, I see no error on the part of the leaders. The satyagraha was started not for the sake of monetary concessions but for a principle. Satyagraha can never be merely for monetary gain. There is always some principle behind it and, therefore, it is of universal benefit. I have before me the resolution concerning the Petlad satyagraha. From it I see that, according to the people's belief, the Revision Settlement was not lawful and their demand was merely that the Government of the Gaekwar should appoint a committee of officials to examine it. The people scored a victory the moment such a committee was appointed. That victory was even celebrated. There is

nothing to be said from the point of view of principle against the final decision which has now been announced. The Dewan Saheb was courteous enough to invite the representatives, and he announced his decision after apprising them of it. One does not see much monetary gain in that decision. It would have been more welcome if it had contained such benefit. But the principle having been safeguarded, one cannot continue to fight merely for monetary gain. The satyagraha resolution contained no demand for monetary benefit. The demand was only for justice. Hence the satyagrahis have no ground for repudiating the resolution adopted by their representatives. I hope, therefore, that those who have taken the wrong step of rejecting that resolution will realize their error and correct it.

A TEACHER'S SPINNING

Shri Zaverbhai, a teacher at the Rashtriya Kumar Mandir of Varad writes :¹

I congratulate Shri Zaverbhai on showing so much enthusiasm. Let other teachers follow his example. I feel like making one suggestion to Shri Zaverbhai. Three lakh yards of yarn weighing 18 seers means yarn of six counts. The cotton growing in Bardoli is usually good. Moreover, if the cotton is hand-picked and hand-carded, one can easily spin from it yarn of 20 counts. It may be true that more care is required in spinning yarn of 20 counts and, therefore, relatively more time will be needed to produce a given number of yards of such yarn. It does not matter if more time is required; there will be economy of cotton in spinning 20-count yarn. Moreover, we in Gujarat have to start spinning fine yarn. We can expect those who spin for love and with devotion to take the lead in producing such yarn. We can now find a number of men and women in Gujarat who are enthusiastic spinners like Zaverbhai. I suggest to them that they should spin fine yarn. If they wish to wear coarse khadi, they may certainly buy and wear such khadi and give away the fine yarn spun by them so that it may meet the needs of men and women who love to wear fine khadi. I believe the Khadi Association can easily arrange to give coarse khadi in return for fine yarn which can be woven into khadi. If this is done, the middle-class people who spin fine yarn and

¹ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had stated that he himself had, in the course of four months, picked 7 maunds of cotton, carded it and made slivers from it; that he had spun 18 seers of yarn (measuring 3 lakh yards) and intended to give all his spare time to spinning in the current month.

are content with coarse khadi will help much in the production of fine khadi in Gujarat itself.

AN OLD WOMAN'S TESTIMONIAL

I give an extract from a letter¹ I have received from the khadi centre at Amreli :

Such remarks are made not by one old woman but by many. I have heard many old women say that the spinning-wheel provides them much-needed relief. Many widows have averred that it is their only support. It is the refuge of the down-trodden. There is a friend who, whenever he is angry, seeks out the spinning-wheel and its soothing movement brings peace to his soul. It is but natural that everyone may not have this experience. "As one's faith, so one's experience."

HOW KHADI MAY SPREAD

Nellore is a part of the Tamil-Telugu region. A correspondent from there writes to say :²

Even in parts where agriculture is a profitable occupation, people get enough spare time for spinning. They are able to do plenty of spinning from March to October, that is, for eight months, and earn at the rate of Rs. 5 a month. It is unfortunate that the women who spin wear foreign cloth, but, this will end only when the so-called cultured classes see dignity in wearing khadi, so that our ignorant country folk in the villages, who generally follow the example of city people, will also come to see dignity in cloth made out of hand-spun yarn. In fact, it is not in all regions that the women who spin behave in this way. In some villages which I visited, among the women who did spinning, I did not see any wearing cloth other than what was woven from yarn spun by themselves. What the correspondent has described happens in places where people have more money than they know what to do with.

Another thing worth noting is that where the women who spin take real interest in their work, they themselves attend carefully to the preparation of slivers. We can see from the correspondent's account that they engage a carder to work in their homes and get merely

¹ Not translated here. It stated that on the day of reporting there was a huge crowd to buy slivers at cheap prices. Among them was an old woman of 60 who was especially happy because she could now work and not be dependent on others.

² The letter is not translated here.

carding done by him; they watch the work and give directions so that the carding is done to their satisfaction. Afterwards, they find some time and themselves make the slivers. To have good slivers, it is certainly essential that the cotton should have been properly carded but it is also necessary that the rolling of slivers should be done with equal care. If in making a sliver the fibre is merely rolled into a cylindrical shape anyhow, even well-carded cotton will be wasted.

If cotton is spread out evenly on a hollow board and, with a thin stick placed over it, rolled with one's palm five or six times, the fibres get stretched out properly and form a roll to make a fine sliver. Only the person who spins with such a sliver knows the pleasure that spinning gives. If one or two more turns are given with the palm, the result will be still better. On the contrary, if only one or two turns are given, the sliver so made will not yield a well-twisted and even thread in spinning. In such slivers the fibres just stick together somehow and the thread, therefore, can never be even. The women in the region near the Nellore taluk probably know this and, therefore, do not entrust the rolling of slivers to the carders. If the carding is not well done, the defect is immediately noticed and can be remedied. On the other hand, if the slivers are made carelessly, it is not possible afterwards to improve their quality.

I hope that those who love spinning will keep in mind the points made here.

KANCHANLAL MOTILAL BARFIWALA

The person bearing this name is a resident of Surat. He is aged about 21 years. His parents do not know his whereabouts since *Ashadha Sud* 3, Samvat 1980¹. He used to wear khadi and likes doing public service. He wears glasses. He was a *Navajivan* reader. His relatives do not know why he left home and where he has gone. If he happens to see this copy of *Navajivan*, I request him to get in touch immediately with his elders and relieve their anxiety. These days some young men seem to think it a great virtue to disappear without informing anyone. They do not, however, realize what suffering they cause to their relations. If any reader comes to know the whereabouts of this man, I request him to communicate the same to Kanchanlal's parents. Their address in Surat is Rani Talao.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 3-5-1925

¹ July 5, 1924

159. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

FARIDPUR,

Sunday, Vaisakha Shukla 10 [May 3, 1925]

BHAISHRI BRIJKRISHNA,

I have your letter. I don't think the factory can be run with Rs. 5,000. No matter how much more capital is invested to run it, I think it is futile to hope for immediate returns. No person who offers any money should do so in the hope of any profit. No one who is not aware of all the facts about khadi and about the processing of yarn can, I think, be of any use. Whatever you do, please bear in mind all these factors. I suggest that on this matter we consult Bhai Vitthaladas Jerajani who runs the store in Bombay.

I too shall write to Mahomed Ali¹ to spare a Muslim [worker]. Collecting free cotton has come to be regarded as a means of making khadi cheaper. This experiment is being tried in Gujarat. I shall be in Bengal at least for this week. I have with me Mahadev² and Krishnadas³.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

My address in Bengal : 148 Russa Road, Calcutta.

From a photostat of the Hindi original : G.N. 2356

¹ 1878-1931; Journalist and politician; led the Khilafat delegation to England in 1920; President, Indian National Congress, Cocanada, 1923

² Mahadev Desai (1892-1943); lawyer, journalist and author; Gandhiji's private secretary and biographer

³ Author of *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi*

160. REPLY TO CIVIC ADDRESSES, FARIDPUR¹

May 3, 1925

In course of his reply Mahatma Gandhi said that he was a lover of Municipal life. He esteemed it a great privilege whenever he was associated with anybody in Municipal service, which was really the foundation for a larger political life after which they were all hankering. But unless the foundation was truly laid, there was no such thing as a larger life. Municipal life was the life of service. They had to look after the health of the citizens. They had to look after water supply which was a great thing in Bengal, especially in East Bengal.

As regards the eradication of malaria referred to in the address . . . he knew it required a remedy, but it was impossible for him, a frail imperfect human being, to prescribe a ready cure. He was not a medical man who had got so many drugs in his pocket, one of which he would offer as a remedy for all ills of life. He knew that the remedy lay through municipal service; it was really an impossible thing for them to commence at the top; they must begin at the bottom and that was what he was talking about, in season and out of season, about the spinning-wheel. It was reducing their towns to the simplicity of the village. And this message of the spinning-wheel was that they, the people of the city, who were drawing their sustenance from villages, should make some little return to the villages for the great thing they were doing for them. He hoped they would take care of spinning-wheel which, as he had said, was the foundation of their larger political life. He had not the slightest doubt that the larger life would take care of itself and that swaraj, which was the dream of his life, was not going to be attained unless they looked after these simple little things. He hoped the mofussil councillors would introduce spinning in municipal schools and start spinning companies. They could make khaddar dress compulsory.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 4-5-1925

¹ Gandhiji and C. R. Das were presented with addresses at a meeting of the Municipal Corporation, Faridpur, held in front of the Town Hall. C. R. Das requested Gandhiji to reply on his behalf also.

*161. SPEECH AT BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE,
FARIDPUR*

May 3, 1925

PRESIDENT AND FRIENDS,

I am supposed to be speaking to you to return thanks for the very kind and generous words spoken about me by the Chairman of the Reception Committee and our worthy President. At the outset I want to tender my congratulations to the Subjects Committee on having finished its deliberations in perfect harmony. It is an open secret—and latterly we have ceased to have any secrets whatsoever in connection with our politics and, therefore, we have been welcoming, and even inviting, detectives so as to enable them to detect flaws in our policy, detect flaws in our doings and in everything that we may do in connection with the national policy and even outside the national policy. But still, as I said, it is an open secret that there were some disputes or differences or dissensions in connection with the resolutions that will be brought before this House this afternoon. But all's well that ends well. I do not recall any Subjects Committee in which there have not been little differences or little jars. I suppose, they will abide with us to the end of time whether they are in India or elsewhere. European Cabinets have their secrets, but if we are permitted to pry into their secrets and into the secrets of their Subjects Committees, I suppose, we would have about the same kind of reports as reports are to be found in connection with our dissensions and disputes. Let us not, therefore, exaggerate those dissensions and differences, but let us treasure the thought that, after all, in the end we can unite and we can unite to a purpose. ("Hear, hear".)

I read the address of Deshbandhu Das and I have had the privilege and pleasure of reading the English translation. I do not know which is the original, whether Bengali or the English translation, because Bengali scholars tell me that the Bengali version reads as sweet and as eloquent as the English version, but, in any case, I had the pleasure and privilege of having an advanced copy of the English address when I was in Calcutta with a brief, little, loving, sweet note from Deshbandhu that, if I could spare a few minutes, I should read that address. Well, I read from the start to the finish and I was wondering whether he had pilfered every sentiment from me. (Laughter.) But I must confess to you that I saw that the language was

not mine. The language was that of a scholar and not of a rustic who delights in calling himself a spinner, a scavenger, a weaver, a farmer and now even a *Namasudra*. (Laughter.) And so I saw that the language was not mine, but the thoughts seemed to have been pilfered and so immediately I said to myself, if he would ask me to subscribe to it, I would have no hesitation in doing so without perhaps altering a single word or a single phrase. But, perhaps, some of you will consider that this is no recommendation whatever for that address, but on the contrary that is the surest guarantee that the address is as dull as ditch water. Well, I assure you that it is not as dull as ditch water. And why do I want to give you that assurance? You have listened to it. You read it. And when a thing is not dull in reading, you may depend upon it.

I want to look not at phraseology. I do not want to look at the language. I only want to look at the thoughts that under lie it and what he has said to us in that address. If we are true to ourselves, if we are true to the nation, if we are true to the policy that was enunciated for the first time in Calcutta in 1920 with all the great deliberation that we could bring to bear upon that policy, if we are to be true to that, then, there is absolutely nothing in that address to cavil at. And that address is a reenunciation and an emphatic and unequivocal re-enunciation of the policy that was laid down for the first time in the history of the Congress in 1920. When I say laid down for the first time in the history of the Congress, it is not that the Congress ever believed in a policy of violence, nor that the Congress ever believed that we should follow anything but legitimate methods, but that the Congress never made that declaration. But in 1920 we chose deliberately to tell the world that we intended to attain that goal of swaraj, that in order to attain that goal we intended to follow a means that was absolutely peaceful and legitimate. And as I have translated these two phrases or these two words or paraphrases, “non-violent and truthful” means, do you abide by that interpretation or that paraphrase or these two words? And during the four or five years that have intervened, Deshbandhu has been one of those who have had a part in the shaping of the national policy in those terms—and you have no right to expect anything else from him and you have no right to expect anything more from him today. Anything more I say, because some of us like pepper and salt eschewed from our programme for the time being, at any rate. We have considered it, everyone of the leaders has considered it, that it is not possible for us to attain our freedom with pepper and salt or with fire and brimstone. We shall be able to attain

our national regeneration—shall we say, national salvation—only by means that are absolutely non-violent and truthful; not that it need be the religion of any single one of us—it is sufficient if it is our policy, it is sufficient if we accept it from motives of expediency and no other or no higher motive.

We have problems in India to deal with which no other nation on the earth has. We have, if we are Hindus, to deal with our Muslim countrymen, with our Christian countrymen, with our Zoroastrian countrymen, with the Sikhs and so many sections and sub-sections of Hindus, which dignify themselves by a name which does not belong to Hinduism. How are we to achieve the unity of purpose, the unity of action between the diverse elements except by means which are not open to any question, namely, non-violence and truthfulness? We will not be able to deal with our Muslim countrymen or with our Hindu countrymen on any other terms. And then we have our provincialism. Bengal thinks that she must rule the whole of India and that the whole of India is to be merged in that little province called Bengal (Laughter), and Gujarat probably thinks likewise. Gujarat, which is merely a drop in the ocean compared to Bengal, thinks it must rule the whole of India and India should be merged in Gujarat. Then take the brave Mahrattas with their recent traditions. Why should they not think that they must shape the destiny and policy of India? The Muslim with his still later traditions thinks that he must establish or re-establish a Muslim empire. From these diverse elements and provincialism there is no escape for us except through non-violent and truthful means because, otherwise, we are sitting on a mine which is likely to explode at any moment. The slightest trace of dirt in us is likely to make us perish and that is why I have insisted in season and out of season upon a policy not of religion but a policy of non-violence and truthfulness. You may do anything you like with your country after you have attained your goal.

You may resort to any means that you consider legitimate or proper for the vindication of your country's honour, but for me I make no secret. It is the first and the last. It is my religion. It is the breath of my nostrils—non-violence and truthfulness, and I wish, I could infect every young man in this hall with that zeal and with that devotion for this non-violence and truthfulness.

I know many a Bengali youth. I know that he has got courage which is matchless; I know he is eager to die for the freedom of his

country as he is today living for the country. I claim, if it is not impertinence on my part, that I have also the ability to die for the country as I am today living for the country. But, as I have said, it is for me a living death. Death on the gallows has absolutely no terror for me. I believe I have got the capacity for dying on the gallows with a smile on my lips if I am innocent. If my hands and my heart are as white as snow, then death has no terror for me. Let it be so with every young man in Bengal. And Deshbandhu has re-enunciated and restated that policy for you. Did he not say the same thing in his beautiful address¹ at Gaya? I have not read that address even now, but I heard the echoes of that address delivered to me at the Yeravda Jail.² I did not pilfer that news. I may tell you I carried out every instruction of the Jailor's, but the Jailor and visitors sometimes told me what was passing outside the walls of that prison and I came to know in ordinary course that Deshbandhu had enunciated in emphatic terms the policy of non-violence and the policy of truthfulness. He thinks likewise for you, for me, for himself and for the whole of the country. You know how he has been assailed. You know how many detractors he has, not merely amongst Europeans but amongst our own countrymen. He has detractors in his own camp. What is he to do? Is he to sit on the fence? Yes, he might have sat on the fence if he had not his country's interest in all his heart—if he did not dream about the deliverance of his country, and if he was not prepared to say in most loving manner : I cannot possibly wish you, Mahatma Gandhi, a long life because you are destined to die the moment we have achieved swaraj, because you are living for swaraj and swaraj alone and as I want my swaraj for India today, I cannot pray to God that Mahatma Gandhi may live long lest my swaraj be delayed. I treasure that thought and in that thought, although humorously uttered, is the highest compliment that he is capable of paying me or you are capable of paying me because it is right.

I am as impatient as any single one of you to attain swaraj. But I understand our functions, know what we have got to do. If we could get swaraj by a doze of intoxicating medicines, I would today hurl defiance at the great British throne and say out with you I want my swaraj today. But I cannot do that today. I cannot hurl that defiance. I admit my incapacity. I admit the incapacity of my country today. Yes,

¹ At the Congress session in 1922

² During 1922-24

I can certainly take off a few Englishmen's heads as anyone can. It does not require strong arms. It requires a strong heart. A little bit of revolver can be manipulated by me just as [by] any one of you. But what is the use of my taking off the head of Lord Reading or Lord Lytton or of any Englishman? But I cannot possibly put that head on a charger and say that here is the deliverance of my country. Deliverance of the country requires a sterner stuff. We have got to evolve not merely the capacity for dying. We have got to evolve not merely the capacity for killing, but, as Dr. Besant¹ once said, it required some amount of courage, even to live in the face of odium, censure, neglect and boycott—even from those whom you have treasured as nearest and dearest to you. And she was right. I say that every moment of my life it requires some degree of courage even to live in the midst of such storms and strife.

But how, then, are we to attain freedom of our country? Not certainly by killing, not certainly at the present moment even by dying, but by plodding, and that is the reason why I have humbly ventured to place before you these three things : Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability and the spinning-wheel. But the Hindu-Muslim unity cannot occupy a young man's whole twenty-four hours. It is our creed. Just as a Mussalman has said his *kalma* it is finished and then he has got to live up to the implication of the *kalma*, just as I have recited a *gayatri*², it is finished with me and I need not be reciting it fifty million times during the day, but I must live up to it—so this is but a creed—of Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability. But every one of us can put our hands to something tangible, to something feasible. Everyone of us can put our hands to the beautiful spinning-wheel and with every yard of yarn that you spin, you spin every yard of the destiny of India. That is the finest revolution that I know for India. I know that some of you laugh—the laugh of incredulity. Some of you will consider—here is an idiot speaking to us in season and out of season about the spinning-wheel.

¹ Annie Besant (1847-1933); British theosophist, orator and writer; founded the Theosophical Society in 1907; established the Indian Home Rule League in 1916; presided over the Indian National Congress in 1917; edited a daily, *New India*, and a weekly, *The Commonweal*; author of *The Religious Problem in India* and other books

² Vedic prayer to Sun-god

But I promise, I prophesy that a day is to dawn, and is not very far, when nobody will call me an idiot. But the finest testimony that will be given to me will be that I revived the cult of charkha—that Gandhi gave the simple message of the rustic when he asked us to spin—that he spoke in terms of swaraj for the masses and millions of his down-trodden countrymen when he delivered the message of charkha. I have no misgiving about the future of my career. My career is ensured. My future is ensured so long as I swear by the charkha and I promise to you that [even if] everyone of the audience here, including Deshbandhu Das, says : “Gandhi is wrong; charkha is nothing, it is an idiotic thing in this age of machinery and speed”, I will still say the same thing up to the very last breath of my life: “Give me the spinning-wheel and I will spin swaraj for India.” You will not get swaraj for India on any other terms. We must become a nation of workers and not a nation of talkers or idlers. We are by nature not idle but, by force of circumstances, millions of our countrymen have to live in enforced idleness. You do not know the idle masses as I do. I have lived in the midst of the 17 lakhs of people of Champaran for six months or more, and I have seen them hovering round me from day to day without doing anything whatsoever. They were satisfied to draw a little of warmth from one whom they considered to be their true servant, but they would not work. But I had not, at that time, this spinning-wheel or I would have placed it before them. They were not famishing, not starving, but they had forgotten the use of their limbs. They would scratch a little bit of earth, grow indigo, reap corn, but would not spin. They had no industry in their homes and, having forgotten it for years, they now consider it perfectly useless. That is why I call it enforced idleness. Our limbs were cut off by the East India Company—that is one of the blackest crimes that I have charged the British Rule with and that is why I have said that, not until I see a change of heart amongst the Englishmen, and not until they feel in terms of the masses of India and say: “Yes, we repent, we ought to return to India what we have taken from her”—for me there is no hand extended; to them I say, “I cannot clasp your hand if you do not call me, ‘my dear brother’.” I cannot do that unless he sympathizes with the masses of India. He flings a little bit of sympathy in the face of the masses from time to time. It is not enough for me. I

want him to read the hearts of the masses and understand their economy, not economics borrowed from Europe, no matter how distinguished a personage he may be. He must think in terms of the masses and, the moment the Englishman begins to think in terms of the masses, you will find me fall prostrate at his feet, because I know his virtues, his capacities. But I cannot do so unless he develops along right lines. That being so, unless he does so, what is the use of my speaking to the Englishman; for I charge him with a black crime in that he has robbed me of the spinning-wheel. But why should I charge him when you, my countrymen, refuse to spin for half an hour, when you send messages or when you write sometimes that 'this fool of a Gandhi has imposed this cursed franchise on us; let us get rid of it as he has imposed this cursed burden upon us.' But does he ask you to do something marvellous, something beyond your capacity when he asks, in the name of God, for the sake of the country, to spin if it is only for half an hour? Does he ask you to do something which you are incapable of doing when he asks you to be clad from top to toe in hand-spun and hand-woven cloth? What shall I say to you, what shall I do with you or how shall I attain my swaraj if you cannot do this little practical thing? They accuse you, they accuse the Bengalis, of want of practicability and in some respects they are right. We want everything, but without having to work for it sufficiently. If we speak about the thing sufficiently, if we pass resolutions, but immediately, when it comes to actual work, we shirk it, remember those who shirk work for the sake of the nation shall have no hand in shaping the destiny of India, shall have no hand in attaining swaraj for India. I ask you, therefore, to retain this "Yarn Franchise". Make it still more restrictive. If it is to be restricted, make it obligatory on every man and woman who wants to serve India through the Congress, a living organization, make it obligatory upon every man and woman, upon every girl and boy, to spin for at least half an hour and to wear khaddar, not only on ceremonial occasions, not for Congress work, but for all work. In your home also, you will wear nothing but khaddar. You will go stark naked rather than that you should wear anything that is not hand-spun by your sister and hand-woven by your brother in your home and not in the factory. That is the message of the spinning-wheel. That is the simple little demand I make of

every man and woman who loves India and who wants freedom of India. Would you be surprised if I tell you that, if you want to have the discharge of those prisoners who are cooped within the walls of the Mandalay Prison, if you want the release of Subhash Chandra Bose¹ and others you must spin. Without work it is impossible. If you want him and his fellow-prisoners to be discharged with honour and with dignity, then I say, spin.

Promise me that every Bengali man and woman will henceforth wear khaddar and nothing but khaddar, that every man and woman will go to the charkha with the same delight that he goes to his meal or with the same delight of a young lover who goes to his sweetheart. Then I promise deliverance of those young men in no time.

You will find that this incredibly simple thing will secure their deliverance, because that will be a sign of your determination to work for India without expecting any remuneration; because I have asked only for half an hour's free labour for the sake of India. It is not a mighty thing that I ask of you. But [it is] because you are of little faith, because you have no faith in your masses, because you have no faith in yourselves, because you have no faith in your country, that you decline to spin and still feel that Deshbandhu would secure the key of that prison, break their fetters and unlock those gates. It is impossible for him to do so.

Some of you consider that he is carrying on negotiations with the Government in secret. He has no secrecy whatsoever, so far as I know. Secrecy is prohibited in Congress politics. When somebody asked him what is at the back of all this, he said, "There is as much in the back of it as in the front". (Laughter.) Lord Birkenhead has sent no secret message to him. He is not in secret negotiations with him. All that he had got to say, you will find it in his beautiful address. You will find it in his writings and speeches. You will find it in his life when he is closeted in his own inner chamber or when he is in this big *pandal*. If you scratch him, I know you will find the same man wanting deliverance for the country. That is the link that binds me to

¹ 1897-1945; politician and nationalist; President, All-India Trade Union Congress, 1929-31; President, India National Congress, 1938, 1939; author of *The Indian Struggle*, founder of the Indian National Army

him, that is the link that should bind the audience to him. That is the link which should bind you to him.

You may not be convinced with our reasons. You may say : “Our heart is satisfied that you are on the right track. We subscribe to your advice so long as we hold you to be our ideal.” That is the way for you. That is the way I would like you to treat those whom you love. You [are] like sepoys and soldiers, it is not for you to reason why after you have chosen your leader. If you have not made your choice and are called upon to make your choice, exercise your reason to its utmost. Scan the would be candidate to leadership from top to toe. But after having made your choice and after having garlanded, like Sita, your chosen person, never flinch and, like Sita, go through the fire with him and all will be well with you. (Applause.)

The Searchlight, 8-5-1925

162. REMINISCENCES OF BENGAL

May 4, 1925

I am writing these reminiscences on Monday after returning from Faridpur. I write sitting on the covered terrace of the mansion formerly belonging to Deshbandhu Das. I have been in Bengal for four days but have still not recovered from the shock I felt when I first entered this mansion. I knew that the Deshbandhu had made over this building for public purposes. He had debts, I knew, but I also knew that he could clear them by practising for less than a year and keep the mansion. But he did not at all want to practise, or, rather, he wanted to plead the cause of his country without demanding fees. He decided, therefore, to give away this palatial building and made over its control to trustees. He wanted, however, that whenever I travelled I should stay while in Calcutta in that old building. And so I am lodged here.

But it is one thing to know a thing and quite another to see it with one's own eyes. My heart wept when I entered the house, and my eyes were moist with tears. In the absence of its former master, and no more his property, the mansion seemed to me like a jail. I felt miserable in it, and I have still not got out of that feeling.

I know that this is ignorant attachment. By giving up his ownership of the house, Deshbandhu has in fact lightened his burden. What use had the Dases for a building in which they would lose their way? If they want, they can turn a hut into a royal palace. For both of them it was a willing sacrifice. Why feel sad about it? Well, this is being philosophical. If I did not have this gift I would feel impelled to start building a palace for myself straightway.

Is it easy to escape the consequence of the *atman* dwelling in a physical body? Do others in the world act as Das did? People in the world would welcome a palace if they can have it, whereas this man gave away one. All honour to him! The tears in my eyes spring from love. The shock I felt was also the result of love. But is there no selfishness in this? If I had no bond at all with Deshbandhu, if I had not known him reigning like a king in this building, I would have felt no shock. I have seen many palaces whose owners departed from this world itself, leaving palaces behind them, but I shed no tears when entering them. These tears, therefore, spring from selfishness too.

Chittaranjan Das has lost nothing by giving away the palatial bungalow. His services are the richer for this sacrifice.

The Bengalis are mad folk. If Das was mad, so is Prafulla Chandra Ray. He dances on the dais when addressing an audience. No one would believe that he is a learned man; he thumps his hands and stamps his feet. Whenever he likes he introduces English words and phrases in his Bengali. When speaking, he forgets himself. He is then totally absorbed in the flow of his thoughts and does not bother to know whether others laugh at him or what they think about him. We do not understand his greatness until we hear him speak, with our eyes fixed on his face. I remember that when I was staying with Gokhale¹ in Calcutta and Acharya Ray was his neighbour, the three of us went to the station one day. I had my third-class ticket with me, and they two had come to see me off. Anyone coming to see a third-class passenger off must be a beggar, people believe. But Gokhale's chubby face, his silken turban and silk-bordered dhoti were enough

¹ Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915); scholar, patriot and statesman; was associated with the Indian National Congress since its inception and presided over its Banaras session in 1905; founded Servants of India Society at Poona, member of Indian Public Services Commission, 1912-15

for the station master. But who would let this skeleton of a young bachelor, wearing a soiled long shirt and as lean as a beggar, go in without a ticket? So far as I remember, he cheerfully stayed out. Criticizing my obstinacy when he saw me literally squeezed in my seat in the compartment, Gokhale went away and rejoined his comrade. Why does Acharya Ray reign supreme over the hearts of innumerable students? Because he is also a man of self-sacrifice. And now he has gone khadi-crazy. He did not feel the slightest embarrassment in asking a Bengali woman officer of the Education Department : “What good can you do unless you wear khadi?” If he did not say this, would anyone buy khadi manufactured by his beggars of Khulna?

The same night we left for Faridpur. Shri Shankerlal¹ had given Satish Babu² a rather alarming account of my health. There was nothing, therefore, he would not do to make me comfortable. He, too, belonged to the mad folks’ league. He had looked into the minutest of details. In order that I might rest my back while sitting, a wooden support was kept ready wherever I sat. I could accept it because it was a simple and inexpensive thing. But when we reached the station, there was a first-class compartment for my companions and me. The Faridpur Reception Committee had also a hand in this arrangement. Only a few days ago a correspondent had asked me in a letter published in Young India whether I was a poor man or rich. It seemed as if Bengal had answered that question. I asked them if a second-class compartment was not good enough for my comfort, and why Bengal had arranged a first-class compartment for me. I was told in reply that they had paid for a second-class compartment and secured a first-class one. How could that reply satisfy me? According to my principle, we should not avail ourselves of a thing of which we do not approve even if it is offered gratis. If there should be anyone so foolish or mad as to offer me, free, a diamond necklace to wear, should I wear it? Are my companions, too, who serve me as secretaries and may even clean the lavatory, as weak as I so that for them also a first-class compartment should be provided at second-class fare? Moreover, this could not

¹ Shankerlal Ghelabhai Banker, a Congress worker and labour leader of Gujarat; Ghandhiji’s associate for many years

² Satish Chandra Dasgupta, an associate of Acharya P. C. Ray, worked for Khadi Pratishthan; then Secretary, Bengal Provincial Congress Committee

have been managed without the Railway people obliging. Should such personal favours be accepted? I saw in this arrangement the madness or excess of love. I must find a solution to this problem. God's will be done. But, then, this madness is not confined to one class of people. We started for Faridpur at night and I had thought that I would get plenty of rest on the way and would be able to make up fully for the lost hours of sleep. But that was not to be. I had great difficulty in getting sleep, thanks to cries of "*alo, alo*" and other noises. The train also stopped at almost every station. At every station there were crowds and people insisted on having *darshan*. But I had resolved never to give *darshan* during night-time. So I kept lying down. But that did not help. My companions, too, tried hard to explain the position to the people, but the more they explained the more did the crowds get excited. There were louder and still louder shouts of "*Vandemataram, Mahatma Gandhi ki jai, alo, alo*". *Alo* means light. The train lights had been switched off. The people wanted them to be switched on so that they could at least see me sleeping. This was the state of affairs at almost every station up to Faridpur. All the time I kept earnestly praying to God to save me from such love! When we arrived at Faridpur, there was a huge crowd, of course, but the arrangements on the whole were good. Babu Surendra Biswas, the chairman of the Reception Committee, had instructed the people in advance not to shout or rush towards me. The car, moreover, was kept right at the spot where I was to alight, so that we entered the city without harassment. EXHIBITION

Before being taken to the place where I was to stay, I had to declare an exhibition open. They had accepted for it varieties of seeds and other such things supplied by the Government Agriculture Department, but the main sections related to khadi. Biswas Babu had decided not to permit the display of any specimen of cloth not manufactured from hand-spun, yarn, wool or silk. This helped the khadi section very much; it became the centre of interest and the visitors had no chance to compare it with mill-cloth. There were, among the varieties of khadi, a great many specimens of fine cloth too. There was also a large quantity of fine yarn. There were even two persons sitting on a chair and spinning, neither of whom had to turn aside for winding the yarn. The yarn was being wound as it was spun. No doubt that type of the spinning-wheel did not produce more yarn at a faster rate, but there was one operation less to attend to and, as the

wheel was being turned by foot, both hands remained free.

Looms had been received as exhibits from the Government factory at Serampur, and these also were accepted on condition that only hand-spun yarn must be used for both warp and woof. It was learnt on inquiry that students were now taught hand-spinning too in that factory. There were many *fataka* looms, too, on which they used only hand-spun yarn as warp. Even jute and wool were spun by hand in this section.

The processes relating to the tanning and dyeing of hides were also being demonstrated in the exhibition.

There were spinning competitions, and since many men and women had taken part in them the two sections were kept separate. Almost all of them drew fine yarn. All this created the impression on my mind that, if Bengal took up this work enthusiastically, it would come to occupy the first place in regard to khadi. I found very few people in Bengal who insisted on not wearing khadi. There is plenty of artistic sense, and much skill in spinning too. Many middle-class women spin fine yarn and with sincere devotion. The wife of the chairman of the Reception committee, in whose house I was put up, has spun a large quantity for her family. She grows the dev variety of cotton on her small farm and spins it uncarded. This good lady made slivers for me with her own hands. They were very good indeed. She picks cotton from the plants as she needs it and arranges it properly to turn it into slivers. In a matter of minutes a whole heap of slivers is ready. A good many Swarajists in Bengal seem to have taken up spinning. Biswas Babu himself is a Swarajist. The chairman of one of the [Congress] committees in Calcutta is also a Swarajist. He had sent to me at a public meeting yarn spun by him. We saw many men in Faridpur clad exclusively in khadi. There was a separate meeting for women. At this meeting, too, one saw a relatively larger number of women, larger than in similar meetings in Gujarat, dressed in khadi. I observed that the Bengali women did not have pleats in their saris, and, therefore, did not require any great length in their saris. But this is not the explanation of there being a large number of women in khadi at the meeting. We can only say that women in this part are more intelligent. It is true, of course, that a number of men and women had put on khadi specially for this occasion.

I have given here only the impression produced on me in Faridpur. As my present tour is connected solely with the khadi

movement, I have still many more experiences in store for me. The reader will know afterwards what the sum total of these experiences comes to. As there is no entrance fee for the exhibition, thousands of people have taken advantage of it. On the next day, before I left Faridpur, prizes were awarded to persons who had demonstrated the different processes relating to khadi. The recipients of medals and prizes probably included equal numbers of men and of women. Among those who received medals three were Muslims. There were graded medals and prizes for the best carders, best sliver-makers, best spinners and best weavers.

AT THE CONFERENCE¹

I found Deshbandhu's physical condition to be very bad. His voice has lost its strength. There is extreme weakness. In fact, he has not recovered well enough to be fit to undertake such exertions. Just now, the doctors have advised him to go to Darjeeling or some place in Europe to recuperate his strength. But he intends to do this only as a last resort.

A khadi marquee was specially erected for the Conference. It displayed the utmost simplicity. Seating arrangements were made on the ground. Not a chair was to be seen. The work of erecting the marquee was entrusted only to a tent-maker. He said he had made it exclusively of pure khadi, but all of us have serious doubts whether the cloth used was really khadi. I am trying to ascertain the truth. The important thing, however, is that the organizers' intention was to have a khadi marquee and they believed that the one which was erected was of khadi.

Deshbandhu's speech was short and interesting. Every sentence breathed the spirit of non-violence. He stated clearly in his speech that India's salvation could come only through a non-violent struggle. If anyone asked me to put my signature to it, I would hardly find it necessary to alter a word or phrase.

It was but natural that the resolutions should be in tune with such a speech. There was, therefore, a good deal of heat in the Subjects Committee. Matters reached a stage when Deshbandhu felt it necessary to offer to resign, but ultimately his influence carried the day and the important resolutions of the Conference were passed without unpleasantness.

¹ Bengal Provincial Agricultural Conference

ANJUMAN MEETING

Muslim friends had arranged a separate meeting¹ to which we both were invited. Accordingly, Deshbandhu, his wife Vasantidevi and I went to it. There is some estrangement [between Hindus and Muslims] in Faridpur. I advised that the matter should be settled through arbitration and suggested that the Muslims should participate in the Conference. As a result, about a hundred of them attended on Sunday evening.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 10-5-1925

163. LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI

CALCUTTA,
*Monday [May 4, 1925]*²

REVERED ANNASYABEHN,

I am quite well. Satis Babu³ has made more than adequate arrangements and spent a lot of money. It is all because of Bhai Shankerlal's letter. I wish he had not written so elaborately. There have to be limits to the arrangements one gets up. But this I write only to tell you that I am being fully looked after. The weather is excellent. There is no sickness. I wish you to go to Nainital. It will be good if Bhai Shankerlal can also go there or somewhere else.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I returned from Faridpur today.

From the Gujarati original: G.N. 11545

¹ On May 3, 1925

² From the postmark. May 4 in 1925 was a Monday.

³ Satis Chandra Das Gupta of Khadi Prathisthan, Sodepur

164. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Vaishakh Sud 11 [May 4, 1925]¹

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter. I think you need a change of air if only for a short time. There is the problem of Harikishen. But if you can manage, you must steel your heart and go at least for a week, even if it is only to Matheran. I am being looked after very well here. Do not worry at all. Keep writing to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI
93 BAZAR GATE STREET
FORT, BOMBAY

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

165. LETTER TO KHWAJA ABDUL MAJID

148 RUSSA ROAD, CALCUTTA,
May 5, 1925

DEAR KHWAJA SAHEB,

I wrote to you some time ago to ask you whether you had the money that I was to collect and what decision had ultimately been arrived at. I have to enquire this of you again. I understand that the money has been paid over at Hakimji's. Pray remember me to Khurshed Begum.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

KHWAJA SAHEB ABDUL MAJID
NATIONAL MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH

From the original: A. M. Khwaja Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

¹ From the postmark. *Vaishakh Sud 11* corresponded to this date in 1925.

166. SPEECH AT PRABARTAK ASHRAM, CHANDERNAGORE

May 5, 1925

The Mahatma said that he had long been entertaining the wish to come to the Ashram and he was glad that his wish was at last fulfilled. He had heard from Nirmal Babu a good deal about the inner life and history of the Sangha and expressed how profoundly he appreciated its high ideal and mission. He was told that the Sangha was founded on spiritual life. The members followed the inner knowledge and institution and lived the integral ideal of the ancient, *sanatan* dharma. Their principle was not merely a philosophy of *tyaga* or rejection, but total acceptance of life for the fulfilment of God's expression. That was the Vedic dharma and its foundation was *atma-darshan* or spiritual self-realization. It was not perfectly true to say that his own ideal of life was quite different—nay, largely political. Whatever he did, his ideal was *paramartha* or “selflessness of the highest self” as he would say, and he was strictly a *mumukshu* or *mokshartha*, in the sense that he wanted his salvation through the service and salvation of the nation and humanity. Here he was really spiritual, for his motive was self-consecration and his whole life and work was dedicated entirely to the feet of Sri Krishna and Bharat Mata. Therefore, gently insisted the Mahatma that his ideal was nowhere essentially different from that of the “Prabartak Sangha”. Next, he dwelt on the excellent system of spiritual education imparted at the Ashram and he was glad that their motto was *swavalamban* or practical self-help. Spirituality without economic foundation, as he believed, was a broken reed, and he congratulated the Sangha in having achieved such a unique harmony between spiritual life and economic *tapasya*.

Afterwards he dwelt on khadi and charkha and said he would be still more glad, when he would find that the Sangha had totally rejected mixed yarn. As now he would tell people wherever he went, to go to the Prabartak Ashram at Chandernagore, to see the excellent work there in respect of spiritual culture, exemplary character-building—so also he longed to say that the Sangha was doing pure khadi work alone as an ideal institution.

He explained further how his heart throbbed for the crores of India's sons and daughters who could not get even a mouthful meal every day and were plunged in abject misery. For these crores of India's poverty-ridden souls and for nationwide unity did he preach his triple gospel of khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of

untouchability. It was for him his practical Vedanta, for he believed in the one self in all and would harm none for his life, which was the true meaning of his ideal of non-violence. He exhorted the audience to spin, weave and wear khaddar as the only means revealed to him, for securing swaraj for the millions of India.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 8-5-1925

167. SPEECH AT ASHTANGA AYURVEDA VIDYALAYA

CALCUTTA,
May 6, 1925

FRIENDS,

It was not without greatest hesitation that I accepted the invitation to lay the foundation-stone of this great institution. You know that some years ago I performed the opening ceremony of the Tibbia College¹ whose presiding deity was my esteemed friend and brother, Hakim Ajmal Khan². Even then it was not without hesitation that I performed the ceremony. I could not resist the invitation that was given to me by a bosom friend and little could I resist a similar invitation coming again from a bosom friend. But I would be untrue to myself and untrue to those assembled if I did not express my deepest thoughts about medicine and particularly about Ayurvedic and Unani medicines and the profession in general. It was in 1908³ that, for the first time, I reduced to writing my views about medicines and the medical profession, and I am not able, looking at it after so many years, to alter a single word of what I have said there. No doubt what I wrote in 1908 was compressed, it was a passing reference to a subject which was included among so many others which I had to deal within a mere booklet. Since then I have expanded the same thought, but I have not diminished the strength of the thought that I expressed in 1908. Every time I approach medical men and their medicines, I do so in fear and trembling, and it takes nothing away from my fear that I submitted to the living knife of a surgeon whom I only knew

¹ Vide "Speech at Opening of Tibbia College", 13-2-1921.

² 1865-1927; eminent Muslim physician and politician who took a leading part in the Khilafat movement; President, Indian National Congress, 1921

³ Slip for 1909; for Gandhiji's observation on doctors and medicine in *Hind Swaraj* (1909)

perfunctorily in the Yeravda jail¹. I had the fullest confidence in Col. Maddock² as a man and as a friend but I had not the fullest confidence in his ways and in the medicines that he prescribed. If you were to go to him today, he will issue a double certificate—one in my favour and the other against me. He will certify to you that to a certain extent I was a willing, obedient and a loyal patient, a more loyal patient he could not wish for. But he will also say and certify that I was one of the most difficult patients he had to deal with. He had to deal with my prohibitions. I will take this and I will not take that and my negations were far more than my ayes. And, therefore, he always came to me in des-pair whenever he felt that he wanted me to put a little more weight. It was with the greatest difficulty that he could persuade me to take so many of the medicines that he thought I should take and that I thought I ought not to take. (Laughter.) Well, there it is. I have merely given you a skeleton of my views about the profession, but perhaps you will better understand my views when I tell you that I belong to that noble, growing, but the still small school of thought which believes more in prevention than in cure, which believes in Nature doing things for herself even for suffering humanity if we would but let Nature take her course. I believe in that school of thought which considers that the less interference there is on the part of doctors, on the part of physicians and surgeons, the better it is for humanity and its morals. I belong to that school of thought among medical men who are fast coming to the conclusion that it is not their duty merely to subserve the needs of the body, but it is their bounden religious duty to consider the resident within that body, which is after all imperishable. And I belong to that school of thought among medical men who consider that they will do nothing in connection with that body if whatever they do is going to impair, in the slightest degree, the soul, the spirit within. And it grieves me so often when I find some of my best medical friends—and you will accept my word—but I assure you that it grieves me when they discuss with me the question whether there is such a thing as soul and when they tell me that, if there was a soul, it would not escape their deadly knife. Little do they know that the soul survives the knife and that the

¹ Gandhiji was operated upon for appendicitis in 1924

² Surgeon-General Sassoon Hospital, Poona, who performed the operation

soul is not to be found by any probing of knife, however deep it may be. (Laughter). Therefore, it was with the greatest hesitation that I have approached this function.

I wonder whether it is a real sign of civilization when the number of hospitals in a particular place is larger than in another place. I wonder whether it is really a test of growth to find in the catalogues and in the directories of medical men that every year their sales are increasing by leaps and bounds and that the inmates in the hospitals and dispensaries are increasing. I really wonder whether it is a sign of real progress. However, I know that there is the other side of it. I don't want to labour only on one side of this question. But, in all humility I have placed [these] for consideration of those who are put in charge of the management of this great institution. I have hitherto confined my remarks to medicine and surgery in general, but when I come to the Ayurvedic and the Unani system, I am filled with greater doubts. You may not know that, even from my boyhood. I have come in contact with many physicians, some of them known to be distinguished in their own localities. There was a time when I used to swear by the Ayurvedic medicine and used to commend it to all my friends, who went in for Western medicine, to go to these Ayurvedic physicians. But I feel sorry to have to own to you that I was undeceived and I found that our Ayurvedic and Unani physician lack sanity. They lack the humility. Instead of that I found in them an arrogance that they knew everything (Laughter), that there was no disease which they could not cure. (Renewed laughter.) I found that they believed that the mere feeling of the pulse could enable them to understand whether the patient was suffering from appendicitis or some such other disease. When I found that their diagnosis was false, that it was incomplete in most cases, I felt that it was nothing short of humbug. When I turned to the advertisements of medicines—I shall not say from *Kavirajas*—but Unani Hakims and *Vaidyarajas*, I felt humiliated I felt a sense of shame coming over me—these advertisements which pander to the basest passion of humanity, disfigure our newspapers and magazines. I have handled magazines devoted to the education of ladies. I have seen magazines devoted to the education and information of young men, and I have found these advertisements alluring, no doubt, profitable, no doubt, to those who advertise these nauseating things. I felt that they are cutting deep into the vitals of the suffering humanity.

Therefore, whilst I am going to perform this ceremony of laying the foundation stone of this noble institution and whilst I do so with a prayerful heart and wish it all success, I want the organizers to note

my limitations, to understand the note of warning that I have uttered to those who are called upon to devote their wealth to this institution. I utter an all humility this note of warning. May this institution be of use to the real sufferers. May this institution take care not merely of the need of the body but of the imperishable soul that resides in that body. May it never be said of this institution that it panders to the basest taste of humanity, that it panders to the basest taste of the youths of Bengal—and I know the youths of Bengal. I know how their fair life is being sapped by the medicines that are poured down their throats by physicians who, in the words of the Lord Justice Stephen, “introduce drugs of which they know little into the bodies of which they know less”.¹ And so I plead, as I pleaded in Madras at a similar function, for sanity, for humility, for truthfulness, for fear of God among those who are the present organizers of the institution and those who follow. With these words I shall have much pleasure as soon as you give me room to go to the place where I have to lay the foundation and I shall have equal pleasure in praying for the success of this institution.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 8-5-1925

168. COW-PROTECTION

Rightly or wrongly, most reluctantly and in fear and trembling I have shouldered the burden of conducting the All-India Cow-protection Organization that was brought into being at Madhavbag in Bombay on the 28th ultimo.

It is a tremendous task for which I am hardly fitted. I fancy that I know the disease. I know the remedy, but I have neither the time nor yet the men who can help me to carry out the ideas that are to govern this institution.

Cow-protection to me is not mere protection of the cow. It means protection of all that lives and is helpless and weak in the world. But for the moment cow-protection means primarily protection of the cow and her progeny from cruelty and slaughter and derivatively all other cattle, e.g., the buffalo.

India is the one country in the world where cow-protection is a religious obligation for over twenty crores of her people. And yet the

¹ Vide also “General Knowledge About Health [-II]”, 11-1-1913.

cattle of India are miserable-looking, ill-treated, underfed, overburdened, deteriorating and are even said to be a burden on the land. Nowhere else on the earth are milch cattle led to the slaughter house because they go dry long before they should. Nowhere else perhaps do cattle give less milk than they cost to feed and keep.

How can this state of things be remedied? Certainly not by multiplying cow-protection societies which do not know their business; most certainly not by fighting the Mussalmans about things which they cannot help even if they would. I do not here take note of those Mussalmans who, merely to wound Hindu susceptibility, kill cows deliberately and preferably and, as it were, in the Hindus' faces. These are exceptional cases. I am thinking of the cattle economics. If we take care of them, the rest will take care of itself. If the cattle are an economic burden and if one cannot set the condition right, nothing can prevent them from perishing or being slaughtered. The problem, therefore, is to study the question calmly and without sentiment. Religion without the backing of reason and enlightenment is a worthless sentiment which is bound to die of inanition. It is knowledge that ultimately gives salvation. Devotion to the cow divorced from knowledge is the surest way of imposing premature death on her. Therefore, one man with an accurate knowledge of the cattle problem, if he has the heart for the cow, represents in his own person all the cow-protection societies that were and will be ever formed. This all-India organization is conceived with that end in view, to find out men, chaste, pure, lovers of the cow and learned who would give their whole time to the work of investigation and administration. I want, therefore, a secretary whose qualifications I have described in the opening speech reported elsewhere in these pages. A treasurer too has still to be found. Meanwhile, a provisional committee and a provisional treasurer and a provisional secretary have been appointed in order to do the preliminary work. The committee is by no means representative of all India. For it was necessary to appoint one from those present. The members of this provisional committee have undertaken, during the three months that are to elapse before it meets again, to enlist over twelve hundred members. If the organization is to be representative, it should have members from all the provinces. The provisional secretary is Sjt. Nagindas Amulakhrai of Bombay, (30, Hanuman

Building, Homji Street, Circus Road) and the provisional treasurer is Sjt. Rewashanker Jagjivan Jhaveri¹ of Jhaveri Bazar, Bombay. I hope that those who are interested in cow-protection will send in their subscriptions to the secretary or the treasurer. The subscription is Rs. 5 per year payable in advance or two thousand yards of hand-spun yarn per month.

Young India, 7-5-1925

169. AT IT AGAIN

My revolutionary friend has returned to the charge, but I must tell him that he has not been as patient with his composition as before. He has introduced in his letter under discussion much irrelevant matter and has argued loosely. So far as I can see, he has exhausted all his argument and has nothing new to say. But should he write again, I advise him to write his letter more carefully and boil down his thoughts. I have been obliged to do that for him this time. But as he is seeking light, let him read carefully what I write, then think out his thoughts calmly and then write out clearly and briefly. If it is merely questions he has to ask, let him simply write them out without arguing to convince me. I do not pretend to know everything about the revolutionary movement, but as I have been obliged to think, observe and write a great deal, there is very little new that he can tell me. Whilst, therefore, I promise to keep an open mind, I ask him, please, to spare a busy servant of the nation and a true friend of the revolutionary the labour of reading much that he need not read. I am anxious to keep in touch with the revolutionary and I can only do so through these columns. I have a soft corner for him in my heart, for there is one thing in common between him and me—the ability to suffer. But as I humbly believe him to be mistaken and misguided, I desire to wean him from his error or in the process myself be weaned from mine.

My revolutionary friend's first question is :

“The revolutionaries have retarded the progress of the country.” Do you differ with your own view, when you wrote in connection with the Bengal Partition : ‘After the Partition people saw that petitions must be backed up by force, and that they must be capable of suffering. This spirit must be considered to be the chief result of the Partition That which the people said tremblingly and in secret began to be said and written openly. . . . People,

¹ A friend of Gandhiji and brother of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta

young and old, used to run away at the sight of an English face; it no longer awed them. They did not fear even a row, or being imprisoned. Some of the ‘best sons of India’ are at present in banishment.”¹ The movement which followed the Partition or more correctly which was the manifestation of the unrest of the people was the revolutionary movement, and the best sons of India you speak of are mostly revolutionaries or semi-revolutionaries. How is it that these so-called ignorant and misguided persons were able to reduce, if not remove, the cowardice of India? Would you be so intolerant as to call the revolutionaries ignorant, because they cannot understand your peculiar dogma of non-violence?

There is no difference between the view expressed in *Indian Home Rule*² from which the writer has quoted and the views now expressed by me. Those who led the Partition movement, whatever and whoever they were, undoubtedly shed the fear of Englishmen. That was a distinct service to the country. But bravery and self-sacrifice need not kill. Let my friend remember that *indian Home Rule*, as the booklet itself states, was written in answer to the revolutionary's arguments and methods. It was an attempt to offer the revolutionary something infinitely superior to what he had, retaining the whole of the spirit of self-sacrifice and bravery that was to be found in the revolutionary. I do not call the revolutionary ignorant merely because he does not understand or appreciate my method, but because he does not even appear to me to understand the art of warfare. Every one of the warriors whom my friend quotes knew his art and had his men.

The second question is :

Was Terence MacSwiney a “spotless lamb” when he died of hunger-strike of 71 days? Please remember that he was to the last an advocate of conspiracy, bloodshed and terrorism, and maintained his ideas expressed in his famous book *Principles of Freedom*. If you can call MacSwiney a “spotless lamb”, will you not be ready to use the same term for Gopimohan Shaha³ ?

I am sorry to say I do not know enough of the life of MacSwiney to be able to give an opinion. But if he advocated ‘conspiracy, bloodshed and terrorism’, his method was open to the same objections that have been advanced in these pages. I never

¹ Vide “Hind Swaraj - Chapter II : The Partition of Bengal”, 22-11-1909.

² Vide “Hind Swaraj”, 22-11-1909.

³ Slip for Gopi Nath Saha; vide “Interview to *The Times of India*”, 5-6-1924.

regarded him as a “spotless lamb”. I gave my humble opinion when his fast was declared, that from my standpoint it was an error. I do not justify every fast.

The third question is :

You believe in *varnas*. Therefore, it is self-evident that you hold the Kshatriyas to be of the same utility as any other *varna*. The revolutionaries profess to be Kshatriyas in this *Nikshatriya* epoch in India. *Kshatat trayate iti Kshatriyah*. I consider this state of India to be the greatest *Kshata* which India has ever met with, in other words this is the time when the need of Kshatriyas in India is the uttermost. Manu, the Prince of Hindu lawgivers prescribes four ways for the Kshatriya: “*sama, dana, danda, bheda*”. In this connection I reproduce a passage from Vivekananda, which I think will greatly help you to comprehend the matter full well.

“All great teachers have taught ‘Resist not evil’, have taught that the non-resisting is the highest moral ideal. We all know that if, in the present state of world, people try to carry out this doctrine, the whole social fabric would fall to pieces, society would be destroyed, the violent and the wicked will take possession of our property, and possibly take our lives also. Even one day of such non-resistance would lead to the utter dissolution of the country”. I know what you will do in this awkward position, you will try to interpret it differently, but you shall find that he left no room for such misinterpretation, because he instantly adds, “Some of you have read perhaps the *Bhagavad Gita* and many of you in Western countries may have felt astonished at the first chapter wherein our Shri Krishna calls Arjuna a hypocrite and coward, on account of his refusal to fight or offer resistance, because his adversaries were his friends and relatives—his refusal on the plea that non-resistance was the highest ideal of love. There is a great lesson for us all to learn, that in all things the two extremes are alike; the extreme positive and the extreme negative are always similar; when the vibrations of light are too slow we do not see them nor do we see them when they are too rapid; so also with sound, when very low in pitch we do not hear it, when very high we do not hear it either. Of like nature is the difference between resistance and non-resistance . . . We must first care to understand whether we have the power of resistance or not. Then having the power, if we renounce it and do not resist, we are doing a grand act of love; but if we cannot resist and yet at the same time make it appear and ourselves believe that we are actuated by motives of highest love, we shall be doing the exact opposite of what is morally good. Arjuna became coward at the sight of the mighty array against him, his ‘love’ made him forget his duty towards his country and King. That is why Shri

Krishna told him that he was a hypocrite: 'Thou talkest like a wise man, but thy actions betray thee to be a coward, therefore stand up and flight.' I want to add nothing more except a few questions. Do you think that your so-called heart-and-soul non-violent disciples can resist this alien bureaucrat government by physical force? If yes, on what ground; if not, how then does your non-violence remain the weapon of the strong? Please answer these questions in the most unmistakable terms, so that no one can make different interpretations.

Along with it I shall ask you the following questions, which directly arise from your statement. In your swaraj, is there any place for soldiers? Will your swaraj government keep armies? If so, will they fight—I mean use physical force, when necessary, or will they offer satyagraha against their opponents?

I have room in my philosophy of life for Kshatriyas. But my definition of him I take from the *Gita*. He who does not run away from battle, i.e., danger, is a Kshatriya. As the world progresses, the same terms acquire new values. Manu and the other law-givers did not lay down eternal principles of conduct. They enunciated certain eternal maxims of life and laid down for their age rules of conduct more or less in accord with those maxims. I am unable to subscribe to the methods of bribery and deceit even for gaining entrance into heaven, much less for gaining India's freedom. For heaven will not be heaven and freedom will not be freedom if either is gained through such methods.

I have not verified the quotation said to be from Vivekananda. It has neither the freshness nor the brevity that mark most of that great man's writings. But whether it is from his writings or not, it does not satisfy me. If a large number of people carry out the doctrine of non-resistance, the present state of the world will not be what it is. Those individuals who have carried it out have not lost anything. They have not been butchered by the violent and the wicked. On the contrary, the latter have shed both their violence and wickedness in the presence of the non-violent and the good.

I have already stated my meaning of the *Gita*. It deals with the eternal duel between good and evil. And who does not, like Arjuna, often quail when the dividing line between good and evil is thin and when the right choice is so difficult?

I heartily endorse, however, the statement that he alone is truly non-violent who remains non-violent even though he has the ability to

strike. I do, therefore, claim that my disciple (I have only one and that is myself) is quite capable of striking, very indifferently and perhaps ineffectively, I admit; but he has no desire to do so. I have had in my life many an opportunity of shooting my opponents and earning the crown of martyrdom, but I had not the heart to shoot any of them. For I did not want them to shoot me, however much they disliked my methods. I wanted them to convince me of my error as I was trying to convince them of theirs. “Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you.”

Alas! In my swaraj of today there is room for soldiers. Let the revolutionary friend know that I have described the disarmament and consequent emasculation of a whole people as the blackest crime of the British. I have not the capacity for preaching universal non-violence to the country. I preach, therefore, non-violence restricted strictly to the purpose of winning our freedom and, therefore, perhaps for preaching the regulation of international relations by non-violent means. But my incapacity must not be mistaken for that of doctrine of the non-violence. I see it with my intellect in all its effulgence. My heart grasps it. But I have not yet the attainments for preaching universal non-violence with effect. I am not advanced enough for the great task. I have yet anger within me, I have yet the *dwaita bhava*—duality in me. I can regulate my passions. I keep them under subjection, but before I can preach universal non-violence with effect, I must be wholly free from passions. I must be wholly incapable of sin. Let the revolutionary pray with and for me that I may soon become that. But, meanwhile, let him take with me the one step to it which I see as clearly as day-light, i.e., to win India’s freedom with strictly non-violent means. And, then, under swaraj, you and I shall have a disciplined, intelligent, educated police force that would keep order within and fight raiders from without if, by that time, I or someone else does not show a better way of dealing with either.

Young India, 7-5-1925

170. NOTES

DEIFICATION OF ME

A Muslim friend met me at Dungargarh station and told me that the process of deifying me, especially among the Gonds, was going on as merrily as ever. I have expressed my horror and strongest disapproval of this type of idolatry more than once. I claim to be a mere mortal, heir to all the weaknesses that human flesh betrays. It would be infinitely better that the Gonds should be taught to understand the meaning of my simple message than that they should indulge in a meaningless deification of me which can do no good either to them or to me and can intensify the superstitious nature of such simple people as the Gonds. I bespeak the help of every Congressman in the necessary work of un-deceiving the Gonds of their error.

THE UNTOUCHABLES

At one of the stations on the way to Calcutta, I found to my great joy a number of untouchables. They presented me with a piece of khaddar spun and woven by them. The workers told me that the most substantial work was really done by the untouchables. They were giving up drink and carrion and taking to khaddar. Had I not been told that the people I met at this station. Jharsingada, were untouchables, I should not have distinguished them from the rest of the company.

KHADDAR

At Raigarh I was astounded to hear that there was not a single spinning-wheel. The men who had come to meet me quietly told me that some of them wore what the poor people from the interior brought. They informed me that khaddar has become very popular among the people in the villages and that, if there was more interest taken in the work, it could easily become universal. The people of the Central Provinces including Chhatisgarh are specially adapted for the wheel and the loom which merely await organization.

SPLITTING HAIRS

A well-known Congressman for whom I have great regard and who prides himself of being a disciplinarian was found the other day not being wholly dressed in khaddar. I thought that he was fully dressed in khaddar. But the friends who lived in the same town with him knew better and asked me to persuade this friend to respect the

Congress resolution. The friend frankly admitted that all the articles of his clothing were not made of khaddar, but said that, in having come to me, he was not on Congress work. This was a hair-splitter for which I was wholly unprepared, especially from a disciplinarian. I enjoyed no private relations with him. He came to discuss with me public affairs and, therefore, I thought that, in coming to see me, he had come on Congress or public work. But the friend held otherwise and said that he came to see me not on Congress business. I told him such hair-splitting distinctions delayed the advent of swaraj. The Congress resolution, in my opinion, provides for exceptional circumstances in which khaddar dress may be dispensed with without the wearer forfeiting his membership. It does not absolve members from the natural obligation to wear khaddar on all occasions. If men at the top resort to fine distinctions for not wearing khaddar, it is impossible for the common folk conform to the khaddar dress unless it becomes cheaper and more easily available than foreign calico. They expect the leaders to go the whole length in order to enable them to go a quarter.

Young India, 7-5-1925

171. BENGAL NOTES

[May 7, 1925]

‘1ST-CLASS SCANDAL’

Gujarat thinks that it can take more care of my body than the other provinces. Bengal evidently thinks otherwise. “I must travel in first-class through saloons,” says Bengal. Satish Babu whom I questioned regarding the “scandal” of putting me in a first-class saloon said it was the Faridpur Reception Committee that was responsible for it. His other excuse was that a through saloon was taken to avoid a night change, that a through bogie necessarily contained a first-class compartment and that the railway authorities had generously charged 2nd-class fares for 1st-class seats. Let the reader understand that the bogie meant payment of at least ten 2nd-class fares. All this, it was suggested, was necessary in the interest of my health which, whilst I was in Bengal, must not on any account be put in jeopardy by any act of omission or commission on the part of the organizers.

My own opinion is that my tour cannot do much good if I must be thus wrapped in cottonwool. I must either live or travel as like the

millions of poor people as possible or cease to travel at all in the public interest. I am quite certain that I can no more effectively deliver my message to the millions by travelling not even double first but fivefold first than the Viceroy can rule over the *hearts* of India's millions from his unapproachable Simla heights. Single 2nd class is about as much as it is possible to tolerate. Finding me in a luxuriously fitted 1st-class compartment, the poor cannot regard me as one of themselves. They, therefore, peeped into it with awe every time they came near it. I also felt queer looking at them. My body may have found more comfort, but my soul was ill at ease. I am convinced that we cannot enter the hearts of the poor unless we would suffer with them. I have always known that my usefulness for the service of the poor was half curtailed when I was disabled, or thought I was disabled, for travelling 3rd class. Had I never travelled 3rd class, I would never have felt like the poor and one of them. I look upon my 3rd-class travelling as the most precious among my experiences. I, therefore, feel that ordinary 2nd class is about the limit beyond which I must not go, beyond which friends must not take me or tempt me, if they would have me to serve the country by touring. When I become unfit for even 2nd-class travelling, I must cease to serve by touring. God does not give direct notices. He sends us signs which those who will may read. I am not much disturbing the present arrangements made by the Reception Committee, but I hereby give notice to my friends that they may not smother me with excessive affection. They may take all precautions that may not be inconsistent with a due sense of proportion. But let them leave something to God. No precaution will be enough if God wished me not to tour and no want of it will lay me prostrate so long as it is His will that I should serve through touring. Let me also assure them that I am too careful of my body to neglect those bodily wants which I regard as necessary. Let me also record with gratitude the fact that no province, not even Gujarat, has showered on me greater affection than Bengal. It has been my precious privilege never to feel a stranger in any of the provinces, least of all in Bengal.

A FIT NEMESIS

But though the Reception Committee had taken excessive precautions for my comfort, gods had willed otherwise. For the whole night's rest, during the journey to Faridpur, was disturbed by crowds at almost every station howling for *darshan*. My companions tried in

vain to pacify these blind admirers. They vainly pleaded for rest for my fatigued body. "*Also, alo,*" light, light, "*—ki jai*", rent the air and exasperated the sleeping passengers. The crowd felt no consideration even for them. I remained obdurate. I would not rise from my bed though I risked the loss of my Mahatmaship. I regarded it as a crime to pander to such wild and meaningless affection. There can be no doubt about it that we need iron discipline. Our affection for individuals or for the country should be enlightened. So long as it is not brought under control, it must run to waste and, at times, even cause injury by unintended explosions. Every village must have silent, self-effacing and intelligent workers who would lead people to transmute their affection into real power for the country. "Handsome is that handsome does." True affection will show itself not in midnight shouts but in quiet national work. All the people of intermediate stations cannot see me or their other idols. But all can use the occasion of their visits for shaking of lethargy and doing more work.

MAD BENGALIS

Bengalis are mad. Deshbandhu Das gives up his palatial house to the trustees for national purposes. I know that the house carries with it certain liabilities. But the Deshbandhu could have, if he had chosen, wiped them out inside of a year by returning to his princely practice. I could not enter the vast mansion without feeling sad and shedding a tear. As a philosopher I knew that, in getting rid of the house, he has got rid of a burden. But, as a man living in the world, I know that millions would be glad to shoulder such burdens and feel happy in uncomfortably big mansions. I therefore could not restrain myself as I entered the house and was lodged in the very room which was but yesterday occupied by the distinguished servant of India. But that is not the limit of his madness. He is ailing, he is weak. He squats with difficulty. He rises from his seat with difficulty. His voice has lost its original strength. But he must preside—not for applause, but, for service. He must sit up late at the Subjects Committee. He must reason with those who will not or cannot see the necessity of the lucid explanation of his position.

Nor is he the only mad Bengali. There is the great Acharya Ray. In perfect self-forgetfulness he dances on the platform, now thumping this leg and now that. Quite unnecessarily he would break out into English before a pure Bengali audience. He does not care what others will think of him. He is lost in his theme. And who that does not know

him will ever consider him to be one of the greatest among the scientists of the world? He still loves his science college. He gives it his very soul. But he is khaddar mad. He divides his love between science and khaddar. Or perhaps, he regards khaddar as a true product of scientific research. Be that as it may, it requires a mad man to ply the charkha when he might be handling exquisitely delicate instruments in order to wrest from Nature some of her precious secrets. I could, perhaps, indefinitely multiply the names of such mad Bengalis. But the reader must be satisfied with these two brilliant samples.

NOTHING BEHIND IT

But I must return to the Deshbandhu. So many people have asked me, "What is at the back of his manifesto?" I put to him the question on behalf of the inquirers. His answer was emphatic and characteristic.

There is no more at the back of it than there is in the front of it. My manifesto and my address are in reply to the challenge of European friends. I have repeatedly told them that I abhor violence. I believe that India's freedom can only be attained by non-violence. They then asked me to say the same thing in public in emphatic and unequivocal language. I had no objection and no hesitation. This is the whole history of the manifesto and my address. In them I have condemned both—the violence of the revolutionary and the repression of the Government, which is but another name for violence. I have also stated the terms on which as a self-respecting man, I can co-operate. Let any reasonable man examine them dispassionately and, if he discovers a flaw in them or in the statement of my position, let him point it out to me. It now rests with the Europeans and the Government to take the next step.

This is as I have understood to be the Deshbandhu's position. I have not been able to reproduce his language. I have endeavoured to reproduce his thought. The address is remarkably brief, lucid and temperate. There is a studied attempt not to wound anybody's susceptibilities. His condemnation of violence is beyond cavil. If I were asked to subscribe to it, I should do so without perhaps altering a single word or phrase. In my opinion, he has built a golden bridge over the gulf that divides the British from us. It is for them to use it if they will.

THE RESOLUTIONS

The resolutions are in the main a summary of the address. Exception has been taken to their utility inasmuch as there were differences of opinion in the Subjects Committee about some of them. So there were. But, in my opinion, they acquire added importance from that fact. They have been passed after full discussion and deliberation. Expression of differences of opinion is a healthy sign of growth, by no means that of weakness of capacity for execution.

POSSIBILITIES OF KHADDAR

I was unprepared for the discovery I seem to have made of the spread of khaddar in Bengal. The Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition held at Faridpur was more a khaddar exhibition than anything else. Khaddar was not assigned a mere corner in the exhibition. It overshadowed all other exhibits. There were many weavers, some wearing artistic designs, but all were working with hand-spun—either cotton or silk. The Government industrial institution at Serampore had also sent their demonstrators. They showed jute-spinning by the hand and other processes that jute goes through. As jute is one of the greatest industries of Bengal, spinning jute by the hand may give honourable cottage industry to many a home. At the present moment, jute goes to the mills directly from the field conditions said to be in no way favourable to the jute the growers. The average cotton-spinning of Bengal is probably superior to [that of] Andhra. The spinning competition held on the exhibition grounds showed a degree of skill among voluntary spinners not to be met with perhaps elsewhere. Specimens of khaddar too would compare favourably with the best Andhra make. In fineness of counts Bengal, if it is a little better organized, is likely to beat Andhra in a year's time. No other province can perhaps compete with Bengal in this respect.

On a par with the competition at the Faridpur exhibition was a competition arranged by the Khadi Pratishthan at Mirzapur Park. Rai Yatindra Nath Chaudhari of Nakipur and Mrs. Kamini Roy, the distinguished poetess, took part in it. Babu Shyam Sunder Chakravarti and Satish Babu, the Secretary of the Provincial Congress Committee, were also in it and last but not the least, Dr. Ray himself took part in it. He already draws an even good thread not less than 12 counts. He tells me the charkha is growing on him and he takes delight in his spinning. Nearly 180 spinners took part the competition. I do not

think it is possible in any other part of India to get together so many men and women of the upper middle class taking part in such an exhibition and spinning with such great skill. Let me note, too, that many Swarajists are themselves spinning regularly and with zest. My hostess in Faridpur is the wife of a staunch Swarajist, Babu Suresh Biswas. She is a fine spinner. She and her children are devoted to the wheel. She gives all her spare time to the wheel. I am told that, during my tour which really commences today (I am writing these notes on 7th May at Calcutta), I shall see still better exhibition of khaddar work of Bengal. There is no doubt that, if Bengal wills, it can lead the country in khaddar as she can in several other things. She has talent, she has a fine imagination, she has poetry, she has great self-sacrifice to her credit, she has the necessary skill, she has material. Will she add to these qualities the will to do it? May God grant it.

THE SAGE OF BARRACKPORE

I was privileged to visit Sir Surendranath Banerjea¹ at his residence at Barrackpore. I had heard that he was ailing and that age had told upon his steel frame. I was anxious, therefore, to pay my respects to him. Though he might not approve of some of my activities, my regard for him as a maker of modern Bengal and a Nestor of Indian politics has not suffered any diminution. I remember the time when educated India hung on his lips. It was, therefore, with great joy that I approached the pilgrimage to Barrackpore. Sir Surendra has a magnificent mansion situated on the river bank among beautiful surroundings. All around there is great quiet. One can understand what a great relief it must have been to him to be able, every day, to retire to this pleasant retreat after the daily toil in crowded Calcutta. I expected to see him lying in bed weak and careworn. Instead, I found myself in the presence of a man standing erect from his seat to greet me affectionately and talking to me with the buoyancy of youth. He told me in the course of our conversation that his memory was still as green as ever. He could paint, he told me, the scenes of his childhood. The reminiscences that have just been published he wrote during the past nine years. He showed me with justifiable pride the whole of his beautiful manuscript. It is all written methodically in clear, bold hand with a steady pen. Sir Surendra Nath

¹ 1848-1925; President, Indian National Congress in 1895 and 1902; later, one of the leaders of the Moderate party; author of *A Nation in Making*

is now 77 years old, but he has, like Pandit Malaviyaji¹, faith in himself. He said, "I have given myself ninety-one years. And I hope to be able to retain my present energy till then." When I inquired what he was reading, he told me he was revising his reminiscences as he expected to publish a second edition inside of a year. He takes a lively interest in everything that passes around him. He has taken from me a promise to meet him again before I leave Bengal. "I must come to you if you cannot find the time to run up to Barrackpore," he said. "I will not think of putting you to that trouble. I will make time to come again without fail," I replied. Sir Surendra Nath owes his vitality to his unfailingly regular habits. Nothing could keep him overnight in Calcutta. It might almost be said that he never missed his last train for Barrackpore. This regularity, he would say, was as necessary for the service of India as strenuous work itself.

A CONTRAST

The poor, thank God, are always with me. They sought me out at the great man's mansion. Among them was a humble Bihari clerk who wanted me to go to his quarters where he had six charkhas going and where he was selling khaddar to poor men. The request was irresistible. We went to his humble quarters which were situated in the coolie-barracks connected with the waterworks. He showed me the wheels that he and his friends were working and the nicely arranged stock of khaddar, all of which he received from Bihar. "Why don't you get the locally manufactured khaddar?" I asked. "Because," he answered, "I am helping to sell the surplus stock from Bihar." He told me that he made no profits. For running this humble store the coolies give him, to defray the out of pocket expenses, one pice per rupee of their wages. He sells nearly Rs. 2,500 worth of pure khaddar among the coolies who come from Bihar and the contiguous districts of U. P. We have no notion of the penetrating capacity of the wheel and khaddar. Wherever I go, I find these unknown, self-appointed, honest young men taking their humble share in this glorious work

¹ Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946); elected four times President of the congress; founder of Benares Hindu University; author and parliamentarian; member, Round Table Conference and Imperial Legislative Council

which is bound to succeed and solve the problem of the grinding pauperism of the masses by providing them with the labour they can do with ease and comfort.

Young India, 14-5-1925

172. LETTER TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

CALCUTTA,
May 7, 1925

DEAR GURUDEV¹,

Suneeti Devi tells me she is going to Bolpur to take part in the celebration of your 64th birthday. May I add my wish and prayer to the many that will be sent up tomorrow for your health and long life?

Andrews told me in one of his letters that you were not keeping well. I hope that you are now feeling stronger.

I am
Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE
SANTINIKETAN

From a photostat: G. N. 4628

¹ 1861-1941; poet and author; was awarded Nobel Prize for literature in 1913; founder of a school at Santiniketan later known as Visva Bharati.

173. SPEECH AT BUDDHA BIRTH ANNIVERSARY ¹

CALCUTTA,
May 7, 1925

FRIENDS,

It is now my pleasant duty to perform this service. I shall not say anything of these proceedings. Dr. Dharmapala has added a pathetic touch to this service². And he has laid on my shoulders a burden which I consider I am ill-fitted to carry. I hesitated last year when Mr. Natarajan drew me out of my convalescent bed and asked me to preside at the anniversary last year³, but I could not resist Mr. Natarajan, for I have very great and deep affection for him. I know that from that time I would be perhaps called upon to take part at such functions somewhere in India from year to year. And so it happened even when I came to Calcutta. It is a very strange thing that almost all the professors of great religions of the world claim me as their own. The Jains mistake me for a Jain. Scores of Buddhist friends have taken me for a Buddhist. Hundreds of Christian friends still consider that I am a Christian and some Christian friends do not even hesitate to ascribe, by implication, cowardice to me and say: "We know, you are a Christian, but you are afraid to own it. Why don't you come forward boldly and say you believe in Jesus and his salvation?" Many of my Mussalman friends consider that, although I do not call myself a Mussalman, to all intents and purposes, I am one of them; and some Mussalman friends consider that I am on the road to it, very near, but still far short of it. All this is extremely flattering to me and I take it as a mark of their affection and their esteem. For me, however, I regard myself as one of the humblest of Hindus, but the deeper I study Hinduism the stronger becomes the belief in me that Hinduism is as

¹ Gandhiji presided over the birth anniversary of Lord Buddha celebrated at the Buddha Vihara, under the auspices of the Mahabodhi Society.

² The General Secretary of the Society had spoken earlier on the teachings of the Buddha and the way he had himself been carrying on the work of the Buddha in Bengal.

³ Vide "Speech at Buddha Jayanti Meeting", May 18, 1924.

broad as the Universe and it takes in its fold all that is good in this world. And so I find that with Mussalmans I can appreciate the beauties of Islam and sing its praises. And so simultaneously with the professors of other religions, and still something within me tells me that, for all that deep veneration I show to these several religions, I am all the more a Hindu, none the less for it.

Nearly 40 or 38 years ago, I went to England as a lad and the first religious book that was placed into my hands was the *Light of Asia*. I had read nothing of any religion in the world, nothing therefore of Hinduism. I knew of Hinduism what my parents taught me, not directly but indirectly, that is, by their practice, and I know a little more of it from a Brahmin to whom they sent me in order to learn *Rama Raksha*.¹ That was the stock with which I sailed for England. So, when I found myself in possession of the *Light of Asia*, I devoured it.

From page to page I went; I was really an indifferent reader of literature, but I could not resist the temptation that each page afforded to me and I closed the book with deep veneration for the expounding or teaching which has been so beautifully expressed by Sir Edwin Arnold. I read the book again when I had commenced the practice of my profession in South Africa. At that time, I had read something of the other great religions of the world, but the second study of that book did not diminish my veneration. Beyond that I have practically no acquaintance with Buddhism. I read some more literature in the Yeravda Jail, but I know that the reason why I am called upon to preside at such functions, whether they were in connection with Buddha or Mahavira or even with Jesus Christ, is that I endeavour to follow to the best of my ability such of these masters' teachings as my limited understanding enables me to appreciate. Many friends consider that I am expressing in my own life the teachings of Buddha. I accept their testimony and I am free to confess that I am trying my level best to follow these teachings. Unlike Buddhistic professors and unlike also many Hindu students—I was going to say philosophers—I draw no distinction between the essential teachings of Hinduism and Buddhism. In my opinion, Buddha lived Hinduism in his own life. He

¹ A prayer in Sanskrit, seeking Lord Rama's protection and grace

was no doubt a reformer of his terrible time, that is to say he was a reformer deeply in earnest and counted no cost or pain great for achieving the reform which he thought was indispensable for his own growth and for the uplift of the body. If historical records are correct, the blind Brahmins of that period rejected his reform because they were selfish. But the masses were not philosophers who whiled away their time in philosophizing. They were philosophers in action, they had robust common sense and so they brushed aside the beast in the Brahmins, that is to say, selfishness, and they had no hesitation in recognizing in Buddha the true exponent of their own faith. And so, being myself also one of the masses living in their midst, I found that Buddhism is nothing but Hinduism reduced to practice in terms of the masses. And, therefore, sometimes the learned men are not satisfied with the incredibly simple teachings of Buddha. They go to it for the satisfaction of their intellect and they are disappointed. Religion is preeminently a matter of the heart and a man who approaches it with intellectual pride is doomed to disappointment.

I make bold to say that Buddha was not an atheist. God refuses to see any person, any devotee who goes in with his pride. He believes not in men rubbing their noses on the ground, he wants not to see the marks on the noses, and some of you may not know that many Mussalmans really carry these marks on their foreheads as they lie prostrate in their mosques, rub their foreheads day after day so that they have got the scar on their forehead about the circumference of a rupee, sometimes, even larger. God does not want the marks. He sees through and through. A man may cut his nose and rub it on the ground, but God will not recognize him who will turn his back upon a man with pointed nose, if his heart is not bruised and blood does not flow freely from his heart. He recognizes that as his own. And the masses, not knowing what pride is, approach him in all humility and become the splendid philosophers in action, and we can freely follow them. That, in my opinion, is the essential teaching of Buddhism. It is pre-eminently a religion of the masses. I do not despair. I do not for one moment consider that Buddhism has been banished from India. Every essential characteristic of Buddhism, I see, is being translated into action in India, much more perhaps than in China, Ceylon and Japan, which nominally profess Buddhism. I make bold to say that we in India translate Buddhism into action far more and far better than our Burmese friends do. It is impossible to banish Buddha. You cannot deprive him of his birth in India. In his own life, he made out

for himself an imperishable name. He lives today in the lives of millions of human beings. What does it matter whether we go to a little temple and worship his image or whether we even take his name. My Hinduism teaches me that, if my heart is pure, I may mispronounce the name of Sri Rama as Mara, still I can speak it with as much force as may, even more than, the learned Brahmins. So, I say to Dr. Dhar-mapala, what does it matter whether he can count upon the support of so many men, or whether a lady from Honolulu contributes a huge sum or not. Buddha has taught us, in my humble opinion, that it is not necessary for millions to associate themselves with one man who seeks for truth.

Let each one say for himself how much of the message of mercy and pity that Buddha came to deliver we have translated into our own lives, and in so much as we have translated that message in our own lives are we fit to pay our homage to that great Lord, Master and Teacher of mankind. So long as the world lasts, I have not a shadow of doubt that he will rank among the greatest of teachers of mankind. The thoughts that Buddha gave about 2,500 years ago will never vanish—thoughts leave also a mark, thought going at snail's pace. It is still germinating, though one may find that Buddhism, like every other religion, at the present moment is really decadent. I am optimistic enough to feel that a day is dawning when all these great religions will be purged of all frauds, hypocrisy, humbug, untruthfulness, incredulity and all that may be described under the term "degradation". They will be purified of that fraud and we will see a day dawned when he who learns to see will find that truth and love, after all, are two faces of a coin. That and that alone is the only current coin and every other is a base coin.

May God help us to realize the message that the Lord Buddha delivered to mankind so many hundred years ago and may we, each one of us, endeavour to translate that message in our lives, whether we call ourselves Hindus or not.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 9-5-1925

174. SPEECH AT LOHOGUNJ¹

May 8, 1925

Mr. Gandhi, in acknowledging the address and purse, delivered a short speech and said that he was sorry that he could not bring the Ali Brothers as they were busy in their own work. If they wanted swaraj, they had to make up their mind. It was for this reason the Congress had declared that swaraj was to be obtained by love and non-violence, and the Congress repeatedly expressed that all people, irrespective of religion, would devote their heart and soul to the work, and asked them to remove untouchability. Their religion instructed them not to hate anybody. He appealed to them to spin at least half an hour daily and wear hand-woven khaddar. He was sorry to say that very few people had come with khaddar on even now. They should understand their work and spin on the charkha. He further urged them to send their sons and daughters to national schools. Referring to the purse, he said that the money presented to him would not be used for him, but would be spent in charkha and looms and hence he appealed to them to subscribe the promised amount². There was no use seeing him or hearing his speech. If they promised to do that, it would be of immense profit to them and their country. He hoped and prayed that his instructions would be carried out.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 9-5-1925

175. SPEECH AT MALIKANDA³

May 8, 1925

In the course of his speech, Mahatmaji said it pained him very much to find that some of them were not clad in khaddar. He wanted to speak to them about three things and he was confident that, if they translated his message into practice, swaraj would come to them automatically. The first thing to be followed in this connection was that the Hindus and Mohamedans should live in complete harmony. They should be tolerant towards each other and love each other. Mahatmaji emphasized that the curse of untouchability should go. Finally, he strongly urged the audience to wear khaddar and to take to the spinning-wheel. It might not be necessary for them to spin for their livelihood but, if they were to stop the huge drain of the country's wealth,

¹ Gandhiji arrived at Lohogunj, a business centre in Dacca, in the afternoon and was presented with an address and a purse of Rs. 5,500 on behalf of the people of Vikrampur.

² Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh had earlier referred to a target of Rs. 15,000.

³ Malikanda was the venue of a khadi exhibition. Gandhiji's speech was in Hindi, but was rendered into Bengali.

they should spin at least half an hour a day. He hoped that under the able guidance of Dr. Prafulla Chandra they would soon learn to spin and give up foreign cloth. He had heard that the barbers and washermen of the place would not serve *Namasudras*. This was untouchability. The essence of the Hindu religion was truth, non-violence and love. For barbers and washermen not to serve *Namasudras* was not love, but hatred.

The Hindu, 9-5-1925

176. REMARKS AT NATIONAL SCHOOL, DIGHIRPUR ¹

May 9, 1925

I am shocked at these wheels. No wonder, we fail in our attempt to popularize the charkha here. I am glad I have come here. Other wise, I should have blamed the villagers in case of failure. Now I see that the fault is all ours. Look at the rickety wheels and the thick spindles. They have to turn and turn the wheel before they can coax a thread to come out. And look at the horrid sound they make. How can the boys sing whilst spinning, if the wheel does not sing in harmony with their music? The only consolation is that the boys know the art. They have taken to it like fish to water, they have got the cunning of the fingers and I can see that in spite of the wretched condition of the wheels they are drawing out beautiful yarn. If the wheels were better and the spindles thinner, they could easily spin double the present quantity. Your maximum speed you say is 300 yards an hour. I promise it will be 600 yards as soon as you have reformed the wheels. The dexterity with which your boys handle them should give you an idea of the immense possibilities of spinnings, and you yourself must do a year's penance to master the art and the technique of the wheel if you do not know it today.

Young India, 21-5-1925

¹ Gandhiji addressed these to Jatindranath Kushari, who was in charge of the school where 30 students were learning spinning. This report is an extract from Mahadev Desai's account of Gandhiji's tour in East Bengal, under the title "With Gandhiji in Bengal".

177. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, DIGHIRPUR ¹

May 9, 1925

Gandhiji, addressing the gathering which numbered more than ten thousand, said that he was sorry to find that the attempt made by the Congress people to remove untouchability was not successful. Defending his attitude regarding untouchability, he stated he had never said that anybody should take food in the same plate with a *Namasudra*. He would never drink water polluted even by his own mother, but if his mother or anybody else gave him water in a clean pot, it would be a sin if he refused it. Similarly it would be a sin if barbers and washermen did not serve their *Namasudra* brethren. He asserted that the Hindu religion meant service. Service meant equality and love. Swaraj was impossible without Hindu-Muslim unity. That was why he used to take one of the Ali Brothers along with him in his wanderings. He was pleased to recognize that there was some khaddar and charkha work in the locality. He wanted to kill the poverty in Hindustan, but he was sorry to find that very few people were clad in khaddar. He was pleased that the Union Board had presented five charkhas free on the occasion of his visit.

Finally, Gandhiji urged them to be respectful towards their parents, to love their teachers and all the members of their family and to be on friendly terms with their fellow-students.

The Hindu, 11-5-1925

178. SPEECH AT KHADI WORKERS' MEETING, TALTOLA ²

May 9, 1925

I must tell you in the first place that I have never said that charkha is our only salvation. I have said that swaraj for the masses is impossible without the charkha. But I am prepared here to advance the first also. I would ask you to exercise your imagination. And just as you visualize gods and goddesses on the Himalayas because your

¹ The Union Board of Dighirpur presented an address to Gandhiji on behalf of the people of the locality.

² A meeting of khadi workers was held, but it was thought more convenient to hold it on the boat and accordingly the workers accompanied Gandhiji to Narayan Ganj. Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh who was with Gandhiji remarked that the workers' faith was waning: "Most of them do not believe that charkha is our only salvation, though they do believe in the economic value of it. Some of us feel that it is unnecessary to be Congress members. Pray clear our doubts and fortify our faith if you can."

mind is filled with sacredness, you will also visualize the tremendous possibilities of spinning if you fill your minds with the elaborate details of a successful working of the spinning programme. It requires a tremendous effort to keep things going as we are doing, much more to make millions spin. Every one of us will have to take charge of little details and be under exact discipline. Universalization of spinning means the automatic solution of many other questions. Take the untouchability problem. It is impossible to universalize the wheel without tackling untouchability. Do you know that the untouchables would have nothing to do with khadi if we had not made them our own? They would say, "What shall we do with khadi when we are treated as untouchables?" And unless they co-operate, you cannot achieve the full khadi programme. And so also for the Hindu-Muslim question. The two things hang together. You can thus see that spinning alone does lead to swaraj.

But I want to take you a little deeper. Do you know the Government have their hands on every string of the violin except the one which is in my hand? That is non-violence. You can win swaraj only with non-violence and never with violence. If you are convinced of that, you will not take time to be convinced that by spinning alone can you win swaraj. For, non-violence in action can be achieved by nothing but a successful working out of a peaceful programme of the universalization of the spinning-wheel. How will you solve the Hindu-Muslim question but by getting the Hindu to work in the cause of khadi of the Mussalman, and *vice versa*? And in order that you get the Mussalman and the Hindu and the untouchable to work together, you have to plod away in faith and confidence in yourselves. Take first the smoothest channels, leave the difficult ones alone. These are the maharajas, nawabs, etc. Let us fill the land with a net-work of expect carders and spinners and make the spinning-wheel the centre of the whole programme. Don't say the atmosphere is spoiled. Let there be dissensions. You will spin in spite of them. And you will see that all about would be spinning like you one day. If you are clean, all about you are bound to be clean one day. Shall I say good-bye to *brahmacharya*, truth and ahimsa, because the opposite is going on all around me? No, I must work away in the faith that my method is right even though I may be the sole representative of it.

"And how will the spinners bring swaraj?" you ask. I say, nothing will need to be done after you have universalized the spinning-

wheel. You will have acquired a power and a strength which everybody will automatically recognize.

But possibly the struggle before us may be long. There is no shorter cut. I can make the Congress hum with a thousand genuine workers. A million non-spinners whose sole business is to give four annas each will be worse than an encumbrance. I have faith in God and in the fact that the few shall act, when the time comes.

Young India, 21-5-1925

179. SPEECH AT MALKHANAGAR

May 9, 1925

The first thing is that I never said that we could win swaraj merely by spinning, though I believe that we can. But I have certainly said on many occasions that unless we spin we cannot win swaraj. However, I am ready to prove to you that both the statements are true. What do we mean when we speak of spinning? We mean that we should make it universal. Spinning means learning all the other processes, such as ginning and carding, and getting the yarn produced woven into cloth. What an effort is needed to do all these things ourselves and set crores of people spinning in that sense! Such an effort implies setting up an organization through the length and the breadth of the country. Is it a small thing to set up a system like the one that obtains on big liners where everyone obeys the captain's orders and those who do not can be shot dead? And when you set crores to spin, the problem of untouchability will be solved, even that of Hindu-Muslim unity will be solved. Why do I say that the problem of untouchability will be solved? Today the untouchables work for khadi for my sake. They told me in Madras that, when the people regarded them as untouchable, why should they labour for the people and weave khadi for them? All the same, they weave for my sake. When untouchability has disappeared, they will of their own free will take sincere interest in this work, and, when they do so, untouchability too will disappear. Can the khadi movement succeed unless Hindus and Muslims work unitedly? In order, thus, to get all communities to spin, you will have to continue living in this marshy place.

But you may ask how spinning can mean swaraj. My reply is that when you have made spinning universal, the three big problems which face the Congress today will be solved. And when all the three are solved, what more will remain? When these three things are done

we shall be in a position to insist in the fulfilment of our conditions. Thereafter, the British may leave if they choose or stay on if they like to remain here on our terms. If you ask me whether I would co-operate with the British against whom we have carried on such a long and determined struggle and who have perpetrated such atrocities on us, I would say, "Yes, I would certainly co-operate, because I want to convert even enemies into friends."

In order to understand how swaraj can be won by spinning, you must be clear about one thing. It is this—by what means do you want to win it? If you want to win it by violent means, you may give up the thought of spinning. But I can see it as clearly as I do the things before me that you will not be able to overcome the British by violent means. In the game we are playing today, they have all the pieces in their hand, and only one is in mine—non-violence. It is only by means of that piece that we can possibly win against them. If you admit this, you will understand that you have no choice but to take up spinning, for the spinning-wheel is the centre round which the other items of the non-violence programme revolve.

The atmosphere has not been vitiated. The Government wants fighting, it will even find people who delight in creating discord, but I count on you to say that you will go on spinning no matter what obstacles are placed in your way. Because others give up spinning, should you on that account stop spinning? If others forsake purity, *brahmacharya* and non-violence, will you also do?

Those who sincerely devote themselves to spinning in this way will certainly come forward when the time comes [for action]. I can get no work done through three crore members if they do not spin. But I can rouse the whole country if there are 300 sincere persons. If you ask me why I believe these people will come forward for a fight, I cannot answer your question. I shall merely say that God will prompt them to join the fight. I have such faith in God that I rely upon Him, when the time comes to rouse everyone. What happened in the Transvaal? Till the last moment, no one was asked [to join the fight]. But when the coolies saw that all of us were in prison, they too came out and followed us. Hurbatsingh¹ was a free man. He did not have to pay the [poll] tax, but he too was inspired, and went to jail and died there. The mines were turned into jails in which the workers were

¹ Vide "Letter to *Indian Opinion*", after January 5, 1914.

confined, and they endured countless atrocities. How could I imagine that all this would happen? It was, in fact, the result of my faith in God. Hence, if people ask me when I propose to start civil disobedience, I give them no reply. I merely say that God will create the circumstances for it.

Now I come to the question what purpose is served by our continuing as members of the Congress. I admit it serves no great purpose, but our leaving it will hurt the Swarajists needlessly and they will believe that we do not want even to extend our support to them. This year, at any rate, we must become members of the Congress and do as much constructive work as possible. If they do not want even this next year, then we shall see what to do. We shall, then, be able to set up a spinning association. Truly speaking, however, such an association will be the result of our labours during this year. Even if you believe that nothing is to be gained by remaining in the Congress, there is at any rate no harm in doing so.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 17-5-1925

180. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

May 9, 1925

Mr. Gandhi agreed to the existence of individuality in different localities as suggested by Mr. Ghosh and he said that the work should proceed on the individuality of each locality,¹ but he said that charkha might form the main part of the constructive work whereas other things might be added to it consulting each individual case. Charkha, he said, could be universally introduced in every locality. Mr. Ghosh then referred to his Faridpur speech² wherein he said it required a strong heart and not a strong arm to deliver the country. Mr. Gandhi said that we might get swaraj by a strong heart, but to maintain internal peace and order as well as to protect the country from external enemies, it could require a strong arm. Mr. Gandhi in reply

¹ Kali Mohan Ghosh had asked Gandhiji whether charkha, as a part of the constructive activity, would be equally suitable for people of all localities, with their different individual characteristics, and whether organizational work should not take these variations into consideration.

² *Vide* "Speech at Bengal Provincial Conference, Faridpur", 3-5-1925.

said that he answered the question in the *Young India*¹ and he did not say that a strong arm was not required. Rather the police and the army would be necessary when we would get swaraj to protect the country, but first of all we must have a strong heart to attain swaraj.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 12-5-1925

181. UNTOUCHABLE SAINT NANDA

Shri Mahadev has called the story of Nanda from the literature of the South. I wish that everyone should read it with interest. Let no one believe that the story of Nanda is anyone's invention. There may be exaggeration in it. But there indeed lived a saintly *Antyaja* named Nanda six hundred years ago. That, by the strength of his character, he earned his right to enter a temple and that even today he is worshipped by Hindus as an avatar is not to be doubted. The sanctifying story of Nanda teaches us that though the condition in which one is born is the fruit of one's actions in the previous life, the Creator has left scope for human effort, so that an *Antyaja* like Nanda could, by the strength of his character, purify himself during his life and was regarded by others as purified. The Brahmins accepted him with love. If Nanda could become pure during his life, we must believe that all of us have that power in us. Every *Antyaja*, therefore, should have the right to enter our temples for worship.

I hope that no one will advance the argument that Nanda had entered fire [to prove the purity of his character], and that *Antyajās* are welcome to do what he did and then enter temples. The story of his going through fire is pure poetry. Or, even if we believe it to be true, he entered fire of his own free will. The vast majority of Brahmins were ready to permit Nanda to enter the temple for the purpose of *darshan*² on condition only that he should take a bath. The only moral we should draw from this story is that an *Antyaja* can, by right effort, purify himself during his present life. That is to say, the *Antyajās* should be free to enter temples on the same condition on which other Hindus can.

This much for the so-called caste Hindus.

Nanda's story is one which should inspire the *Antyajās* and

¹ Vide "At it Again", 7-5-1925.

² Sight of a person, place or thing considered holy

bring purity in their lives. I for one wish it should be read in every *Antyaja* home. But they should not content themselves merely with reading it. Every *Antyaja* should do what Nanda did. Let every *Antyaja* show Nanda's purity, as also his patience, his compassion, his truthfulness and his determination. Nanda was the very embodiment of satyagraha. He converted atheists to believers in God. May every *Antyaja* read the story of Nanda and be inspired by it to strive to rid himself of his faults and have the strength to succeed in his effort.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 10-5-1925

182. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

*Sunday, Vaishakha Vad 3 [May 10, 1925]*¹

CHI. MAGANLAL²,

Herewith Puniya's letter which you want back. You will see that I have made use of it in *Young India* as well as in *Navajivan*.

I have already written to you about Chi. Rukhi³. I am learning here many new things about khadi work. Some of the work done here surpasses ours. Is our spinning and weaving being done smoothly and regularly? My health has been very nice so far. If Ramniklal⁴ has come back, tell him that there was a letter from Charitravijayji⁵ in which he has categorically denied everything. Let him collect as much evidence as he can about . . . and . . . I have not forgotten both these things, nor do I wish to. Do you know the facts about . . .? There are allegations against him of embezzlement and adultery, and those who

¹ The contents of the letter suggest that it was written during Gandhiji's Bengal tour in 1925.

² Gandhiji's nephew and associate; manager, Sabarmati Ashram; member, All-India Khadi Board

³ Addressee's daughter

⁴ Ramniklal Modi, an inmate of Sabarmati Ashram

⁵ Founder of Mahavir Ratna Ashram, a centre for training students and others for propagation of khadi, at Sonagarh in Saurashtra

have informed me are firm in making those charges. If you or Chhaganlal¹ have come to know anything about it, please let me know.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

Tell Ba that I met Harilal². I talked with him for three hours. Harilal particularly told me that Ba should not go to Calcutta. At present he is staying with some of his friends.

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 6206. Courtesy : Radhabehn Choudhri.

183. LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI

Vaishakh Vad 3 [May 10, 1925]³

REVERED ANASUYABEHN,

I write this from Chandpur on Sunday evening, after starting silence. Do not worry about me. Satis Babu is with me. He looks after me well. We have taken many small things with us. A doctor is also with us. I am quite comfortable. I will keep writing.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: G.N. 11547

184. SPEECH AT MERCHANTS' ASSOCIATION, PURANBAZAR

May 10, 1925

Replying to the address⁴, Gandhiji at the outset expressed his keen sense of regret at his inability to bring either of the Ali Brothers with him. He said that the mere singing of his praise was of no use. What he wanted was complete Hindu-Muslim unity. Untouchability should go. He admitted that it did not exist in Bengal in the form in which it existed in South India, but from the *Namasudras* of Bengal, he came to learn of the iniquitous treatment which was being meted out to them. To remove poverty from Hindustan, they should all take to the charkha and wear khadi. He

¹ Addressee's brother and a close associate of Gandhiji since his South African days

² Gandhiji's eldest son

³ The date has been inferred from the fact that Gandhiji was at Chandpur on May 10, 1925, which was a Sunday.

⁴ Presented earlier to Gandhiji

wanted to purge the country of all sins, including the vice of drinking. It was his firm conviction that swaraj would never come to them unless they worked up the triple programme laid down by him.

The Hindu, 11-5-1925

185. SPEECH AT CIVIC RECEPTION, CHANDPUR¹

May 10, 1925

Mahatmaji at first thanked the Reception Committee and the Municipality for the addresses (*manpatras* as he called them) they had given him. It was only the outcome of their love for him that the references to his virtues were made therein. Accepting their love he said he would pray to God for acquiring those virtues and he, therefore, accepted the encomiums as a token of their love.

Referring to the expression of disappointment mentioned in the Reception Committee's address so far as the amount of work was concerned, he said that there was nothing to be disheartened, if one would stick to one's work with earnestness, spirit of sacrifice and humility.

God said that we should always stick to the performance of our duty irrespective of the result.

Mahatmaji emphasized this, saying our religion teaches us to remain engaged to duty. He said that he understood the reason of the slow progress of their work; it was because the country had very lately entered into the sphere of real action.

Up to this time we had only talked of work, but did not apply ourselves seriously to undertake work. From the period of words we were approaching the period of action. We have to advance towards the spiritual life through the *sadhana* of karma now that we had stepped into the region of action. We realized our real situation ten years before when address, eulogy and clapping of hands, were the fashion of political platforms. We had thousands of workers. Nowadays it is no wonder that the number of workers at the charkha are found less.

¹ A public meeting was held on the Railway Ground in the morning. Hand-spun yarn and addresses printed on khaddar were presented to Gandhiji on behalf of the people and the Municipality. Gandhiji's reply in Hindi was translated into Bengali by Satish Chandra Dasgupta of Khadi Pratisthan, Sodepur.

Mahatmaji said that he did not feel at all disappointed at the abnormal decrease in the number of Congress members and no increase in the number of charkha. He felt that it was giving him more determination for work. For this reason he urged upon his brothers and sisters to have faith in their work. He said he would consider thirty members of the Congress who fulfil the conditions of the spinning franchise, Hindu-Muslim unity and untouchability more valuable assets than one crore of Congress members who would pay fouranna subscription and do nothing. He said that five or seven real and genuine coins were more valuable than one crore of counterfeit coins which should be thrown away into the river and discarded.

So the spinning franchise of the Congress is only a test to determine the real workers and it would help in finding out counterfeit materials. If anybody would say that he has no faith in charkha, he must give up charkha, but if you have faith in charkha you need not be disappointed because others do not take to it. You must be alive to your duty and go on with your work.

Mahatmaji emphatically said that, even if the charkha was given up by the last man of the country, he would alone remain in his house and work with his charkha silently for 8 hours a day.

He again referred to the miserable condition of the people arising out of want mentioned in the Reception Committee's address. He said he heard of water hyacinth pest in this part of the country which is greatly damaging yearly crop.

In my opinion, it is owing to the habit of indolence that we are suffering, and it is owing to the very same reason that the water hyacinth is increasing without any check. It is for the deliverance of the people of India from their miseries and adversities that I am preaching the gospel of charkha. Along with charkha, other items of work necessary for our deliverance could be introduced. Charkha give hope even in the midst of disappointment. Man is his own enemy as well as his own friend.¹ Remember God when you are in difficulty. God is so cruel that, unless you be dutiful, you cannot expect God's favour in any work. I exhort all to remember God and to go on working and working.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 13-5-1925

¹ A reference to the *Bhagavad Gita*, VI. 5

186. SPEECH AT NATIONAL SCHOOL, CHANDPUR

May 10, 1925

The Mahatma met the students at National School and the proceedings there were of extreme interest. He first called those boys who would consider themselves to be most wicked. None offered at the call at first. Later on some boys came forward admitting that they were wicked boys. Mahatmaji then called who considered themselves to be ignorant and silly. A big lot of boys offered themselves as belonging to the latter category which aroused laughter. Mahatmaji then explained the virtues of a wicked boy as well as those of ignorant boys and he gave them some instructions which were heard with attention. He asked them to realize the growing poverty of the country. Boys who spin the charkhas, he said, could feel this. Therefore he urged them to try their best to spin yarn daily. The boy who kept no ideal in view in spite of many disappointments was a naughty boy, and an idiot boy was one who felt satisfaction at nothing. The more he produced yarn, the more would he think that he had done his duty. In the struggle for swaraj these sets of boys are indispensable. Finally Mahatma Gandhi urged them to be respectful towards their parents, to love their teachers and all the members of the family and to be on friendly terms with their colleagues. With these words he gave them his hearty blessing.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 13-5-1925

187. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CHANDPUR ¹

May 10, 1925

Gandhiji began by saying that, as the Muslims predominated in the meeting, he wanted to tell them about the talk he had with the Ali Brothers in connection with Hindu-Muslim unity. They had decided that they should not fight again. It was impossible to get swaraj as long as they did not live together. They should resolve not to quarrel with each other and they should work at the charkha. Neither the Hindu nor the Muslims were doing any spinning work.

Incidentally, Gandhiji referred to the fact that the Muslims wore less khaddar and did less spinning. He appealed to them to do more work. They should remember what splendid work Sir P. C. Ray did during the Eastern Bengal Floods and how by the help of the charkha he assisted many Muslim sisters. Gandhiji also appealed to the Muslim sisters to spin. Crores of Hindus were dying of starvation. For them there was no other alternative but to take to the charkha. For this reason he was travelling in Hindustan and was appealing to them take up charkha work. Then and then alone

¹ Gandhiji addressed another public meeting in the evening attended by over, 5,000 people.

would they be able to drive poverty out of the country. Everyone he had spoken to had agreed that the charkha should be worked and that foreign cloth should be discarded. In spite of their admission, they did not use swadeshi cloth. The reason was they did not love their country and secondly they had no regard for their country.

Referring to untouchability Gandhiji said that the *Namasudras* were suffering a great deal, though not so much as in Southern India.¹

The Hindu, 12-5-1925

188. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

Sunday [On or after *May 10, 1925*]²

DEAR BRIJKRISHNA,

Your letter. I trust you; but to seek financial assistance on someone's behalf is outside my province. If I were to act thus with my rich friends our relations would become defiled. In this matter you must solve your difficulties by your own efforts.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 2370

189. A WORKER'S DIFFICULTY

[*May 11, 1925*]

Many suggestions are being handed to me during my Bengal tour. I appreciate them all, even though I may not be able to adopt them. Here is one from a staunch worker :³

I am writing these notes on my silence day⁴. Satish Babu of the Khadi Pratisthan is sitting by me. I therefore handed the suggestion to

¹ Later Gandhiji addressed a women's meeting and advised them to follow in the footsteps of Sita, and not to put on foreign cloth.

² The letter appears to have been written after the one to the addressee on May 3, 1925. The Sunday following it was May 10.

³ Not reproduced here. The worker had pointed out the comparative coastliness of khaddar because of the high price of cotton which could be remedied only through extensive cultivation and hoped that Gandhiji would stress the importance of this during his tour of Bengal

⁴ Monday, May 11, 1925

him for reply as he knows the Bengal conditions much better than I can ever hope to. Here is his reply :

The writer thinks that the real difficulty about the spread of khaddar in Bengal lies in the high price of cotton. The remedy suggested is to introduce and encourage the cultivation of cotton.

It is surely a difficulty in Bengal that cotton is not grown everywhere. But it is not the only difficulty or a serious difficulty. Manchester buys her cotton from America and Bombay and sends her mill-products to India. Surely Bengal can get all the cotton she wants at any of the cotton marts of India. Lacs of rupees worth of cotton is grown in Bengal and sent away from the ports of Chittagong and Calcutta. Bengal does not utilize for home-spinning a fraction of the cotton she grows. She can use all her Chittagong and Comilla produce for home-spinning and buy what more she requires in the markets of Bihar and United Provinces.

The real difficulty in the way of the spread of khadi is neither its high price nor the absence of cultivation of cotton. What is wanting for the spread of khadi is a desire to spin and use khadi and an organization to create and cater for the desire.

The Ashram from which the writer sends the note may be made a centre for selling "cheap" cotton, i.e., cotton at fair market price. The Ashram might train up an expert in spinning and carding and then demonstrate to the sisters in the neighbourhood that with good slivers and a good charkha it is a pleasure to spin. It is only when spinning becomes irksome that imaginary difficulties about the spread of khadi crop up. If the sisters of Bengal are helped from organizations where charkha experts are in a mood to serve, then every difficulty will disappear and I may even see cultivators introducing cotton cultivation without much coaxing.

Spinning is the central process. There are processes before it and after it. Cotton cultivation, ginning and carding precede, spinning and weaving come after. We must confine our attention to efficient carding, spinning and weaving now. Serious effort made by determined men from efficient organizations will override all difficulties and make spinning a success in Bengal. I hope to see such a day in the near future.

Whilst I fully endorse the reply, I would add that the men require as much organizing for spinning as women. Without the men organizing, it would be most difficult to get the women to respond. We need an army of voluntary spinners before we shall be able to organize women spinners for hire. It is only through husbands or fathers or brothers that we may hope to improve the wheel. The vast majority of workers are males. They are not able even to see the manner in which the women are working. But from the spinning exhibitions I visit, I am able to imagine what is going on behind the

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As for cotton-growing, all the parts of Bengal are not fit for growing cotton. Importation to some extent will always be, therefore, necessary. Every new industry requires protection. State protection we may not get as yet. Voluntary protection is, therefore, the only remedy. It can be afforded by free spinning. That is one object of the Congress franchise. The second method is to beg cotton and, like Gujarat, sell slivers or cotton at half price and getting the yarn woven also at half price for those who would spin enough for their wants. Comparison with the mills is a useless pastime. It is conceivable that Japan and Manchester may even practically give away their cloth to kill the reviving cottage industry of home-spinning. There must be, even then, people who will not have foreign or mill-made cloth even as a gift. It is they through whom we may expect to spread the charkha and make it a success.

Young India, 21-5-1925

190. INTERVIEW TO HARDAYAL NAG

CHANDPUR,

[Before May 12, 1925]

Gandhiji was interviewed by Babu Hardayal Nag and gave replies to questions put to him.

Q[UESTION]: Do you still hold that swaraj cannot come from abroad?

A[NSWER]: Yes, most emphatically.

Q. Then why did you not controvert Mr. Das's new theory of swaraj by way of gift and necessarily within the Empire?

A. I do not think that Mr. Das has said any such thing in his presidential address at Faridpur. I read the address quite differently from what you do. For Deshbandhu Das does not say that it is necessarily within the British Empire. On the contrary, he adheres to the formula—"Within the Empire, if possible; without it, if necessary."

Q. Do you not feel that certain classes of people are trying to change the colour of administration only, but not its character?

A. I know that some people merely want to change the colour but not the character.

Q. I venture to suggest that the Swarajists are trying to add another class to these classes for capturing the services with certain amount of false power transferred to them.

A. I hope not; nor do I believe it is so. I know Deshbandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru. I am convinced that they will not be satisfied with mere change of colour.

Q. I cite the Calcutta Corporation as an instance. It is now manned by Swarajists, as far as possible. The Swarajists, I suggest, want to capture the provincial and local administrations only to man them with Swarajists.

A. I do not know what is happening in the Calcutta Corporation.

Q. I and many others think that swaraj must grow from within and it must be built in the village and we accept charkha as the only weapon for the foundation for it. Do you agree?

A. I literally endorse your view. But we feel that our task is very difficult on account of the apathy of the Swarajists. In Bengal, almost all the Congress organizations are in their hands and they have no

faith in charkha. That being the case, charkha is suffering most on account of want of provincial or district organizations.

Q. Do you approve of any separate organization in favour of charkha and khadi movement?

A. I shall be very sorry if I discover that the Swarajists have no faith in the spinning-wheel. I am aware that some of them do not possess the same faith in it that you and I have, but so far as my knowledge goes, I have not met a single Swarajist who has shown his disbelief in the spinning-wheel. Assuming that they do not believe in the charkha at all, I am still unable to understand your deduction that their apathy is hampering your or my progress. On the contrary, you and I should to that extent make greater effort. I, therefore, do not consider a separate organization for the development of spinning necessary, so long as the Swarajists do not repudiate the spinning-wheel.

Q. Do you recognize the fact that the two parties are not pulling on well in their respective work?

A. I do not recognize the fact, but if the two parties are not pulling on well, I would then blame the non-Swarajists more than the Swarajists, for the simple reason that the former had not the slightest occasion to stand in the latter's path. They at least have, I expect, made their final choice. Let them abide by it and live up to it.

Q. But considering the fact that you are the accredited leader of both the parties, does your duty end in blaming this party or that party?

A. Yes, certainly, because though I may be the nominal head of both the parties, I am myself a non-Swarajist. Therefore, I am entitled to blame the non-Swarajists more.

Q. Many of us have of course individually implicit faith in non-violent non-co-operation as a means to win swaraj. Now it is evident that the Swarajists are trying to discredit non-co-operation only for their class or party purposes and have already made gestures for co-operation, of course on certain terms quite immaterial to the people of the country. Under the circumstances, in his presidential address at Faridpur, Mr. Das has declared non-co-operation as a failure. In your speech, subsequently made at Faridpur, you laid stress on non-violence and truthfulness, but you did not say a word to save non-co-operation from the attack of Deshbandhu Das. Will you illuminate us on this point?

A. I have discovered no attack on the part of Mr. Das on non-co-operation. Therefore, non-co-operation was not a relevant matter. Moreover, I have debarred myself from saying a word upon non-co-

operation from the congress platform, being the author of the resolution suspending non-co-operation at Belgaum. But my own individual view is known to the world and my personal abstention from co-operation is an ocular demonstration of my view.

Q. Of course at Faridpur you spoke not as President of the All-India Congress Committee, but in your individual character and the phrases you used there were non-violence and truthfulness but not a word about non-co-operation. To my mind, non-violence without non-co-operation is meaningless. There is non-violence even in cowardice. If you have a firm faith in non-violent non-co-operation, how can you allow any Swarajist to speak against it without any protest?

A. As I have told you there is not a word, so far as I am aware, said in Deshbandhu's address against non-co-operation. And we should also recollect that I was speaking on the creed of the Congress. The creed of the Congress makes no mention of non-co-operation. But it does make mention of "peaceful and legitimate means" and I took care in my speech to say that I paraphrased these two terms by the adjectives : non-violence and truthfulness.

Q. Your declaration at Faridpur is that you have given your general power of attorney to Deshbandhu Das to do what he is doing in the Council. Anyone can take it by implication that his performances in the Council are on behalf of you as principal, he being only an agent of you. No one can be blamed for taking such a view of your statement according to the law relating to principal and agent. Is that the case? Do you support also what Deshbandhu Das does in the Council?

A. When I spoke of Deshbandhu Das or Swarajists being agents I spoke, as an Irishman once spoke of himself as one of the proprietors of the Empire, as one of the shareholders of the concern called the Indian National Congress. And the Congress having given authority to the Swarajists to prosecute their Council programme, I think I was quite correct in describing the Swarajists as holders of my general power of attorney, so far as their Council work is concerned. I need not, therefore, on that account endorse every detail of the Swarajists' policy in the provincial Councils or Legislative Assembly. As a wise and practical man, having once given my general power of attorney to the agents of my own choice, I do not bother my head about what they are doing.

Q. If the Swarajists succeed in obtaining a concession from the bureaucracy based on a certain agreement, will you be a party to that agreement?

A. Oh, when the terms of any agreement with the bureaucracy are out, I shall have to consider them. I have issued no power of

attorney to anybody to conclude any settlement with the Government. I therefore reserve, like every individual Congressman, my full right to scrutinize any terms of settlement that may be proposed for national acceptance.

Q. Do you understand what Deshbandhu Das means by provincial autonomy?

A. I can guess.

Q. Then what is it?

A. I take the word in the dictionary sense of the term.

Q. Can't I expect a clear answer from you on this point?

A. That is the answer. For I have closely followed Deshbandhu's address at Faridpur, but he has not gone into details there. Therefore, I am entitled to give provincial autonomy the meaning that is given to it in the English language.

Q. Is not the Faridpur speech liable to the interpretation that Deshbandhu Das has changed his views with reference to provincial autonomy?

A. I should think not. That is certainly not my impression.

Q. Then why has he fought shy of the phrase in his presidential address?

A. Has he laid any stress on this matter, I mean upon provincial autonomy? There was no occasion. All that he has laid stress upon is swaraj and swaraj is a term which to me is more inclusive because it goes farther than provincial autonomy.

Q. But can you illuminate us why he studiously avoided the word which he has been preaching so long?

A. For the simple reason that he has used a more general term, an inclusive term.

Q. Can you guess the ultimate result of the work of the Swarajists in Council?

A. I do not need to. Because whenever I want to understand what they have done, I have got the newspaper records to fall back upon. Further, I have got my own measure for gauging the worth of all such work. And I know that it can be no more and no less than the work that you and I are doing outside and internally. Because those who have gone to the Councils have declared and must declare that their potency depends upon the work done by the people themselves and the power evolved by them for self-rule, I suggest that measure for your and everybody's acceptance. In that case, we need not search the newspaper files nor resort to the dangerous pastime of guessing.

Q. Do you not feel that non-co-operation is suffering most on account of

your giving a long rope to the Swarajists?

A. I do not think so at all. Rather, I hold that it is suffering because of the weakness of non-co-operators.

Q. Are you aware that the Swarajists have not yet changed their methods?

A. What method?

Q. Their methods and procedure. I cite this instance. Do you know anything of the supersession of Dr. P. C. Ray's election as President of the Bengal provincial Conference at Faridpur?

A. I know nothing of it. What was it?

Q. At the time of election Dr. Ray stood second, while Mr. B. N. Sasmal stood first. Mr. Sasmal having resigned, Dr. Ray's election was set aside and Mr. Das was elected President. Do you not know anything about it?

A. I know nothing about it.

Q. If I cite this as an instance of their method, what have you got to say?

A. I cannot give any opinion without hearing the Swarajists and without knowing the full facts.

Q. Are you willing to enquire?

A. I would not lose my time over a thing that is finished.

Q. I bring this matter to your notice as a vivid example of the Swarajists' method. What have you to say to this?

A. I know nothing of their methods whatsoever. Without examining the instances, I am not able to pass any opinion, as I do not want to sit in judgment on the Swarajists or anybody, specially where there is no necessity for it.

Q. When you find the Swarajists have not yet changed their methods, can you accuse the puritans of incompetency?

A. In the first instance, you are assuming that the methods of the Swarajists are questionable. You would, therefore, have to satisfy me on that point. Secondly, I have not accused those whom you are pleased to call puritans, I do not know with what right, of their incompetency. But I have accused them of want of faith in their own mission. And even now, taking for granted for the sake of argument that the Swarajists' methods are questionable, what has that got to do with the purity of the puritans? Need I be impure, if the whole world around me is impure or is not that the time for testing the strength of my purity? I may only add that the puritans have not understood the implication of their claim. If they want to make good their claim, they should not grumble, they should not find fault with anybody in the

world, far less with their erstwhile co-workers, but they should silently and surely set their faces against obstacles and they should shine the brightest when the obstacles are the greatest.

Q. Is not the present attitude of the Swarajists worse than their open hostility?

A. If the Swarajists are really apathetic to charkha, I grant that it would be far better to be openly hostile than to be secretly apathetic.

Q. If the Swarajists are really apathetic, is not a separate organization or charkha and khaddar advisable?

A. Yes, certainly.

Q. If that is so, is it premature to think of a separate all-India non-co-operation organization?

A. I think it is premature for the present moment. We must finish this year of grace before pronouncing judgment or taking a decided step.

Q. Many orthodox non-co-operators feel embarrassed to work together with the Swarajists. Can you suggest other remedy?

A. A good non-co-operator ought not to feel embarrassed in working with the Swarajists. For what is the meaning of working with the Swarajist except to work charkha together with him if you have not got to work together with him in the Councils? I suggest a good non-co-operator will work even with the Viceroy, if the Viceroy will kindly sit down to the charkha.

Q. But Mahatmaji, you should not ignore facts, they are there.

A. I suggest then they are not non-co-operators because they have not understood the secret of non-co-operation. You non-co-operate with measures, not with men.

Q. We appreciate your view, but the fact is that we feel embarrassed. They are obstructing us.

A. I have not seen any statement to corroborate the charge that they are obstructing. If they are not spinning, that is not obstruction. They will obstruct you, when you go to the villages, ask the masses to spin and they say spinning is no good. That is obstruction. But I have not known that that charge can be levelled against a single Swarajist.

Q. Do you not know that the scheme suggested by them for the reconstruction of the villages does not contain any scheme of charkha?

A. I can simply say that it was the Swarajists who organized the exhibition of khaddar at Faridpur and it was a pure charkha

exhibition. Deshbandhu Das has laid stress in his presidential address on the constructive programme in the Congress, without which he held that they could achieve nothing. I may further add that I know the family of at least one Swarajist which is devoted to spinning as much as you or I can possibly be.

Q. Your reference to the Faridpur Conference reminds me of another objectionable method of the Swarajists. They invited you to kill the Non-co-operation Movement in Bengal, but they have been disappointed.

A. You are too suspicious, too diffident.

Q. But man proposes, God disposes. Mr. Desai wrote to me from Delhi that Mahatmaji would not visit Bengal very soon. But when you accepted the invitation of the Faridpur Conference, they did not think you would visit Bengal. But they were simply non-plussed when you accepted our invitation. It was to us a heavenly blessing. Do you not know that they did not want you to visit Bengal?

A. I think you are hyper-suspicious.

Q. Well, it is my mental attitude.

A. You are hopelessly wrong, because my tour has been jointly arranged by the Swarajists and non-Swarajists. It is the Swarajists who are taking me to Chittagong and Noakhali, because Chittagong and Noakhali were not on Satish Babu's tour programme.

Q. Did you not notice that the orthodox non-co-operators were conspicuous by their absence at Faridpur?

A. I do not know. Probably they were. If so, it was their fault.

Q. Can you ascribe any reason for it?

A. I cannot, except this that if they were absent, it was their fault.

Q. I suggest the reason is that that was the only way to save their life.

A. I think it is a libel.

Q. Do you feel that this unnatural combination of those having faith in constructive work and those having no faith in Council obstruction is creating a political scepticism in the mass-mind?

A. Mass-mind responds to work and nothing but work. Immediately there is solid work, self-sacrifice, the mass-mind sees it instinctively. Otherwise, the mass-mind goes to sleep like Kumbhakarna¹. It does not listen at all.

¹ Brother of Ravana in the *Ramayana*, who slept for half the year at a stretch

Q. Do you think any political education is necessary for educating the masses?

A. Yes, that is charkha.

Q. If that is so, who should do it?

A. Of course, those who have kept awake a living faith in it. They should become the instructors of the masses.

Q. Do they not need any organization for it?

A. I am now coming from Calcutta, seeing two young men doing their work perfectly, effectively and systematically without any monetary or others aid. They need no organization. That is the beauty of the charkha.

Q. Is any change of heart possible in the hearts of our rulers who boast of tiger qualities?

A. Change of heart is possible, otherwise non-co-operation is of no use. Let there be first a change of heart among the non-co-operators, then there will be a change of heart in the rulers. I have no doubt in my mind about it.

Q. I only refer you to a case in the animal world. Do you think real friendship possible between a tiger and a sheep?

A. No, but that analogy cannot be carried to the human platform because man is man, whether he believes in spinning or in Council obstruction, whether he believes in the cult of the tyrant and the slave or in the brotherhood of man.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 14-5-1925

191. LETTER TO G. V. KETKAR

ON THE TRAIN,

May 12, 1925

DEAR MR. KETKAR¹

I have read with pleasure the article on the *Gita Beej* sent me by Mr. Kelkar². I really do not think that the *Gita* is a scientific treatise to be treated scientifically. We may, however, evolve science out of it.

¹ Editor, *Kesari*

² Narasinh Chintaman Kelkar; editor of the *Kesari* and *The Mahratta*; a close associate of Tilak; sometime Secretary of the Indian National Congress.

Your selection is certainly ingenious and supported by good reasoning. Whether it is the best, I cannot say.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

G. V. KETKAR, ESQ.

THE "KASARI" OFFICE

POONA CITY

From a photostat : G.N. 7963

192. LETTER TO C. RAMALINGA REDDY

May 12, 1925

DEAR MR. REDDY,

I have your letter. I am writing this on the train carrying me to Chittagong. I realize fully that the problem in the South is an exceptional problem though it is the same disease at bottom. In my opinion the construction programme too must fail not because the Scheme is bad but because we are not ready. Internal quarrels and jealousies leave us no time for anything else. The masses are untouched by them. Whether in the South or here in Bengal I find no difficulty in getting thousands [to] listen to the Congress message of the wheel. I can find no substitute for it, nor can I find at the present moment any addition to it. Untouchability is there. But I cannot find through it work for thousands. I have therefore practically staked my all on the wheel. Look at the untouchable problem in the South or the non-Brahmin question, who wants swaraj? Are we to divide ourselves into watertight compartments and show this is swaraj?

I am therefore more interested in the news you give me about your sister spinning. She is undoubtedly bringing swaraj nearer. Tell her, if I had any money and if I was a gambler, I would put my all on her and what is more expect to win.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy : C. W. 11333. Courtesy : Dr. N. Rama Murthy and C. A. Reddi

193. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CHITTAGONG¹

May 12, 1925

Mahatma Gandhi in the course of his speech said he was grateful for the addresses, but was sorry that he could not bring either of the Ali Brothers with him. He further regretted that Mr. Sen Gupta was also absent. Last time when he visited their place, he was prohibited from speaking by the orders of the Government. He thanked the Municipality for the splendid work they were doing. He did not know whether it was useful to make education compulsory. There were two opinions on the subject. He, however, promised to think over the matter more carefully. He thanked the Municipality for stopping drink and making its employees wear khaddar. Nothing could be done except by khaddar. Civil disobedience was an impossibility without khaddar. The charkha was necessary to drive poverty out of the country. His movement was for self-purification. He would never say anything which he did not do himself.²

I have been just now asked to say a few words in English. I know the Bengali infatuation for English. You have heard every word I said translated fairly accurately in Bengali, your mother tongue. I can't imagine I can drive truth home with greater force, or in clearer words, through the medium of a language which is as foreign to you as it is to me. However, I have to do my work and if I convert a few people to the cult of khaddar or convince, if they are not already convinced, a few of them to the truths of non-violence through the medium of the English language, I should do so. And therefore, if I take up your time just now by speaking in English, it is merely to flatter those who want me to speak in English, so that, perchance, if they have not yet seen the very simple truth that I have been speaking to the masses of India, they might be able to see it.

One of my co-workers said some years ago, writing in connection with the spinning-wheel, that its very simplicity frightened the educated classes. He said, and he said it with great truth in it, that because of its simplicity the educated Indians fail to understand its beauty and grand meaning. Simple as the spinning-wheel is, I am absolutely convinced, after years of continuous, deep and powerful

¹ Gandhiji arrived in Chittagong at 6 a.m. and addressed an hour later, a meeting of over 20 thousand people. Three addresses were presented to him on behalf of the Municipality, the Gandhi Reception Committee and the Cess-payers' Association of Chittagong. Gandhiji first spoke in Hindi and then in English.

² This paragraph is from a report in *The Hindu*, 13-5-1925. What follows is a report of Gandhiji's speech in English extracted from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 15-5-1925.

thinking, that there is nothing before India so efficacious for her many ills as the spinning-wheel and khaddar.

The problems of our dear country are so vast, so complex that nothing but a very simple remedy will solve the riddle. The complex character of the education and the training that we have received has confounded our thoughts, paralysed our brains and, unless we have something presented to us in an inexplicable manner, we refuse to see the truth that lies in it.

But if you tax your brains or, better still, if you retire into your private rooms to bend your knee before God and ask Him to guide you, He will guide your hand and put it unerringly on the spinning-wheel. We have spoken, we have delivered speeches, we have written in newspapers, we have published books, we have even made researches. But the age of speaking, the age of writing, the age of delivering oration is gone, never to return again. The age of action has commenced. You have to battle not against a race of speakers, but you have to give battle to the race of born workers—a race that has not known what it is to yield, a race that has inflexible determination, a race which is made of some of the finest soldiers in the world. No diplomacy that we can call to our aid will be able to do the task that is before everyone of us. You want mass consciousness, you want co-operation of the masses? You want Councillors to speak with power. At the present moment there is no power in their words—there is no power in their resolutions—not because they don't know how to speak. Deshbandhu has shown how he can outwit the Government in defeating its resolution, defeating its policy. But he can do little unless he has power behind him. You and I, everyone of us, can't go to the Councils. I have said repeatedly I don't believe in Councils. But I have granted, those who believe in Councils should go there. But I want to arm the Councillors with power. I do not want them to become discredited after they have gone there. I want them to be listened to with respect and attention by the Government. How is that to be done? Not by holding mass meetings, not by passing resolutions, not by approving of their policy of resolutions, but by giving some power to them. And you will not, cannot, give them power unless you have evolved it for yourselves, in yourselves. We have not got power. I defy anybody to match the violence of the Government with violence. No matter what may have been [done] in other parts of the world, I am positively certain that we should not attain our freedom by violent means.

I have placed, therefore, a non-violent programme with full knowledge of what I am doing and not because it is a religion, as it is with me, but because it is expedient. It is the only politics for the country. And he who has any political wisdom must come to the conclusion that violent means will serve no earthly purpose. I understand, I appreciate the impatience of those who are burning to deliver the country from the shackles that bind her. I yield to none in my desire to free the country from the shackles. But I consider myself to be a sane man. I regard myself as having a great deal of common sense. I regard myself as a man who has been something of the world. I am born a fighter from the earliest days of my youth. I am fighting even though it may be with my brothers, friends, wife, children, my co-religionists and, if it is Mussalman, with Mussalmans. But throughout my fight I have understood that one weapon is common to all these fights and that is the weapon of non-violence.

I could not fight my wife with violence, I could not fight my brothers with violence, I refuse to fight the Mussalmans with violence and I dare not fight the Hindus, some of whom are opposing me on the question of untouchability, with violence. I, therefore, deduce from that fund of experience that I cannot fight Englishmen with violence. You have seen in one of my writings that I have converted more Englishmen to love India than any single one of the present generation. I know it is a large claim, it is a proud claim, but it is the claim of the humble man, who has put forth that claim in all humility. I feel, if we are to fight our battle non-violently it will not be by mere words. Non-violence must be expressed in action. Action without intermission, without rest, without recreation, without the slightest pause, with continuous determination—action with the fullest faith in its efficacy is the only remedy for India and the only remedy that I can place in the hands of those little girls and boys, in the hands of the grownup people, in the hands of poets and philosophers, in the hands of sannyasins, politicians, learned professors and sweepers, in the hands of women and in the hands of robust men. The only universal remedy I can discover today is the spinning-wheel. Multiply the force of this charkha and spin until it is done by 3 hundred millions of men and then tell me what its power will be, tell me then what it will not do. Is there nothing that we can claim to our credit? Throughout all this long, dreary forty years of political life, we have not been able to show to the world one simple action done to perfection and to fulfilment. We have placed before ourselves many programmes, I place before

the nation only one programme and ask the nation to fulfil that programme before it can dare think of any other. Is it an impossible programme that you and I should wear nothing but khaddar, although it may be costly? It may be coarse. If it is costly, than, tear it into half and do cover your nakedness with half the cloth and it will go to your credit in the book of life. If it is coarse, then, for the sake of India, you will wear coarse cloth. Understand that the slavery of India is coarser than the coarsest khaddar, understand that the pauperism of India is infinitely coarser than the coarsest khaddar that can be produced in Chittagong. If you have heart to think for famishing millions of India, if you have heart to spin, then spin till your hands are paralysed and wear khaddar till you perspire in the coarsest khadi and then you will find that the swaraj of my dream—and of your dream—will break forth in the horizon and then you will dance in joy.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15-5-1925

194. SPEECH TO STUDENTS, CHITTAGONG

May 13, 1925

Well, then I would say that true national education begins with training in spinning. Just as every boy in England receives naval training and you in Bengal normally know swimming and rowing, so the seven lakh villages in the country should know, for their own protection, spinning as a subsidiary occupation besides agriculture. Even in America, they attach importance to a subsidiary occupation, though the people there have no problem of the joint family and enjoy self-government. In India, no farmer can have enough to live on without some small extra income and he can get it only through spinning. Weaving will not serve the purpose, for it cannot be done only in spare time. I have been to the women's meeting and given them demonstration in spinning. Here is my spinning-wheel in this small bag.¹ You will not think it a particularly good one, but the one which was fine I gave away to Miss Ghosh in Faridpur. She is the head of the education department. She liked it and has written to me saying she will spin and also teach her friends to spin. You can ply it even while you are talking with friends, or relaxing in their company, or thinking about problems in geometry. Shepherds on our side ply it as

¹ Gandhiji held up his *takli*.

they walk. They watch their sheep and ply the *takli* at the same time. If you do not understand what I am saying, go and ask Satish Babu. He has joined this movement having given up his chemical works and his income. He will convince you better than I can because his is the brain of a scientist. If you feel that you should perform this daily *yajna* for the sake of your starving countrymen, start it right now.

Now tell me, how many of you are convinced of what I have said.¹

Well, then, how many of you promise to spin?²

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 24-5-1925

195. SPEECH AT TRADERS' MEETING, CHITTAGONG

May 13, 1925

My relations with merchants have always been close. I am sure in my mind that it is through merchants that we lost India and it is through them that we shall win it back. India's freedom cannot be secured through the educated classes. We do not know of any instance in the world of a country's freedom having been defended by its educated classes. Those who save a country are the traders and the soldiers. It was not through defeat in battle that India lost its freedom, it was through trade. I tell you, therefore, that when I get the fullest co-operation of merchants in my work, the country will have its freedom for the asking and I urge you to make your full contribution to the public cause of spreading the use of khadi. You should spin for half an hour daily by way of *yajna* and wear pure khadi. One or two of my millionaire friends spin and wear khadi. Why should you not do likewise? You can also help with both money and intelligence. If you want you can do more work than I do. I appeal to you to contribute to this cause with your body, mind and wealth.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 25-5-1925

¹ Between 50 and 60 students raised their hands.

² About 20 students raised their hands.

196. KHADDAR IN KARNATAK

I gladly publish the following¹ from Sjt. H. S. Kaujalgi about an experiment that is being made in the district of Bijapur for cheapening khaddar :

This idea of collecting cotton has certainly caught on. Mr. Bharucha reported the other day good collections in East Khandesh in which the Marwaris and the Parsis joined the local people in giving their quota. I would appreciate reports from the other places where similar experiments are being made.

Young India, 14-5-1925

197. NOTES

WEAVERS' COMPLAINT

With reference to the yarn sent by members under the Ahmedabad A.I.C.C. resolution, a worker writes :

The weavers are complaining that there is no twist to the fine yarn. A large quantity will, therefore, be useless for weaving. The spinners seem more to have cared for the credit of having spun than for the quality of their spinning. I think you did not handle the hanks there. Some of the weavers are even returning the warp after sizing. Their second complaint is regarding the different sizes of hanks. On account of these avoidable defects, the weavers tell me they are not able to weave even one yard per day and thus can hardly earn even two annas a day.

This is a legitimate complaint. I have said in these pages that yarn that cannot be easily woven is not yarn at all, even as bread that cannot be eaten is no bread at all. The complaint is proof of great indifference on the part of the spinning members. Work ill-done is sometimes worse than no work. A lawyer who does not handle his case skilfully steals his client's money. A doctor who carelessly treats his patient steals his patient's money and may even be guilty of manslaughter. Similarly, a spinner who spins indifferently and sends yarn that is not tested steals merit.

Under swaraj, we shall have the reins of government in our own

¹ Not reproduced here. The correspondent had written that he along with a few others had collected cotton by begging from door to door. It was woven into and cloth made available to the people at a comparatively low price.

hands. How will it do if the officials skip over their work, as spinners seem to have skipped over their spinning? Spinning is a simple operation but it is a test of our merit. In that sense, any other such work will no doubt be an equal test. But spinning has been selected as it is the most needed in the country. There can be only one universal test and, in order to be universal, it should be simple, easy to learn, and should occupy the least time of each individual, so as to leave him or her free to devote time and attention to other pursuits, whether public or private. That test is spinning, and if even those who do take it up do their work negligently, indifferently or unskilfully, they will have failed in the easiest practical test imaginable. It may be that people do not like spinning or do not believe in it. Then, the straightest course would be not to spin at all. But to spin without putting one's heart into it is to deceive oneself and the nation.

THE HANDLOOM

The Director of Information has circulated a memorandum on handloom weaving done under the Department of Industries and Commerce. I publish below the salient extracts from the memorandum:¹

May I point out to the Department that the attempt to introduce the handloom in the homes of agriculturists is foredoomed to failure? A little knowledge of the agricultural life will demonstrate the impracticability of such introduction. Hand-weaving is a long process requiring sustained labour and in itself demanding several processes at which more than one person is required to work at one and the same time. This is not possible in a peasant's cottage. Hence, from times immemorial, hands-weaving has been a separate occupation and an independent and sole means of livelihood. A peasant requires an auxiliary occupation which he can take up or leave at will. Such an occupation for the millions is only hand-spinning. There are, no doubt, other such occupations for utilizing odd moments. But no other than hand-spinning will be found to serve millions of men and women. Hence if the Department of Industries will justify its existence and will think in terms of the millions rather than of individuals and of India rather than of England, then it will devote its attention principally to hand-spinning, organize it among the villagers and

¹ Not reproduced here. It gave an account of the progress made in handloom weaving in the preceding 15 years. The Department had opened several schools in the agricultural areas to train people in weaving and dyeing.

make improvements in the various methods of hand-spinning. I am glad to note here that the kindred department in Bengal is turning its attention to hand-spinning though still in a perfunctory manner. This hand-spinning is the one thing in which the Government, if it at all means well, can co-operate with people in making it a success. We have often been told to co-operate with the Government. The proper and natural thing, however, is for the Government to co-operate with the people, anticipate their wants and provide for them. I would also take the liberty of pointing out to the Department that, until they control all the processes cotton has to go through before it is brought to the loom, the latter will act merely as feeder to Manchester, Japan or even Bombay. Whereas the business of the Department is or should be to teach the villager to subject the produce of his field to all the processes in his own home or village, so that he has a variety of occupation and so that he may not feel stranded and helpless when famine or flood overtakes him and leaves him without crops and without work.

Young India, 14-5-1925

198. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

NOAKHALI,
May 14, 1925

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have your letter. We certainly go to Shantiniketan and meet at Burdwan.

I note what you say about Mr. Mcmillan. If a man refrains from untruth for fear of punishment after death, is it any good? Shall we prefer destruction of moral bonds to their existence if they are due to force of public opinion? A friend who advocates birthcontrol frankly admits that he does not believe in the moral tie and that promiscuous intercourse is an ideal state. I wonder!

With love,

Yours,

MOHAN

C. F. ANDREWS, ESQ.
C/O MR. CHALIHA
JORHAT
ASSAM

From a photostat : G. N. 966

199. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

*Thursday, Vaishakha Vad 6 [May 14, 1925]*¹

CHI. VASUMATI,

Your letter reached me here today. Do not be sorry if all the property is gone; and what does it matter even if the house is lost? Navibandar is the place where you can go just now because Devdas² has gone there. He is hardly likely to stay there long. But it is a quiet place. I have not myself seen it but have heard much about it. I hope you are well. Keep writing to me.

Blessings from

BAPU

CHI. VASUMATI DHIMATRAM,

DOULATRAM KASIRAM CO., ETC.

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 462. Courtesy : Vasumati Pandit

200. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

*Vaishakha Vad 6 [May 14, 1925]*³

CHI. MANI⁴

I was delighted to have your long letter. It is indeed very difficult to work among women. Nevertheless you should patiently do what you can. Dahyabhai must have gone to Mount Abu or to Navibandar. I have not forgotten about the conch-shell bangles you wanted. They are available in Dacca, which I shall be reaching in about three days. Has Father had any opportunity to go for a change?

Blessings from

BAPU

CHI. MANIBEHN

C/O VALLABHBHAI PATEL, BARRISTER

AHMEDABAD

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna patro—Manibehn patelne, p. 22

¹ Devdas was in Navibandar in 1925. In that year *Vaishakha Vad 6* fell on May 14.

² Devdas Gandhi (1900-57); Gandhiji's youngest son; was associated with Gandhiji in most of his public activities and suffered imprisonment; Editor, *The Hindustan Times*, 1940-57

³ As in the source

⁴ Daughter of Vallabhbhai Patel

201. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, NOAKHALI

May 14, 1925

Mr. Gandhi replying to the addresses said that he thanked them for the addresses presented to him. He was sorry to hear that Sjt. Satyendra Mitter was not present, but that he was in jail in Mandalay. He hoped that shortly he would come back. Speaking of Hindu-Muslim unity he said his sense of responsibility was double as none of the Ali Brothers was present. They were busy in their own work. He had heard that there was no disunion among them, but now disunion was visible in them. He said that both communities were unwilling to follow his advice. Whenever he found that there was disunion, he thought both were responsible for it. If they were determined to be united, there was no power on earth to separate them and he said that, if they did not clear up their minds, they both would be responsible. So long they had lived in unity and friendship.

Referring to untouchability he said that, so long as it would last, it was impossible for India to advance. Being a *sanatani* Hindu, he said that there was no such thing as untouchability in the Hindu religion. He thanked them for the attempt to uplift the class of untouchables, but he was told that some Brahmins were thwarting them. But he was sure that they would make a determined attempt to abolish untouchability. He hoped that the Noakhali people would do all in their power to remove it altogether. Further, he hoped they would explain this matter to washermen.

Concluding, he said that they were aware that many people had no work for four months in the year and, as a result, they were becoming poorer. All over the world, agriculture was supplemented by some work. And in Hindusthan, there was nothing like the charkha. That is why he called it *Annapurna*. From the fields they would get rice, but through the charkha alone they could improve their condition. He emphasized that the middle-class people should work at least half an hour daily on the charkha wherever they were. If they, for the sake of the poor people, worked on the charkha, there was no greater work. Hence he had been travelling in various places to emphasize on this point. Subsequently, he referred to erosion of Noakhali by river.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 16-5-1925

¹ Gandhiji was presented with four addresses at the meeting in the Collectorate compound attended by over 25,000 people, most of them Muslims.

202. INTERVIEW TO TEACHERS AT NOAKHALI

May 14, 1925

On the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Noakhali on the 14th instant, an interview was sought for and granted by him to some representatives of the District Teachers' Association. The deputationists put some searching questions to Mahatmaji regarding the present system of education and asked how, under the existing circumstances, the teachers could render real service to the country. Mahatmaji smilingly began by saying, "Spin and spin still more." He then advised the teachers that they should change the entire moral atmosphere of educational institutions by making impressions upon the minds of boys who are completely under their control by the example of their own character and work. If the teachers, he said, were earnest in their efforts, no amount of Government interference through the agency of the Inspectorate could thwart their aims and objects, as the teachers were not Government servants. Though the teachers of Bengal, and for the matter that of the whole of India, form a distinct class, yet no united effort at this stage could be expected. But individual earnest workers should bear their part manfully. Concluding, Mahatmaji remarked that he had in the past pointed out the duties and responsibilities of teachers and would do so more emphatically and definitely through the columns of his paper.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 21-5-1925

203. REPLY TO WOMEN'S ADDRESS, NOAKHALI

May 14, 1925

Who says that woman is dependent on others? The Shastras say nothing of the sort. Sita was Rama's better half and enjoyed empire over his heart. Neither was Damayanti¹ dependent. Who will say, after reading the Mahabharata, that Draupadi² was dependent on others? Who will call Draupadi dependent, Draupadi who, when the Pandavas failed to protect her, saved herself by an appeal to Lord Krishna? We cherish as sacred the names of seven women as chaste and virtuous wives. Were they dependent? A woman who has the strength to preserve her purity, to defend her virtue—to call such a woman dependent is to murder language and violate dharma.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 31-5-1925

¹ Wife of King Nala, in the *Mahabharata*

² Wife of the five Pandava princes, in the *Mahabharata*

204. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, COMILLA¹

May 15, 1925

Mahatmaji replied suitably saying that the addresses might be presented in Bengali. He would, he said, appreciate it better if, in future, those who wanted to give him addresses would do so either in Bengali or in Hindi. He was told that Comilla proposed to go forward, but found facts not bearing out this statement. He said he was not in the least sorry for being instrumental in introducing the charkha as franchise for the Congress. They admitted the truth that their work should begin in the villages; but let them ask any worker, and he (the worker) would unhesitatingly reply that the charkha was the only remedy—that was the surest way of removing the growing poverty of the masses. Mahatmaji then thanked the people of the locality for living together in perfect harmony and emphasized its absolute necessity for attaining swaraj.

He regretted that Ali Brothers did not accompany him. Maulana Shaukat Ali did not like to leave Bombay before finishing his work there and Maulana Mahomed Ali could not leave Delhi as he was busy with two papers. But he had not come to Comilla to tell new things. In one address there was a tone of despair, but the note of despair was throughout India. He was not sorry for the franchise for the membership of the Congress. He could think of no medicine for India except the charkha. He did not ask the middle-class people to take to charkha for their bread, but they were to be examples to the poor and make a sacrifice for Hindusthan. Besides this, Hindus and Muslims must cleanse their hearts and in this there is happily no difference between the two communities. In conclusion, he dealt with the question of untouchability.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 17-5-1925

205. SPEECH TO STUDENTS²

COMILLA,

May 15, 1925

Mahatmaji addressed the students in English. He thanked them for the clear exposition of their position and reminded them that the future of India lay upon her youths. He again emphasized the meaning of the ideal of swaraj which was dharma raj as opposed to *adharma* raj. He asked them to observe *brahmacharya* and made them

¹ Addresses were presented to Gandhiji, at a public meeting in the morning, by the Municipality, the District Board, the Traders' Association, Ryots' Association and Santisena.

² In an address presented to Gandhiji, the students stated that only two per cent of them spun and wore pure khadi. This poor response was due to their lack of faith in the charkha and their indolence.

realize the grave responsibilities they had to undertake in the regeneration of the country. He asked them to read books, but that, in his opinion, should occupy only second place, for the primary duty was to form their character without which all learning was of no avail. Mahatmaji stressed upon the fact that the charkha would help them in the formation of their character.

Analysing the reasons of the negligence of the charkha, Mahatmaji assigned it mainly to their failure to appreciate the groaning poverty of the masses. As to the reference that the charkha did not give return for labour, he mildly admonished them and said this habit of calculation ought not to disfigure their lives from boyhood. They should, he said, view the matter from a higher point of view and retain faith in the charkha. Let them not see to their own comforts, but let them feel that every yarn spun by them was nearing the solution of India's problems. The remedy lay in their hands and he hoped the students would act up to his programme.

Referring to the Hindu-Muslim problem, he said that those elderly people who wanted Government employment and who wanted to go to the Councils might fight, but the students had no time nor business to do it.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 17-5-1925

206. REPLY TO WELCOME ADDRESS¹, COMILLA

May 15, 1925

It will be a mere formality on my part to thank you for this welcome address, for, as you yourselves have admitted, I too have had a share in bringing this Ashram into existence.² When I was preparing to visit Bengal, I had a keen desire to meet young men like you and see their work. I know very well the sacrifices which they have made. I know that, until we have many such persons in the country who come forward to make sacrifices, we cannot hope for swaraj. For every young man, renunciation should be his enjoyment. I have never believed that renunciation means suffering, and, if anyone believes that it is so, his renunciation will not endure. Hence, whenever in the course of my tours I come across instances of renunciation and see young men giving up positions of Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000 a month and accepting just a few pice for their livelihood, I do not feel unhappy. On the contrary, I feel that such youths have lost little, having freed themselves from the burden of heavy emoluments.

¹ Presented by Abhoy Ashram; the speech has been extracted from Mahadev Desai's report.

² When Gandhiji was in Bengal in 1920, he had approved the scheme of founding this Ashram.

But I wish to stress one thing, for when we give up a thing for the sake of service, we generally embrace something else in its place. I know that some young men think of self-sacrifice as sufficient in itself. But this is a great error. While giving up something, one should know what other work one must take up. Only then will our life be filled with contentment. We should thus use discrimination in all our activities. According to me, the youths who come forward today to serve the country should have before them only one aim—how to provide work for the idle millions. They will see then that we have no other means of doing so except the spinning-wheel. Hence I regard the medical work and the running of a [medical] school here as unimportant activities.¹ Both these activities have a place only in so far as they can supplement the spinning movement. I was, therefore, glad to learn that in your school, too, spinning and other khadi work is going on. I should advise the workers who run this school to take a vow that, after a fixed date, no boy or girl not wearing khadi would be admitted to this school. The parents should be informed that their children would be obliged to spin and wear khadi. The same rule should be followed in running the dispensary. It would be my wish to see everyone whom I treated here dressed in khadi. There are, of course, many other dispensaries. Running a dispensary is nothing new and that is why young men are able to take up this work. I hope that all persons who have taken a vow of service and renunciation will go in only for those activities which are most difficult, which can be universally adopted and will be most productive of results in our country.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 7-5-1925

207. TALK TO WORKERS OF VIKRAMPUR

COMILLA,

May 15, 1925

In course of a conversation with some of Vikrampur workers, he [Gandhiji] made his position clear with regard to the proposed abolition of yarn franchise. He said :

The time for retirement from the Congress is not come nor for establishing an All-India Spinning Association. If spinning franchise

¹ This remark was with reference to Dr. Suresh Bannerji's statement that they had planned to set up not only a dispensary but also a medical school.

is abolished, it will be time then to think of a separate organization, but if I am allowed to act up to my programme as an integral body of the Congress, just as the Swarajists are at present, I disfavour the idea of a separate organization. If that is refused to me, I shall have to start a new organization.

As regards complete unity among Hindus and Mussalmans, Mahatmaji said:

I don't expect complete unity between Hindus and Mussalmans, I expect workable unity to get swaraj either today or a hundred years after. This workable unity must be established. This unity does not mean extraction of some power from the Government.

As to the meaning of untouchability, Mahatmaji said :

Untouchability is a question of sanitation. If a man is sanitarily clean, I can not only take water from his hands, but allow him to cook my meal; but that is not inter-dining. If a man takes meal from my plate, I call that inter-dining. I don't even allow my wife to share my food from my plate. As a Hindu wife, she often wishes to do it. But, as I don't always swallow everything of Hinduism, I decline to do this.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 17-5-1925

208. INTERVIEW WITH A FRIEND

[After May 15, 1925]

We are repeating our past mistakes, Mahatmaji, he said, in 1905-1908 we built a house of cards which broke down no sooner than it was put up and we are in for the same thing now.

You compare the earlier swadeshi agitation with the present? You forget that we have no fireworks now, but only quiet work.

I know it, sir, but there is no organization.

Pardon me, you are ignorant of the state of things. Do you know that we have the best organizations in Bengal, Tamilnad and Gujarat for example? You think institutions like the Khadi Pratishthan and Abhoy Ashram, Comilla, are going to die?

But how will they go on? We are living on subsistence allowance and asking our young men to do with less. How long can it go on?

How long? Why, our whole history is replete with it. You think our young men have no grit? They have gone to their work with eyes open and they are not going to give it up, whatever happens. The Abhoy Ashram, which I saw a few days ago, is situated on a beautiful spot; they have got clean nice little huts, a beautiful tank and a plot of

land. They cook their own food, do their own scavenging and make both ends meet from the proceeds of a hospital. Dr. Suresh is no child, he knows his business and he will see that his khaddar work goes on increasing every day, whatever happens to him and his co-workers. And Khadi Pratishthan, whose rates are very high you say, have at the present moment more orders than they can cope with. Look at Satish Babu's work. Have you ever been to the flood areas? From flood relief they have embarked upon permanent relief work. And I may tell you that Khadi Pratishthan does not believe in subsistence allowance. It pays its workers their market wages.

Well sir, it is your visit that has created a boom.

It does not matter. You may call it a blister. It will fall back to its normal state which is quite satisfactory. And go to a yarn *hat*¹. Where only a few maunds of yarn was being sold, hundreds of maunds are being sold today. There are hundreds of families supplementing, if not earning, their livelihood from their charkha. It is a sight to see how the workers are besieged by people asking for cotton to spin, on the market days. 'And if these workers retired from their field, what would happen?', you may ask. But they cannot retire. They did not give up their fine careers for nothing. The Abhoy Ashram men have got three strings to their bow, a hospital from which they find the wherewithals and which Suresh Babu thinks of supplementing by a medical school—and he has got enough medical talents—and besides the khadi work which is the main thing, they are running a big boys' school, hoping to have greater hold on the people through the boys. Then there are Pravartak Sangh workers. I do not know their work, but I know they are as many as 200 and they are working against tremendous odds.

"But there are only three such institutions," said the questioner still unsatisfied.

By no means. There are many more working away in their humble way, and if they were only three, what then? There are men like Jamnalalji² Rajagopalachari³ Shankerlal Banker, giving all their twenty-four hours to the work, working with devotion and dogged pertinacity. They are working with patience to wait for a century if

¹ Weekly market

² Jamnalal Bajaj (1889-1942); merchant, social worker and philanthropist; treasurer of the Congress for a number of years and a close associate of Gandhiji.

³ C. Rajagopalachari (b. 1879); lawyer, journalist, author and statesman; Governor-General of India, 1948-50

necessary and working with the desire to succeed to-morrow. And you do not know how the swadeshi movement of 1905-8 differs from the present. It was a movement magnificent in conception. But it had no knowledge or organization behind it. It made the boycott of British cloth a shibboleth, and relied on the broken reeds of the mills of Bombay and Ahmedabad. Today you are guarding against all the disasters that attended the earlier enterprise. Today you bid fair to show that, if all the mills in India were burnt down, you can clothe the whole of India by cloth produced by your cottage spinners and weavers.

Let us not be too sure. You know of people who in those days had to hang themselves for want of cloth.

You are talking of the days of Noah, my friend. Weavers were then deluded into the belief that they could not weave except with machine-spun or foreign yarn. Today I am asking the whole organization to be taken into intelligent hands. No movement can be made universal unless it can be propagated entirely without foreign agency. But I ask you to study things; study the prices of khaddar in the beginning of the movement and today; study the quality of it; study the yarn we are producing; in short, study the evolution of the charkha and khaddar, and then say what you have to say.

Can't we depend on the growth of our mill-industry?

I have often shown in pages of *Young India* the fallacy of those who argue in favour of the mills and shall not labour the point today. I do not want to depend on mills, I want the mills to depend on me. That is the long and short of it.

we can have national mills.

Well, he who suggests a proposition must work it out himself.

I do not know whether he went away convinced, but he apologized for having tired Gandhiji who assured him that no one could tire him out on the charkha.

Young India, 2-7-1925

209. TALK TO A MUSLIM FRIEND

[After *May 15, 1925*]

A Mussalman friend came with a long catalogue of grievances. First was untouchability against them observed by the Hindus; second, differences about cow-slaughters; third, insufficient representation; fourth, books and pamphlets against Islam; fifth, newspaper reports about abductions and such other alleged crimes by

Mussalmans; sixth, exclusion from services; seventh, exactions by *mahajans*; eighth, *abvabs* by zamindars for Kalipuja. Gandhiji showed him that some of the grievances were purely local, some were against particular individuals and some reciprocal; the real grievance was the first. And he immediately agreed that that was the principal grievance and others arose out of it. "They do not even sell sweetmeats to us, Gandhiji," said he.

Yes, I see it. That is a genuine grievance; but you should not, as you did in the beginning, magnify everything into a grievance suffered by Mussalmans as a community. I tell the Hindus that, if they want to protect Hinduism by an elaborate law of pollution, then it had better perish. You cannot convert India into a *Jazirat-ul-Arab*. Hindus have, in the days gone by, absorbed all sorts of nationalities. I am sure we shall have to revise our code of pollution and remove the unnecessary barriers that strangle Hinduism rather than strengthen it. We were never exclusive, we were inclusive. Its beauty is that it has never been a missionary religion like Islam or Christianity ever counting heads. It has carried on absorption unconsciously, following a sort of natural accretion. "Why", I ask my Hindu friends, "why do we at this time of the day prevent sweetmeat sellers from selling sweets to Mussalmans when we have no objection to getting chocolates from a European confectioner?"

Young India, 2-7-1925

210. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, COMILLA¹

May 16, 1925

Mahatmaji said in his reply to the address that he felt pleasure in receiving their address and should feel more pleasure when all the sisters would be spinning and wearing khaddar. Mahatma desired them to follow the ideal of Sita, which was an ideal of absolute purity. Cloth made of yarn spun on charkha was then in use and there was no poverty then in the land. Foreign cloth was impure and not to be worn on their pure body. He expected the ladies to take a vow not to wear foreign cloth. Mahatmaji appealed for the removal of the blot of untouchability and said those who showed contempt to fellow human beings on the alleged sanction of religion committed an impious and irreligious act. Ramachandra became purer by embracing Guha, a *Chandal*².

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 17-5-1925

¹ Gandhiji was presented with an address to which he replied in Hindi.

² Member of a community treated as untouchable

211. POWER OF “RAMANAMA”¹

A correspondent asks the following question :²

I do not know the writer. The fact that he had the letter delivered to me through his brother when I was leaving Bombay shows the strength of his curiosity in this matter. Ordinarily, such questions should not be discussed in public. It is evident that, if it became the general practice with the public to probe into the private life of an individual, most unpleasant results would follow. But I cannot escape being the object of such curiosity, whether it is worthy or unworthy. I have no right to try to escape. Neither do I wish to do so. My private life has become public life. For my part there is not a single thing in the world which I would conceal from others. My experiments are spiritual. Some of them are novel. They depend very much on self-examination on my part. I have carried them out, following the maxim: “As in one’s body, so in the universe”. The underlying assumption is that what is possible to me must be so to all others. Hence I have to answer some questions about private matters too.

Moreover, I cannot resist the opportunity I have got, in answering this question, of explaining the power of *Ramanama*.

I should, however, like to request this correspondent and others who may put questions to me in future that, if they base their questions on newspaper reports, they should send me copies of the papers in question. I have often stated that I do not read newspapers for the simple reason that I am not able to do so. I do not know what *Saurashtra* has written. It is difficult to take notes of my speeches. Mahadevbhai does so, but I do not always, approve the notes he takes. The reason is that when subtle or new ideas are being expressed, an error in reporting even one word may misrepresent the speaker’s meaning. Hence, when reporters who are not familiar with my ideas take notes of my speeches, they can never be relied upon, and I have often asked readers not to depend on such reports. When they have a doubt about anything, they may ask me and, while doing so, they should also send me a copy of the newspaper in which they have read reports of my speeches.

¹ Repetition of the holy name of Rama

² The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had mentioned Gandhiji’s statement in a speech that he had thrice been saved from sin by *Ramanama*. Pointing out that a local paper, *Saurashtra*, had commented on this statement and drawn inferences which were not clear, he had asked Gandhiji himself to explain what he had meant.

With these prefatory remarks, even though I do not know what *Saurashtra* has said on the matter, I shall describe how I was saved on those three occasions by the grace of God. All the three occasions concern public women. I was taken to two of them by friends on different occasions.

On the first occasion, I went to the place¹ out of false regard for the friend and, if God had not saved me, I would certainly have fallen. This time the woman whose house I had entered herself threw me out with contempt. I simply did not know what to say or how to behave in such a situation. Prior to this incident, I always regarded it as shameful even to sit near a public woman, so that I was trembling even when entering that house. After going in, I could not even look at her face and I do not know what her face was like. What could that smart woman do to such a fool but turn him out? She said a few angry words to me and asked me to go away. At that time, of course, I did not realize that God had saved me. I left feeling miserable. I felt crest fallen and even unhappy about my stupidity! I felt that I lacked manliness. It was later I realized that I had been shielded by my stupidity. God had saved me by making me behave like a fool. Else how could I, who had entered a house of ill-fame with evil intention, have been saved?

The second occasion was more dreadful than the first one. I was not so innocent then as I was at the time of the first incident, though I was of course more vigilant. Moreover, I had the protection of a vow administered to me by my revered mother.² But this time the place was in England. I was in the very flush of youth. Two of us friends were lodged in one house. We had gone there only for a few days.³ The land-lady was as good as a prostitute. Two or three of us sat down to play cards with her. In those days I used to play cards on occasion. In England, a mother and a son can, and do, play cards for innocent amusement. On this occasion too, we sat down to play, following the usual custom. The beginning was completely innocent. I, of course, did not know that the landlady lived on her body. But as the play

¹ In Rajkot, when Gandhiji was a high school student; *vide An Autobiography*, Pt. I, Ch. VII.

² Gandhiji's mother was unwilling to send him to England, but when he vowed not to touch meat, wine and woman, she gave her consent; *vide An Autobiography* Pt. I, Ch. XI.

³ In connection with the Vegetarian Conference at Portsmouth; *vide An Autobiography*, Pt. I, Ch. XXI.

warmed up, the atmosphere changed. The woman started making gestures. I was observing my friend. He had abandoned all restraints. I felt tempted. I was flushed in the face, for lust had entered me and I had become impatient.

But who can harm him whom Rama protects? To be sure, His name was not on my lips at that hour, but He ruled my heart. On my lips was the language of lust. My good friend noticed my behaviour. We knew each other very well. He had seen me in difficult situations in which I had, with an effort of will, kept my purity. But he saw that on this occasion evil had entered my mind and that, it the night progressed while I was in that mood, I too would fall like him.

It was this friend who first made me realize that even immoral men have good instincts. He felt unhappy to see me in that plight. I was younger than he. Rama came to my help through his person. He aimed arrows of love at me: “Moniya!” (This is an affectionate form of “Mohandas”. I remember that I used to be called by that name by my mother, my father and the eldest cousin in our family. The fourth person to call me so was this friend who, through his goodness, proved a brother to me.) “Moniya, be careful. You know that I have fallen. But I shall not let you fall. Recall the promise you have made to your mother. This thing is not for you. Be off from here. Go to bed. Are you gone? Throw off the cards.”

I do not remember whether I replied to him. I put down the cards. For a moment I felt unhappy. I felt ashamed and my heart began to beat fast. I got up and went to bed.

I woke up. I started repeating the name of Rama. “How miraculously I have been saved, how He has saved me! All honour to my promise! All glory to my mother! All glory to my friend! All glory to Rama!”—I kept saying to myself. For me this was indeed a miracle. If my friend had not shot at me the invincible arrows of Rama, where would I have been today?

He on whom Rama’s arrows have lighted—

he knows what they are.

He on whom love’s arrows have lighted—

he knows what they are.

For me, this was an occasion when I first became aware of the existence of God.

If today the whole of world told me that there is no God, no

Rama, I would say it lied. If I had fallen on that terrible night, I would not today be waging battles of satyagraha, would not be washing away the filth of untouchability, would not be repeating the holy name of the spinning-wheel, would not regard myself fit to be blessed by the *darshan* of millions of women, and would not be surrounded by hundreds of thousands of them who sit near me without fear as they sit around a child. I would always be running away from them, and they would have quite justifiably kept themselves at a distance from me. I look upon this occasion as the most perilous in my life. Seeking pleasure I learnt self-restraint. On the path to forsake Rama's name, I had his *darshan*. A miracle indeed.

Oh scion of Raghu's race, protect my honour,

I am a fallen man, old in my evil ways;

Take my boat safely to the other shore.

The third incident¹ is amusing. During one of my journeys, I came into fairly close contact with the ship's captain, as also with an English passenger. In every port where the ship weighed anchor, the captain and some passengers would go and search for brothels. The captain once invited me to go with him and see the port. I did not know what that meant. We went and stood before a prostitute's house. Then I knew what was meant by going to see a port. Three women were produced before us. I was completely taken aback, but felt too embarrassed to say anything. Nor could I run away. I had of course no wish to indulge in this immoral pleasure. Those two went into the rooms. The third woman led me into her own room. While I was still thinking what I should do, the other two came out of the rooms. I do not know what that woman must have thought about me. She stood smiling before me, but that did not have the slightest effect on me. Since we spoke different languages, there was no question of my talking to her. Those friends shouted for me and so I went out. I certainly felt a little humiliated. They had seen that I was a fool in these matters. They even joked between themselves on this point. They pitied me, of course. From that day, I was enrolled among the fools of the world, as far as the captain was concerned. He never invited me again to see a port. If I had remained in the room longer or if I had known that woman's language, I do not know what would have been my plight. But I certainly realized that day, too, I was not

¹ *Vide An Autobiography*, Pt. II, Ch. VI.

saved by my own power, but that it was God who had protected me by having made me stupid in such matters.

I remembered only these three incidents at the time of the speech in question. The reader should not think that I have not been through more of similar experiences. But I certainly wish to state that every time I escaped, thanks to *Ramanama*. God gives strength only to the weak who approach Him in utter helplessness.

So long as the elephant trusted to his own strength,

So long his efforts availed him not.

Let the weak appeal to Rama's strength,

He will come to help before the name is uttered in full.

What, then, does this *Ramanama* mean? Is it something to be repeated parrot-like? Certainly not. If that were so, all of us would win deliverance by repeating it mechanically. *Ramanama* ought to be repeated from the depth of one's heart; it would not then matter if the words are not pronounced correctly. The broken words which proceed from the heart are acceptable in God's court. Even though the heart cries out "*Mara, mara*"¹, this appeal of the heart will be recorded in one's credit column. On the contrary, though the tongue may pronounce the name of Rama correctly, if the lord of that heart is Ravana, the correct repetition of Rama's name will be recorded in one's debit column.

Tulsidas did not sing the glory of *Ramanama* for the benefit of the hypocrite who "has Rama's name on his lips and a knife under his arm". His wise calculations will go wrong, while the seeming errors of the man who has installed Rama in his heart will succeed. Rama alone can repair one's fortunes and so the poet Surdas² lover of God, sings:

Who will repair my fortunes?

O who else but Rama?

Everyone is a friend of his on whom good fortune smiles,

None of his whom fortune has forsaken.

The reader, therefore, should understand clearly that *Ramanama* is a matter of the heart. Where speech and the mind are not in harmony with each other, mere speech is falsehood, no more than

¹ *Rama* pronounced wrongly, that is, in the reverse, and then meaning "*dying*,"

² A medieval Hindi poet

pretence or play of words. Such chanting may well deceive the world, but can Rama who dwells in man's heart be deceived? Hanuman¹ broke open the beads in the necklace which Sita gave him as a gift, wanting to see whether they were inscribed with Rama's name. Some courtiers who thought themselves wise asked him why he showed disrespect to Sita's necklace. Hanuman's reply was that, if the beads were not inscribed with Rama's name inside, then every necklace given to him by Sita was a burden to him. The wise courtiers there upon smilingly asked him if Rama's name was inscribed in his heart. Hanuman drew out his knife and, cutting open his chest, said : "Now look inside. Tell me if you see anything else there except Rama's name." The courtiers felt ashamed. Flowers rained on Hanuman from the sky, and from that day Hanuman's name is always invoked when Rama's story is recited.

This may be only a legend or a dramatist's invention. Its moral is valid for all time : only that which is in one's heart is true.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 17-5-1925

212. SIR SURENDRANATH BANERJEA

Who has not heard of Sir Surendranath Banerjea? There was a time when he was known as the lion of Bengal, and was one of the pillars of the Congress. Young Bengal used to worship him. Thousands of youths eagerly waited for an opportunity to listen to his roar. When Surendranath stood up and spoke, the people never felt tired of listening to his speech. At the time of the Congress session in Poona in 1895, Sir Surendranath was its President. His speech ran into an eighty page booklet of octavo size. He had written out the speech, but he delivered the whole of it without reference to the text and the speech did not differ from the printed text even in one word. He had referred to a sheet of paper only to read out certain figures. It took him three hours to deliver his speech, and it is said that the people listened attentively to his speech lasting so many hours.

Now times have changed. Today the people will not give even one hour to the best of speakers. The love of oratorical speeches has almost vanished.

But a wonderful memory and powerful oratory were not Sir Surendra's only qualities. He has fought many battles against the Government. He also went to jail. He has been a teacher of a high calibre. His services were of great value. It is our fault that we

¹ The Vanara-hero in the *Ramayana*; humble and devoted servant of Rama

underrate them today. No one else could have done in those days what he did. It is ingratitude to forget the virtues of a man of a past age simply because times have changed. The services of such a person should be measured only by the standards of his age. If we apply today's standards to him, we shall be doing injustice both to him and to us. We do injustice to ourselves because, if we forget our legacy of the past, that would be so much loss to us. There is little in common between his views and mine, and yet my respect for him is the same today as it was then. I can never forget the services he rendered to the country. When, therefore, I heard the news of his illness I went¹ to his villa to inquire after him. I had never seen it before. He lives in a quiet suburb of Calcutta named Barrackpore. His villa stands on an extensive plot of land in the middle of a beautiful park, with the Ganga flowing in front of it. As it is in a secluded spot, great quiet reigns there.

I thought I would see him lying in bed, but he was sitting in his writing chair in front of his table laden with books. On seeing me, he rose from his seat and embraced me very lovingly. His body had certainly become emaciated but he stood erect. There was no weakness in his voice. He is 77 years of age and yet he discussed every matter with lively interest like a 17-year-old youth. When I praised his power of memory, he said : "Even today my memory is as good as it was. So well do I remember things of the days when I was just a child five years old that I can describe those events just as they happened." Only recently he has published his reminiscences. It took him nine years to write them; he showed me the exercise books in which he had recorded the incidents. The matter covers five or six books of foolscap size. His handwriting is so clear and uniform that I was moved to admiration. Nowhere did I notice evidence of the hand shaking.

I asked him what he read these days. He replied with a smile: "Shall I tell you? I am going through my reminiscences for the purpose of a second edition. I want to make some changes and additions. I have been told by the booksellers that all the copies will be exhausted by the end of the year. I am, therefore, getting ready [for a second edition]."

The conversation turning to the subject of his physical condition, he said : "I shall live to be 91. I still have so much energy that it doesn't seem too long a period."

Bharat Bhushan Malaviyaji has fixed a hundred years for himself. I, therefore, asked him why he did not fix the same period for

¹ On May 6, 1925; Banerjea died on August 6, 1925.

himself. He replied : “I don’t think I shall be able to work that long, and I don’t wish to live on after I have become too weak.”

He believes that the secret of his long life is his regularity of routine, from which he never departed, and his habit of working systematically. I had heard the story, and he confirmed it, that in the course of his busy life he never missed his fixed train every night by which he returned to Barrackpore. He says: “I attached as much importance to regular rest as to tireless work in public service. Hence I regard failure to take a night’s rest as a sin of failing in the duty of service.”

FROM PALACE TO HUT

Wherever I go, the poor are always with me. They seek me out wherever I may be. No one had been informed about my trip to Barrackpore. I did not know that there were labourers living round about. But a little after I reached Sir Surendranath’s villa, about a hundred or two poor people of the neighbourhood flocked to his park. Within a minute, they came to know of my visit, God knows how. Ordinarily, they would be afraid or would hesitate even to enter in this manner the villa of a great man. But believing that they have a right to enter where I go, they come in unafraid, and no one stops them. Among those poor people, there were one or two Biharis. They used to work as teachers in the labour area. Barrackpore is situated on an elevation. There is a lake there. Water from the Ganga is drawn here and then filtered and purified. Hundreds of labourers have been engaged on this work. These labourers hail from Bihar and from the part of United Provinces¹ bordering on Bihar. One of the Bihari teachers invited me to his house and expressed a desire to show me the yarn spun by him and the khadi store which he ran. He works on six spinning-wheels and, ordering khadi from Bihar, sells it to the labourers. How could I slight or decline his invitation? We went there. The labourers came and surrounded us. To be sure, there were spinning-wheels in that tiny house. On our side, khadi worth three or four hundred rupees was attractively arranged on a bench.

He said, “My brother, some of my friends and I work on these spinning-wheels. We get slivers from Calcutta. We sell this khadi to the labourers without charging any profit. Four or five of us wear khadi exclusively. As money is needed to carry on this work, the labourers give me one pice for every rupee of their wage. I take nothing for myself out of what they give. It only helps in meeting the extra expense incurred on khadi.” I asked him why they did not order khadi from Bengal. He replied: “Because we must help dispose of

¹ Now known as Uttar Pradesh

khadi produced in Bihar. We should give what help we can from here.” In this way, these youths sell khadi worth Rs. 2,500 annually to the poor labourers. Who can say how many such poor, selfless youths there are who silently help in spreading the use of khadi without expecting or desiring publicity? Sir Surendranath could not help expressing approval of the khadi and spinning movement. Before we left the hut of this poor youth, he showed us the book in which in very clear hand, he had written the accounts relating to his khadi work.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 17-5-1925

213. MY NOTES

SIMPLICITY v. DISORDER

Discussing difficulties which deter people from taking up public work, a young man writes :¹

It is not at all easy to say how far the difficulties pointed out here deter the educated class. My own belief is that the difficulties will not deter a sincere worker. Those who have been taking tea continue to do so and at the same time devote themselves to service. Many workers travel second class and yet do real service. There is no sin in drinking tea or travelling second class. Those who can do without tea or the comforts of the second class should do so, but those who cannot endure the physical discomforts of the third class may travel second class and serve. This is plain enough. Those who adopt untidy and slovenly ways in the name of simplicity certainly commit a sin. Simplicity is incompatible with slovenliness because simplicity is a virtue while disregard for order is a defect. One finds even those who live in style wanting in a sense of order. An unmethodical person cannot be regarded as simple. Simplicity can be acquired by training. A person who cannot have furniture and therefore manages without it is not a man of simple habits. He wants more of it and is miserable because he has to make do with a little. A man of simple habits is contented with a little even when he can get much and regards plenty as a source of misery.

What is true of lack of order and method is also true of uncleanness. A person who loves simplicity will never be unclean. We know, however, that many people of seemingly simple habits are very dirty and bring discredit to simplicity. It is the duty of those who

¹ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had stated that Gandhiji's advice to the people to be simple in their food and living habits had been misinterpreted by many to mean disregard for order and regularity.

wear khadi to keep it always clean and as white as milk, to wash it daily and to mend the garment if it is torn in any part. One need not be ashamed of patches on one's clothes, but torn clothes are a sign of indolence and therefore something to be ashamed of. There ought to be cleanliness in simplicity. In trying to maintain cleanliness in the midst of plenty, one is driven to burden oneself with more and more possessions; that is why some people cultivate simple habits. Anyone who adopts such habits should, therefore, understand that he must avoid slovenliness and uncleanness.

A little leisure is certainly necessary to cultivate these qualities. If shop assistants have to be in their shops right from morning to night, they cannot even think of correcting bad habits such as lack of cleanliness. They carry on observing as much cleanliness as custom requires. They do not cultivate simplicity for its own sake. Being helpless they may make a show of being saints. If they have any scope for earning money, they would probably make a great deal of it. Nevertheless, it is necessary to reduce the working hours for such people. It is quite possible that some of them will misuse their leisure, but there is no doubt that the risk must be taken. The remedy lies mainly in the hands of the assistants themselves. If they are keen enough to reform themselves, they will find their own way in the matter. If the proprietors have sympathy for them or if they understand their own real interests, they too can introduce the needed reform on their own.

TO SPINNERS

I have frequently stated that spinning does not mean merely drawing out a thread. Just as a *rotla*¹ made somehow from any sort of flour and cooked on any wretched stove is not *rotla* and may cause indigestion if eaten, so too if we draw out a thread from cotton of any sort carded anyhow, it will not be yarn. That alone is yarn which can be easily woven into cloth. In this respect our standard is mill-yarn. Till our yarn is as good as mill-yarn, the deficiency will be counted as our failure. It is a matter of experience that not only can we equal it but can also excel it. Good hand-spun yarn is always superior to good mill-yarn. The softness to be found in cloth woven from the former is never to be found in mill-cloth. So long as we have not reached that level, there are bound to be complaints against khadi. Not only that, but it will also be difficult to get every weaver to weave only khadi. I had to make these observations because of a letter which the All-India Khadi Board has recently received from a worker. Before spinning

¹ Thick, round cake of unleavened bread

was introduced as a qualification for the franchise, members of the Working Committee had to send their yarn to the All-India Khadi Board. The experiences gained in getting that yarn woven should be regarded as valuable. One of these is the report I have mentioned above. The worker has pointed out in it that sometimes the yarn is too weak for weaving. Moreover, the yarn had been wound on winding-frames of different sizes according to the whim of each spinner, so that the weavers had to spend a great deal of their time in making hanks of standard size. Both these difficulties should be eliminated. The members of the Working Committee could easily have paid attention to this point, but they do not seem to have done so. The result may be that either we shall have to stop using such yarn for weaving khadi from it, or else to use it for some unimportant purpose.

LET THAT BE

As spinning has been introduced as a qualification for the franchise, the number of spinners is bound to increase. Everyone who spins should, therefore, ponder further on the experience reported above. He should bear two things in mind :

1. He should spin well-twisted and uniform yarn.
2. Yarn should be wound round a four-foot winding-frame and every 100 yards should be made into a hank.

Yarn which does not satisfy these two conditions does not deserve the name. A more careful spinner will understand the quality of cotton, card it or get it carded properly and produce yarn of the highest count he can and every time, before removing the yarn, blow water over it. Anyone who does this will have done full justice to himself and to the country. He will have got out of cotton as much as is possible. Such a person understands the economics of khadi. If we can, on the whole, produce yarn of 20 counts, the price of khadi can be much reduced and there will be no more complaints from women.

If the voters understand their duty well, we should get the best yarn at the price of cotton. If we can do this, all the difficulties experienced in regard to khadi will automatically disappear. The voters' honest labour is a protection, a source of support to khadi and royal patronage of it.

Will the voters—men and women spinners—respond to this request?

FAMINE RELIEF

We have received the following report from the Punjab about the help which the spinning-wheel can render during famine :¹

I have taken this from the report received by the All-India Khadi Board. What is to be noted about it is that whereas formerly foodgrain was distributed to people, now they are paid for work done by them. We also see from the report that in making people work, one has to learn the work oneself. If the organizers were particular about the quality of yarn, the same price would not be paid to all irrespective of the quality of yarn, and the Relief Organization would be saved the needless expense it is being put to and no injustice would be done to the poor as at present. We observe, moreover, that in such work correct accounts ought to be maintained, but that this is not being done. It does not seem that this is due to dishonesty. It seems, rather, to be due to lack of efficiency and to the negligence of the organizing department. If the work is done in a clean manner, the people engaged in it being paid a little more if necessary, such undertakings are sure to become self-supporting in most cases.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 17-5-1925

214. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

*Silence Day, Vaishakha Vad 10 [May 17, 1925]*²

CHI. DEVDAS,

I am not at all worried about you and hence do not write to you, knowing that you get all the news about me. I liked your going to Navibandar. The others also will have a change to a cool place. Millions have to bear equally the heat and the cold. We have not reached that stage. I wish we had; but how can we change the mould in which we are cast?

¹ The report is not translated here.

² The postmark bears the date 18-5-1925; *Vaishakha Vad 10* fell on May 17.

I am quite happy. Satish Babu's arrangements leave nothing to be desired. Kristodas¹ had temperature for a day. Blessings to all the boys and girls.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. DEVDAS GANDHI
C/O CHI. MANEKLAL A. GANDHI
NAVIBANDAR *via* PORBANDAR
KATHIAWAR

From a photostat of the Gujarati original : G.N. 2046

215. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Vaishakh Vad 10 [May 17, 1925]²

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter. I hope you have fully regained your health by now. Here is how I would define a Brahmin deserving the gift of a cow.

A poor man who can maintain cow and who is in need of a cow.

An institution which maintains cows and provides cheap milk to the poor.

In Bombay such a Brahmin is not to be found. There are no facilities for rearing cows in Bombay. So ultimately you will have to give only cash. I would advise you to give out on interest the money kept aside for a good cow. If my activities prosper you can then make donations to me. If not we shall think about giving it to a deserving institution.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I had a certain claim over Anand³, hadn't I?

CHI. MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI
93 BAZAR GATE STREET
FORT, BOMBAY

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

¹ Krishnadas

² The postmark bears the date "May 19, 1925", in which year *Vaishakh Vad 10* corresponded to May 17.

³ Who had died on April 25, 1925; *vide* also "Letter to Mathuradas Trikumji", May 18, 1925.

216. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, DACCA¹

May 17, 1925

FRIENDS,

I am making a departure from my ordinary rule of giving a reply to the addresses in Hindustani.² I am breaking that rule mostly as a compliment to the reader of the District Board address who, with exactness, recited the address instead of reading it. It reminds me of Sir Surendranath Banerjea when he was not Knighted. I was only a stripling then but those who were present, when he recited his address at Poona, told me that, without misplacing a single adjective, he recited the whole of the address which covered nearly 80 octavo pages. It reminds me also of Babu Ambika Charan Mazumdar to whose address I had the pleasure of listening at Lucknow. He began to recite his address and went through a page and half without a single mistake and probably, but for a hint from our friends, Lucknow would not have been able to stand, or to ask him to read, an address which covered about 30 foolscap pages.

I don't know who else read the remaining portion of the address. When I came to Bengal, I had occasion to witness these things mostly in connection with the addresses presented to me.

I must not steal from you or me the most impassioned grief and intense longing. I had to listen to the exquisite music of the Bengali language when I came to Bengal. Spare me from our English diction and elocution, no matter how lofty it might be. Give in unadulterated Bengali, when you cannot and may not give in Hindustani. All that Bengal wishes to tell is a message to all India. I think it is high time to conduct our proceedings, specially proceedings of this character, in the vernacular of the provinces or in Hindustani. A time will come when we shall all feel ashamed to use this tongue (English). I think I have taken time on a matter over which I have already expressed my opinion. I am obliged to thank you sincerely for the sentiment expressed in your addresses. I don't thank you for the exquisite caskets in which you have put your addresses. I possess nothing nor have I any use for all these, but for the pieces of paper, which are more a thing of the heart and which come from a corner of your heart. You talk of the departed glory of Dacca. It is specially real. As I walk and as I roam from place to place, I find illimitable

¹ Gandhiji was presented addresses by the District Board, the Municipality and the People's Association, at the meeting held in the Northbrook Hall.

² This sentence is based on a report in *The Hindu*, 18-5-1925.

possibilities for returning to old Bengal. Once more, let Bengal export not all her raw produces, jute, rice or cotton, but let Bengal export the finest fabrics, let Bengal revive her great art for which she was famous. Depend upon it that not until you tackle the problem of hand-spinning, the problem of the revival of the finest art will be impossible. I have been accused of one thing—of the inartisticness to realize the artistic beauty for which India stands, and my heart weeps for the fact that that beauty has departed. We want our own fabric. Until we spin our own yarn, we shall not be able to revive that fabric of ours. If you import ‘muslins’ from Paris or Japan, I know to my cost or to your cost, if you import the finest yarn from Paris or Japan, as I saw when I was in Dacca, you cannot and you will never be able to revive the art. What will you do for the dumb millions of Bengal? What will you do for the sisters of yours who are pining away behind the *purdah*. I visited a village in Comilla and a representative of the sisters of ours—who have not a place in the District Board to send their representatives—insisted on giving cotton and receiving in exchange the yarn from them. If you send your representative there to buy yarn, it may be one rupee, two rupees or three rupees and buy yarn for the supply of their bread, what a service you will do for them! Do you think that your District Board and People’s Association can help them?

I have just now come from the meeting of the untouchables, the *Bhangis*. The *Bhangis* are keeping your town clean and their services are indispensable. They told me that they had 80 children to teach, but there is no school to teach them. I asked them whether they would want a school to educate their boys. One of them in reply said, “We have asked for a school in our address presented to you.”

Speaking on khaddar Mahatmaji said :

If you and the middle-class people give at least half an hour only for spinning, I could swamp Dacca with khaddar. I can compete with Japan, Manchester and any town. The people want to wear khaddar. Be sure that they will wear khaddar. Khaddar shall be sufficient to clothe the whole of Dacca if you can make up your minds. You can do just the very simple thing, that is, to revive the past glory of Dacca in a much more glorious manner. I don’t think I will keep you for many minutes.

Coming to the question of Hindu-Muslim unity you have touched upon, it grieves me that I have not here with me one of the two brothers, Maulanas Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali, to listen to the testimony—the warm testimony—that comes from your hearts.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 19-5-1925

217. TALK TO STUDENTS AT DACCA¹

May 17, 1925

At Dacca the students' meeting was cancelled, but Gandhiji asked the students to come and have a chat after all the public functions were over, and they had more than they could even in their wildest dreams have expected. Gandhiji, always at his best when provoked, unbosomed himself when a friend objected that spinning was a waste of energy and time, and another that his advice took no count of the principle of division of labour.

Do I ask you to do spinning for the whole of the day? Do I ask you to take it up as a substantive occupation? Where, then, is the breach of the principle of division of labour? Do you have a division of labour in eating and drinking? Just as everyone of us must eat and drink and clothe himself, even so, everyone of us must spin himself. And it is a waste, you say? Fellow-feeling for your countrymen, you say, you have in an abundant measure? And what is that fellow-feeling without the milk of human kindness? Do you feel anything like the love that a cow feels for her calf or a mother for her baby? The cow's udders and the mother's breast overflow with milk at the sight of their young ones. Do your hearts overflow with love at the sight of your famished countrymen? By spinning, my friends, you demonstrate your love for them. You spin and you make them shake off their idleness. A friend goes and beautifully sings before a crowd and affects their hearts. Is it a waste of effort? It would be, of course, if he vainly howls *Vande Mataram* before them. But spinning means more. It has a purpose and it means added production. The purpose is that it serves as a bond with the masses. And the mechanical effort has something as its result, whilst there is absolutely nothing like it which all alike can do without much effort and skill, nothing which can be done by millions—by the best of us as by the mediocre. And the students should all do it particularly because they are the salt of the earth. Their life is yet to begin, they can imbibe new ideas as no one else can, and they have long years of service before them. You can put new wine into new bottles and not into old. And imagine what a disciplined band of students with fire, energy and reason can do. Imagine what a mighty thing it would be, the product of a half-hour's labour given to hand-spinning by every one of the 11,000 students of Dacca! And do you know that if you all wear khadi the spinners get a major part of the money you spend? You will perhaps think of England with her elaborate machinery. But she lives on the exploitation of other nations. She has conquered our labour. It is an

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account of Gandhiji's tour in Bengal

economic drain which is even more disastrous than the Home Charges and other drains that Dadabhai Naoroji¹ opened our eyes to. Even he could not see this insidious drain, but I, being his disciple working along his lines, have discovered this subtle drain and say that the economic drain involved in our being made a nation of idlers is the most ruinous of all.

And so on and so forth, until he brought them face to face with the havoc this enforced idleness has wrought on the fair face of the land—the famishing of Jagannath Puri and the impoverished of Bihar and the women in other parts to whom an anna per day is a coveted godsend. There is nothing which I have heard from him for many a long day which can exceed this talk in melting pathos and incisive appeal.

Young India, 28-5-1925

218. SPEECH AT NATIONAL COLLEGE, SHYAMPUR ²

May 17, 1925

He said that he could confer benediction on boys on the foundation stone of the hospital with pleasure, but he said he had little faith in *kavirajas* and doctors and far less in Medical College. Patients, when they came under the treatment of the doctors and *Kavirajas*, became all the more invalids. The education these professional men acquired was for money and so they were always anxious to earn more money. Mahatmaji said that he could confer benediction on boys on the condition that, after they come out of the Medical College, they would sacrifice their lives for the sake of the country.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 19-5-1925

219. LETTER TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

May 18, 1925

DEAR GURUDEV,

Nepal Babu has sent me your very kind and cordial note². I do want to pass a day or two at Bolpur. I would not think of your leaving Bolpur to meet me. I know the delicate state of your health. I shall

¹ 1825-1917; pioneer Indian statesman known as the “Grand Old Man of India”; President, Indian National Congress, 1886, 1893 and 1906; first enunciated swaraj as the objective of the Congress; was elected member of the House of Commons, 1893

² Gandhiji arrived at Shyampur from Narayanganj in the morning and laid the foundation of the National College Hospital building. He was presented with an address by the professors and students of the National College to which he replied in Hindi.

³ This is not available.

inform you of the date when I can come.¹

I am, yours,
M. K. GANDHI

DR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE
SANTINIKETAN
via BOLPUR
E. I. RY.

From a photostat : G.N. 4629

*220. LETTER TO MAHOMED ALI*²

May 18, 1925

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

Before you wrote to me,³ I had realized your position. Such must be the lot of genuine workers. We were doing little when we were swimming with the tide. We have to exert ourselves only when we swim against it. Now we shall know whether we have strength. It is child's play for a soldier to fight against a foe, however formidable. But not many can stand demoralization, distrust, indiscipline and want of faith among their own ranks. You and I have to face that fact.

My prayers are always with you and for you. My faith in the twins⁴ is also unshakable, not in your method of work, however. If you rigidly set apart time for every activity, you will find a margin left. The busiest man has always time for more. For a godfearing man the whole day is prayer time. The fixed times for prayer are merely finger posts. They show that we must have appointed times for all tasks. Have we not dedicated all to God? Even eating may well be prayer and fasting may well be an indulgence. Enough of sermo-nizing.

I miss you and I miss Gulnar⁵. All my flowers and trinkets are wasted. Tell her she must not grow too big for me.

With love to you all,

Yours,
M.K.G.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

¹ Gandhiji visited Santiniketan on May 29.

² Though the draft bears no address, the contents make it clear that it was addressed to Mahomed Ali.

³ This communication is not available.

⁴ Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali

⁵ Addressee's daughter, wife of Shuaib Qureshi

221. LETTER TO KHWAJA ABDUL MAJID

May 18, 1925

DEAR KHWAJA SAHEB,

I had your wire, not the promised letter. I do hope you will keep me informed of how things are shaping. I shall owe it to the donor to tell him something about the institution.

How are you feeling now?

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

KHWAJA SAHEB ABDUL MAJID
NATIONAL MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH

From the original: A. M. Khwaja Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

222. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI ¹

Vaishakha Vad 10, May 18, 1925

Didn't Anand² owe me a debt?

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 80

223. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, MYMENSINGH ³

May 19, 1925

Mahatmaji after having thanked the ladies on their address and presents said that by swaraj he meant dharma raj or Ram raj. Without dharma and morality there could be no swaraj for India. For Ram raj, he wanted to have Sitaji. It was for Sitaji that we could worship Ramachandra. If Sita did not take birth, there would have been no existence of Ramachandra. Mahatmaji prayed that his sisters be like Sita. Sita kept heart as well as body pure. He urged his sisters to purify their body by wearing khaddar. Sitaji used to wear cloth made in India. In her days not a bit of foreign cloth was imported into India. But ladies of the present day wanted cloth from France, Japan and Manchester. To use foreign cloth was impurity. For it implied that they forgot their poor brothers. There was a time when millions of his Indian sisters earned their

¹ 1894-1951; grandson of Gandhiji's step-sister; Secretary, Bombay Congress Committee, 1922-23; member, Bombay Municipal Corporation, 1923-25, and later Mayor

² Addressee's mother

³ At the meeting, held in the morning, hand-spun yarn, jewellery and coins were presented to Gandhiji. An address of welcome was read out in Bengali. Gandhiji replied in Hindi.

bread by spinning with charkha. But for our use of foreign cloth their work on the charkha had not been stopped. Sisters ought to spin at least half an hour every day. Mahatmaji called mill-made cloth, “half-khaddar”. He remarked that, although all his sisters, who had come to the meeting, wore khaddar, they must have done so either to express their love for him or to deceive him. But their love for India was what was required most—this would prompt them to use khaddar. He would feel quite satisfied if his sisters in Mymensingh undertook to do the following three things :—(1) Spinning on the charkha for half an hour a day, (2) use of khaddar and (3) abandonment of hatred of *Namasudras*, erroneously considered to be untouchables.

Mahatmaji, in conclusion, said that the presents that were given to him in the form of yarn, money and jewellery would be devoted to khaddar propaganda.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 22-5-1925

224. SPEECH AT MYMENSINGH¹

May 19, 1925

I am feeling forlorn without either of Ali Brothers. For, with them I would have felt absolutely safe, through them I would have easily reached the Mussalman heart.²

Touching upon Hindu-Muslim question, he regretted that neither community was willing to surrender, not their vital interest, but little temporary interests. At present they were fighting not even for loaves and fishes, but for stones and not for vital interests. But he realized that, until they had cleansed their heart and purified their soul, they would not be able to live as brothers. He advised them not to endanger their unity on the rock of selfishness. After all, he believed the solution of this question did not depend on them. Optimistic as he was, he believed that God would show mercy on this blessed land and enable them to live as brothers, in spite of their having fought each other.

The Hindu and the Mussalman must each add a common article to their creeds, viz., that he can never live without the other. God who has placed together 7 crores of Mussalmans with 22 crores of Hindus will have some mercy on us and will make us live as brothers in spite of ourselves.³

Dealing with the question of khaddar and spinning he said that these two things were indispensable if they wanted to live with the masses. Had they not exploited the masses for their sake? Had they given any return to them? If they cared

¹ At a representative gathering at the Maharaja's palace, addresses were presented to Gandhiji on behalf of the Municipality and the District Board of Mymensingh.

² This paragraph is extracted from Mahadev Desai's account of Gandhiji's tour in *Young India*, 28-5-1925.

³ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account

to travel through the length and breadth of India, they would easily find that they were living on the blood of their people. The result had been that poverty and pauperism had crept into the vitals of the nation and possessed their minds in such a way that they had forgotten that they had even the capacity for labour. In fact, the masses had become idlers perforce. Therefore they must spin. That was the reason why he asked all zamindars and distinguished men to spin and give some slight return to the masses. They complained that khaddar was coarse, khaddar was not durable, it was not good. How could that be if they did not spin half an hour for their poor brothers and sisters? Playing the charkha would not do. It could not produce a large quantity of yarn and why? Because the charkha was not worked properly. The best charkha they had yet got available in the market was the charkha of the Khadi Pratisthan.

Turning next to the people of Mymensingh, he made a passionate appeal to their sense of patriotism and hoped that they would work in the manner suggested by him. Mahatma Gandhi decried spurious khaddar in unmeasured terms; half khaddar to him was impure and should be burnt immediately. If they wanted good khadi, durable and fashionable, let them make a present of half an hour's labour for the masses, their poor sisters and brothers, who were famishing and starving, suffering from degrading poverty. He asked them to give half an hour free of charge and spin half an hour for the national cause and he immediately undertook to cheapen khaddar, make it good, fashionable and durable, and he assured them that he would bring them swaraj.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 22-5-1925

225. TALK TO ZAMINDARS AT MYMENSINGH¹

May 19, 1925

If you have your own dhobi, your own scavenger, why don't you have your own weaver? And for fine, beautiful yarn, you can get the services of the finest spinners in your parts.

Why do not leading men and educated men, take to the charkha?

Because they do not feel for the poor, and they do not feel because they do not know the sufferings of the poor. Please do not say they are lazy. We have helped them to become idle. How to create interest in them? You and I and all must plod on night and day and not be impatient like the boy who planted the mango seed and would not even wait for six months for the seed to take root and grow into a tree.

Young India, 28-5-1925

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account of Gandhiji's tour

226. A REMARKABLE ADDRESS

In the majority of cases, addresses presented to me contain adjectives which I am ill able to carry. Their use can do good neither to the writers not to me. They unnecessarily humiliate me, for I have to confess that I do not deserve them. When they are deserved, their use is superfluous. It cannot add to the strength of the qualities possessed by me. They may, if I am not on my guard, easily turn my head. The good that a man does is more often than not, better left unsaid. Imitation is the sincerest flattery. I commend it, therefore, to the attention of all admirers. If it is my spinning they like, let them admire it by doing it themselves; if it is my regularity they appreciate, let them flatter me by being regular themselves. And if it is my truthfulness and non-violence they treasure, let them show their appreciation by their conduct.

But not all the addresses contain a mere recital of my praises. On rare occasions they give me valuable information. A Chandpur address¹ was remarkable for a frank expression of its limitations. The address does contain some reference to my qualities, imaginary or real; but the greatest part of it is devoted to a catalogue of the activities of the inhabitants of Chandpur. Here is the catalogue :

1. Number of Congress members—Class “A” 10, class “B” 68, total 78.
2. Number of spinning-wheels working—245.
3. Average capacity of each wheel—100 yds. per hour, the highest speed being 500 yds. per hour.
4. Average count—12, the highest being 152.
5. Monthly output of yarn—1 maund.
6. Number of looms working with hand-spun and other yarn-more than one thousand. Only seven looms produce pure khadi.
7. Monthly output of pure khadi—250 yds.
8. Number of khaddar depots—3 only.
9. Average monthly consumption of khadi—worth 300 rupees.
10. Total number of national schools—4, total number of students being 167.

As regards liquor traffic, it has been gradually increasing since 1922.

¹ This was presented to Gandhiji by the people of Chandpur on May 10, 1925. *Vide* “Speech at Public Meeting, Chandpur”, 10-5-1925.

Then follows an interesting commentary on most of the items. It is wound up as follows :

We feel we will be failing in our obvious duty, if we do not allude to the terrible poverty and consequent mortality rampant amongst the people of the country. They are simply groaning under heavy indebtedness. The balance-sheet of most of them indicates the hopeless condition of utter bankruptcy. This state of things, brought about by the total annihilation of the cottage industries, leads to serious crimes, and we shudder to conceive the final result of this economic depression of the people.

The record is certainly not a proud one. But there is nothing here to despair of. We, each one of us, can but do our best. We do not, cannot, control results which depend upon so many other circumstances. We may feel quite at ease, when we have done our real best. Unfortunately, in the majority of cases, we do not work or do it indifferently and still complain of poverty of results. All is well if we have done the best that is possible for us to do.

Truly, the problems that face us are enormous and many. For one man or many to presume to tackle them all at once is to arrogate omnipotence. Any such attempt is foredoomed to failure. Our difficulties are aggravated because we are a subject nation. Many can be remedied if we were not. But it is equally true that we shall not come to our own unless we tackle as many now. Not to handle them till swaraj is obtained is to postpone both swaraj and the solution of the problems. He, therefore, who handles the main problems to the best of his ability helps their solution and brings swaraj nearer.

If, then, the workers in Chandpur have exerted their utmost, results shown by them need not be considered discouraging. Time must work in their favour, for it always does in favour of honest and industrious workers. Better to have even 10 "A" class members than none, and for me, it is any day better to have 10 working members than to have ten thousand members who will pay four annas per year and then no more think about the Congress than miss their four annas. The ten, if they will remain faithful to their trust, will soon convert themselves into one hundred. I know no alternative to the wheel. Those who do must set it up. Till then the ten who work the wheel must hold the field undaunted.

But my fear is that the organizers have not worked sufficiently strenuously. I discovered that there were nearly 120 volunteers in Chandpur. Now, of those nearly 100 knew how to spin, but hardly five or six spun daily. One of the resolutions makes spinning by volunteers obligatory. And if a volunteer does not strictly respect the franchise resolution, who else will? The Reception Committee should

have been strict in the choice of its volunteers. If it could not get enough properly qualified men, it should have managed its work with a few. An unskilled surgeon is worse than no surgeon. An indifferent volunteer is often a hindrance [rather] than a help. Let me note, in passing, that the volunteers were extremely good to me. They served to their utmost. But I want not personal service and attachment, precious as both are; I want national service and national attachment. I want strictest devotion to duty and scrupulous fulfilment of all obligations imposed and accepted.

The address mentions increase in the liquor traffic. It is a serious thing and may be dealt with by workers who will specially dedicate themselves to the reform. But I fear that liquor traffic is one of those things which can be brought under effective control only by prohibition.

The concluding commentary is a statement of our general condition. Revival of the cottage industry, and not cottage industries, will remove the growing poverty. When once we have revived the one industry, all the other industries will follow. They will add to the country's wealth. But the wheel alone can solve the general problem of starvation. Each district has no doubt its varying wants. They must have attention. But I would make the spinning-wheel the foundation on which to build a sound village life, I would make the wheel the centre round which all the other activities will revolve. No spinner enters the village life without coming in contact with and helping to solve the other problems that tax the villagers. But if a worker enters a village and takes up any activity that comes his way and not wheel, he will miss the central point and, therefore, simply grope without reaching every villager.

Young India, 21-5-1925

227. 'ON THE VERGE OF IT'

After putting the questions he has, a correspondent thus concludes his letter :

I hope you will be courteous enough to throw light on these points and continue to discuss with me until I do not talk nonsense. I am your follower and have gone to jail under your leadership and guidance. I have never gone to see and talk to you even when I was very near to you and had ample opportunity, simply because I hated to encroach upon your time. I have not even touched your feet. I now feel very much shaken in my faith in your reasoning and politics. I am not a revolutionary but I am on the verge of being a revolutionary. If you answer these questions

satisfactorily, you may save me.

I now take his questions seriatim.

1. What is non-violence, an attitude of the mind or non-destruction of life? If it be the latter, is it possible to translate it into practice and carry it to its logical consequences when we destroy numberless lives daily in taking our meals, etc.? We cannot even eat vegetables in that case.

Non-violence is both an attitude of mind and action consequent upon it. No doubt, there is life in vegetables. But the taking of vegetable life is inevitable. It is none the less destruction of life. Only it may be regarded as excusable.

The second question is :

2. If we cannot avoid destroying life, it certainly does not mean that we should recklessly destroy it; but then, in proved cases of necessity it cannot be objected to on principle. It may be objected to on expediency.

Even in proved cases of necessity, violence cannot be defended “on principle”. It may be defended on grounds of expedience.

The third question is :

3. If non-violence is non-destruction of life, how can you consistently ask anybody to give up his own life in a cause howsoever holy and righteous it may be? Would that not be violence to one’s own self?

I can consistently ask a person to give up his life for a cause and yet not be guilty of violence. For non-violence means refraining from injury to others.

The fourth is :

4. It is human nature to love one’s own life. If one should sacrifice one’s life when necessary for his country and people, why should he not sacrifice the lives of others when necessary? We have only to prove whether it was necessary. It is, therefore, a matter of expediency again.

“He that shall love his own life shall lose it. He that shall lose his own life shall find it.” Sacrifice of the lives of others cannot be justified on grounds of necessity, for it is impossible to prove necessity. We may not be judges ourselves. The sole judges must be those whose lives we would take. One good reason for non-violence is our fallible judgment. The inquisitors implicitly believed in the righteousness of their deeds, but we now know that they were wholly wrong.

The fifth question is :

5. What is the difference between sacrifice and murder?

Sacrifice consists in suffering in one’s own person so that others may benefit. Murder consists in making others suffer unto death so that the murderer, or those others for whom he murders, may benefit.

The sixth question is :

6. Is a doctor, who operates upon you, condemnable, for he is violent in giving you trouble temporarily? Do we not praise him all the more for that—looking not to his violent action but to his attitude of mind which is to give relief to the patient?

This is a misuse of the word violence, which means causing injury to another without his consent or without doing any good to him. In my case, the surgeon caused me temporary pain with my written and willing consent and for my sole good. A revolutionary murders or robs not for the good of his victims, whom he often considers to be fit only to be injured, but for the supposed good of society.

His seventh question is :

7. Is not physical force as much a potent factor of life as any other force? As non-violence can be taken by cowards as a garb to cover their cowardice, so can violence be misused by brutes and tyrants. It does not prove that violent of itself is bad.

Physical force undoubtedly is a potent factor of life. Violence has certainly been misused by tyrants, but in the sense in which I have defined violence, its good use is inconceivable. See the definition in the answer to the preceding question.

The eighth question is :

8. You will put lunatics and dangerous criminals who are a nuisance to society in prisons. Will you allow us to capture those civilized criminals, who are functioning as government officials today, and deport or imprison them in some Himalayan caves instead of murdering them?

I am not sure that it is right to put lunatics or criminals, dangerous or otherwise, in prisons, i.e., for punishment. Lunatics are not so put even now. And we are reaching a time when even criminals will be put under restraint for their ultimate reform, not for their punishment. But I would gladly join any society for the confinement, under proper safeguards for their comfort, of the Viceroy and every civilian, English or Indian, who are today consciously or unconsciously bleeding India, provided that a scheme can be produced before me that is perfectly feasible from every point of view. And I would be prepared to join such a society even though it may be argued that such confinement might fall within my definition of violence.

The ninth question is :

9. What is more inhuman and terrible, rather what is more violent, to let 33 millions suffer, stagnate and perish, or a few thousand be killed? What would you

prefer, to see the slow death of a mass of 33 millions through sheer degeneration, or killing of a few hundred of people? This certainly is to be proved that the killing of a few hundred will stop the degeneration of 33 millions. But then, it is a matter of detail and not principle. It may be later on discussed whether it is expedient or not. But if it is proved that by killing a few hundred, we can put a stop to the degeneration of 33 millions, will you object to violence on principle?

There is no principle worth the name if it is not wholly good. I swear by non-violence because I know that it alone conduces to the highest good of mankind, not merely in the next world but in this also. I object to violence because, when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent. I do not believe that the killing of even every Englishman can do the slightest good to India. The millions will be just as badly off as they are today, if someone made it possible to kill off every Englishman tomorrow. The responsibility is more ours than that of the English for the present state of things. The English will be powerless to do evil if we will but do good. Hence my incessant emphasis on reform from within.

But, before the revolutionary, I have urged non-violence not on the highest ground of morality but on the lower ground of expedience. I contend that the revolutionary method cannot succeed in India. If an open warfare were a possibility, I may concede that we may tread the path of violence that the other countries have and at least evolve the qualities that bravery on the battlefield brings forth. But attainment of swaraj through warfare I hold to be an impossibility for any time that we can foresee. Warfare may give us another rule for the English rule but not self-rule in terms of the masses. The pilgrimage to swaraj is a painful climb. It requires attention to details. It means vast organizing ability, it means penetration into the villages solely for the service of the villagers. In other words it means national education, i.e., education of the masses. It means an awakening of national consciousness among the masses. It will not spring like the magician's mango. It will grow almost unperceived like the banyan tree. A bloody revolution will never perform the trick. Haste here is most certainly waste. The revolution of the spinning-wheel is the quickest revolution conceivable.

The tenth and the last question is :

10. Is not all logic and reason discarded where vital interests of life are concerned? It is not a fact that a few selfish, tyrant and obdurate men may, as they do, refuse to listen to reason and continue to rule, tyrannize and do injustice to a mass of people? Lord Krishna failed to bring about a settlement peacefully between the obdurate Kauravas and the Pandavas. *Mahabharata* may be fiction. Poor Krishna may be less spiritual. But even you failed to persuade your judge to resign from his post

and not convict you, whom even he, as everybody else, regarded innocent.¹ How far can persuasion through self-sacrifice be successful in such cases?

It is sad but true that, where so-called vital interests are concerned, logic and reason are thrown to the wind. Tyrants are, indeed, obdurate. The English tyrant is obduracy personified. But he is a multi-headed monster. He refuses to be killed. He cannot be paid in his own coin, for he has left none for us to pay him with. I have a coin that is not cast in his mint and he cannot steal it. It is superior to any he has yet produced. It is non-violence; and the symbol of it is the spinning-wheel. I have, therefore, presented it to the country with the fullest confidence. Krishna failed to do nothing he wished to do, so says the author of the *Mahabharata*. He was omnipotent. It is futile to drag Krishna from His heights. If he has to be judged as a mere mortal, I fear He will fare badly and will have to take a back seat. *Mahabharata* is neither fiction nor history commonly so called. It is the history of the human soul in which God as Krishna is the chief actor. There are many things in that poem that my poor understanding cannot fathom. There are in it many things which are obvious interpolations. It is not a treasure chest. It is a mine which needs to be explored, which needs to be dug deep and from which diamonds have to be extracted after removing much foreign matter. Therefore, I would urge my friends, the full-fledged revolutionaries, or those in the making, or on the verge of being such, to keep their feet firm on mother earth and not scale the Himalayan heights to which the poet took Arjuna and his other heroes. Anyway, I must respectfully refuse even to attempt the ascent. The plains of Hindustan are good enough for me.

To descend to the plains, then, let the questioner understand that I had not gone to the court to persuade the judge of my innocence. But on the contrary, I went there to plead fully guilty and ask for the highest penalty. For, the breach by me of the man-made law was deliberate. The judge did not, could not, believe me to be innocent. There was not much sacrifice in undergoing the imprisonment. True sacrifice is made of sterner stuff. Let my friend understand the implications of non-violence. It is a process of conversion. I am convinced. I must be pardoned for saying it that my out-and-out non-violence has converted many more Englishmen than any amount of threats or deeds of violence. I know that when conscious non-violence becomes general in India swaraj will not be far.

Young India, 21-5-1925

¹ Vide "The Great Trial", March 18, 1922.

228. NOTES

DONORS, PLEASE NOTE

Though I have often remarked upon the unportability of addresses when they are framed or when they are put in expensive caskets, I continue to receive heavy frames and, sometimes, expensive caskets. The Calcutta Corporation is the greatest sinner so far as costliness is concerned. When I received its address, it was on a borrowed gold plate. The one specially ordered was not ready. During the present tour, Deshbandhu Das placed into my hands a beautifully made gold plate on which the whole address is carved. As soon as I received it, I was nervous as to where I should keep it and so was he, although it was in his own old mansion that he gave the plate. As he went, he called Mahadev Desai aside and left word with him that the plate should be put in a secure place. Fortunately, Babu Satish Mukerji was by me and I had already mentioned to him the fact of the gold plate and he had taken charge of it. It will have to go where all my other costly presents have gone. The friends to whom I have given these things for disposal have not yet decided where to sell them or to put them to some museum. How much better, if knowing that I cannot keep costly things, those who must give me addresses will give me inexpensive ones? And frames? Well, they are most inconvenient things to carry. Most friends have recognized the situation and nowadays give me addresses printed on khaddar. That to my mind is the simplest and the best method. I can carry with me any amount of khaddar. To have addresses printed on it is so much spread of khaddar. But if a casket must accompany even a khaddar address, I commend to the attention of future donors the example of Faridpur. Both the Municipality and the Jeevashiva Mission gave inexpensive cylinders, one made of stained bamboo and the other of bamboo covered with local matting with simple silver tops. The latter could easily have been omitted. The simplest thing may be made elegant by a little touch of art which one can copy from one's surroundings. The Indian village life, though it has become shoddy, has still enough poetry and art left in it for us to copy. In Travancore they made copious use of the palm leaf. Indeed, I would advise artistic simplicity about all addresses, but in my case it is imperative for the very good reason that I have neither the convenience nor the desire for keeping

costly or bulky caskets and frames.

INVERTED UNTOUCHABILITY

A correspondent writes :

You have answered a correspondent's query as to how to remove the untouchability obtaining amongst the untouchables themselves. Let me put another query similar to it.

Perhaps you do not know that some of the "untouchables" themselves labour under a sense of sin attaching to the act of touching a "touchable", or approaching within a particular distance of him, or drawing water from his well, or entering his temple, or doing any such thing in relation to the "touchable"—though allowed and even invited to do so. The "untouchable" thinks that he would be transgressing his *maryada*¹ and be guilty of sin in doing any such acts. This is the inverse of the untouchability usually so-called and known to obtain amongst the higher castes (touchable and untouchable) against the lower ones. This is untouchability up side down. It may be the case—and the touchables may flatter themselves with the thought—that this sort of untouchability (little known, but as strong as the other) is not retaliatory in spirit. All the same it is there, and even the special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, who interviewed you in Sabarmati Jail and toured India in 1922,² noted it in Anand and Bardoli taluks in Gujarat. What, I wonder, is the remedy you would advise anti-untouchability workers to adopt to cure the "untouchables" of this inverse of untouchability? Is this also a sin like the other sort? Does not the so-called *maryadadharma* come in our way here? Is it possible for a conscientious untouchable believer in this dharma to rescue drowning Brahmin whom he otherwise could?

I am not unaware of the atrocious result of untouchability observed by the correspondent. Sometimes, I find it difficult to make the "untouchables" approach me, much less to touch me. I do not believe that it is a question primarily of religion with the untouchables not to touch the touchables. They simply do not realize the possibility of touching those who have hitherto regarded them as untouchables. In the majority of cases therefore, it is fear that deters the untouchables even under permission from touching the untouchables. The case is on a par with that of the French prisoner who, having been for years locked up in the dungeons of Bastille, could not, when discharged, bear the light of day. He had almost lost the sense of sight. But I have come across in Bengal a suggestion made to the so-called untouchables that they should, by way of retaliation, regard the so-called higher

¹ Bounds of Propriety

² Vide "Interview to *Manchester Guardian*", March 18, 1922.

class Hindus as untouchables, refuse to them all the services they are now rendering and refuse also water or food at their hands. I should deplore the day that such retaliation comes. But, in this age of freedom and also licence, it need cause no surprise if what is now an object of mere talk is translated into action and retaliation descends upon the devoted heads of the so-called higher classes. Nature gives us ninety nine chances of reform and, if we do not take advantage of any of them, the hundredth time she compels obedience and accompanies it with a punishment which at least makes us feel uneasy.

A CORRESPONDENT'S DILEMMA

Thus writes a correspondent.¹ I am not aware of having “placed before man the ideal of a sanyasin”. On the contrary, I have constantly kept before India the ideal of swaraj. In doing so, I have preached simplicity no doubt. I have also preached godliness. But godliness, simplicity and kindred qualities are not the exclusive property of privilege or sanyasin. Moreover, I do not for one moment grant that a sanyasin need be a recluse caring not for the world. A sanyasin is one who cares not for himself but cares all his time for others. He has renounced all selfishness. But he is full of selfless activity, even as God is full of sleepless and selfless activity. A sanyasin, therefore, to be true to his creed of renunciation, must care for swaraj, not for his own sake (he has it), but for the sake of others. He has no worldly ambition for himself. That does not mean that he may not help others to understand their place in the world. If the sanyasins of the old did not seem to bother their heads about the political life of society, it was because society was differently constructed. But politics properly so-called rule every detail of our lives today. We come in touch, that is to say, with the State on hundreds of occasions whether we will or no. The State affects our moral being. A sanyasin, therefore, being well-wisher and servant *par excellence* of society, must concern himself with the relations of the people with the State, that is to say, he must show the way to the people to attain swaraj. Thus conceived, swaraj is not a false goal for

¹ Not reproduced here. The correspondent, claiming to be a student of Gandhiji's writings and speeches, noticed inconsistency between Gandhiji's “idealization” of sannyasa and his struggle for swaraj, and asked Gandhiji how he reconciled the one with the other.

anyone. The Lokamanya¹ never gave the country a greater truth than when he taught the meanest of us to say : “Swaraj is my birthright.” A sanyasin, having attained swaraj in his own person, is the fittest to show us the way. A sanyasin is in the world, but he is not of the world. In all the most important functions of life he does exactly as we the common people do. Only his outlook upon them is different. He does without attachment the things we do with attachment. It is given to everyone of us to cultivate detachment. It is a worthy aspiration surely for all.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Now that I have shouldered the tremendous burden of controlling an all-India cow-protection organization, my correspondence already heavy has become heavier for the inclusion of letters on subjects akin to cow-protection. Here is a sample :²

I have often walked through the streets of Calcutta. What the writer says about cruelty to the draught cattle and horses is only too true. The writer’s indictment of owners is not an exaggeration, though my own opinion is that the owners are more indifferent than calculatedly cruel. They too are amenable to reason as are the carriers and drivers. How to reach them is the question. To look after the condition of animals used within municipal jurisdiction is the function of the municipality concerned. Private philanthropic bodies can, however, write to or wait on the owners concerned and call upon them to remove all cause of complaint wherever it may exist. I feel sure that much can be done by constant watch and a judicious appeal to the parties concerned.

Of the condition of chickens and turkeys, I know nothing; but if the crime is committed in the municipal market, the Corporation can easily deal with it. Much of the cruelty practised by men on dumb creation can be dealt with by a proper mobilization of the humane forces. The Bengal Presidency Council of Women can depute volunteers to note all the cases that come under their observation and report them to the Corporation or the individual owners concerned.

Young India, 21-5-1925

¹ Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920); Indian political leader, scholar and writer, popularly known as “Lokamanya”; one of the founders of Deccan Education Society, Poona and the newspapers, the *Kesari* and *The Mahratta*

² Gandhiji quoted here a letter on behalf of the Bengal Presidency Council of Women detailing cruelties to animals in Calcutta, such as misuse of buffaloes and bullocks for heavy transport, extraction of milk by blowing, etc., and appealing to Gandhiji to write or speak deprecating such disgraceful practices.

229. SPEECH TO UNTOUCHABLES, DINAJPUR¹

May 21, 1925

Gandhiji had . . . nothing more to tell them than that they should not get restive; that they should take comfort in the thought that their condition was much better than that of many of their brethren elsewhere; and that they could, if they chose, send a notice to the Municipality that they were going away leaving the conservancy work to the mercy of the gods, if their demands were not granted, bearing in mind, however, that they had come and settled there of their own accord and not at the invitation of the Municipality!

Young India, 4-6-1925

230. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, DINAJPUR

May 21, 1925

In his reply he expressed his high satisfaction in receiving the addresses in the sweet Bengali,² Hindi and Sanskrit languages. For this treat he was ready to forgive the English of the District Board address. He then paid a tribute to the orderly behaviour of the crowd and the silence they observed according to his wishes. He also spoke highly of the spinners. He observed :

During all my tours in Bengal, the spinners of Dinajpur have pleased me best and I am charmed to see them work. It is also a very good sign that pleaders, doctors and other persons placed high in society were spinning together, sitting side by side with *Santhals*, *Mehtars* and other people so long held in low esteem.

He finished his address after emphasizing his triple programme of khaddar, removal of untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 23-5-1925

231. SPEECH TO STUDENTS, DINAJPUR

May 21, 1925

A friend once told me that whenever he felt the urge of passion he took up the spinning-wheel to forget it, and another that whenever he was angry he took up the spinning-wheel and felt calm. That is to say, the spinning-wheel gives one the peace of mind one needs for observing *brahmacharya*³. Two or three days ago, some boys told me that they could not work on the spinning-wheel, that they were ready

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account of Gandhiji's tour in Bengal

² This was read out by Jogendra Chandra Chakravarti, president of the local Congress Committee.

³ Celibacy

to mount the gallows and asked me to give them a programme which would have on them the exciting effect of an intoxicant. I felt that these students did not observe *brahmacharya*, since they did not like the spinning-wheel which gives peace. I feel that the spinning-wheel has all the virtues needed to make one's life truthful, pure and peaceful and fill it with the spirit of service. I, therefore, beg of you all to give half an hour's labour daily in the form of spinning.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 31-5-1925

232. INTERVIEW AT DINAJPUR¹

May 21, 1925

Questioned as to whether he regarded his Bardoli decision as a mistake, he replied most emphatically in the negative.

That has been one of the sanest acts of my life. Future historians will regard me as the saviour of India at the most critical period of her history. If I had not taken step I would have been regarded by posterity as the greatest monster in the guise of a political leader, and India would have been doomed for many generations to come. It required Herculean courage to order the retreat of that army marching onward and [I] feel proud to say that I was not wanting in that courage at that time. My ultimatum to the Viceroy was nothing—even a child could put his signature to it, but the Bardoli resolution truly required heroic courage. It appears I am giving a certificate to myself, but I must tell you frankly what I feel.

Q. Your programme was within an inch of success as admitted by Sir George Lloyd² himself. The Europeans were all terribly afraid.

A. They were afraid because they thought it was going to be a criminal instead of a civil disobedience. You see, the weapon wielded by me is entirely foreign to theirs. They had no instrument to measure me and as such [were] quite powerless to tackle my activities with.

Q. Then, was it not a mistake to cry halt, since your plan was running so successfully?

A. No, my friends, the country was not prepared, as Chauri

¹ Gandhiji was interviewed by the local landholders and others at the Maharaja's guest house where he was staying. Gandhiji spoke in Hindi and English.

² Governor of Bombay, *Vide* Appendix "Drew Pearson's Interview with Sir George Lloyd", 22-11-1923.

Chaura¹ demonstrated. There was sin amongst our own workers. The passions and prejudices were not yet under control, and, even if swaraj were established, it would not have lasted a moment owing to strifes and dissensions amongst ourselves.

After reiterating the general economic and political importance of the charkha, he added :

It is moreover a splendid test as to how far our workers have the capacity for sincere and devoted work. I am fully convinced that, at present, charkha is the only key to India's salvation.

Q. But, Mahatmaji, surely you are in a minority as to the efficacy of the charkha in winning national freedom.

A. I do not care. Even if I be in the minority of one and all India ranged on the other side, I will stand erect with my views. Those who differ from me are welcome to serve the country according to their lights, but I assert with all the emphasis I can command that charkha will bring us swaraj. All these may appear tall talk to you, but they are not. To me it is all practical common sense. Just as a musician can say with confidence that, if he strikes a certain string, a definite note will issue; so it is with me in regard to the solution of this problem.

Mahatmaji was then told that there was some doubt among orthodox Hindus as to how far he wished to carry his untouchability doctrine. With his characteristic simplicity and brevity he replied :

I will explain it in one word. There are four classes among the Hindus and I recognize no fifth one. My conviction comes from the perusal of the Shastras. The so-called untouchables should be treated like Sudras and no worse. Those who have no objection to inter-dining with the Sudras should have none to treat the untouchables in a like manner. But those who do not dine with the Sudras need not of course do so with the untouchables.

Somebody expressed regret that the Hindu-Muslim unity of 1920-21 has of late been decaying. Mahatmaji sorrowfully replied :

There was none worth the name. It was only an attempt at unity. Can any power in the world separate my wife from me? When there will be real heart-to-heart unity, no amount of temptations and cajolery from third parties will be able to break it up.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 23-5-1925

¹ A village in Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh where, on February 5, 1922, the mob set fire to the police station and 22 constables were burnt alive. Gandhiji was profoundly shocked by this and imposed on himself a five-day fast on February 12.

233. SPEECH AT WORKERS' SCHOOL, BOGRA¹

May 22, 1925

I shall not speak to you on the charkha. You know what I have been saying elsewhere. I shall, however, tell you something about ahimsa in order to strengthen your faith in it. A student at Dacca told me that he would more willingly face the gallows than ply the wheel which afforded no excitement.² I have no doubt that he believed neither in ahimsa nor *brahmacharya*. For the wheel is an emblem of peace and ahimsa, and I have pinned my faith to it, because ahimsa is not a policy with me, but a creed, a religion. Why do I regard it as such? Because I know that it is not *himsa* or destructive energy that sustains the world, it is ahimsa, the creative energy. I do admit that the destructive energy is there, but it is evanescent, always futile before the creative which is permanent. If the destructive one had the upper hand, all the sacred ties—love between parents and child, brother and sister, master and disciple, rulers and the ruled, would be snapped. Ahimsa is like the sun whose worship, as the symbol of God, our *rishis* immortalized in the *Gayatri*. As the sun “keeps watch over man’s mortality”, going his eternal rounds and dispelling darkness and sin and gloom, even so does ahimsa. Ahimsa inspires you with love than which you cannot think of a better excitement. And that is why my faith in the wheel, which is a symbol of peace and love, is increasing as I grow older. And that is why I do not think I am committing an impropriety in spinning whilst I am talking to you. As I am turning the wheel, I am saying to myself : “Why does God give me my daily bread, whilst He starves multitudes of men? Let Him starve me also, or enable me to do something to remove their starvation.” And as I turn it, I am practising ahimsa and truth which are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. Ahimsa is my God, and Truth is my God. When I look for Ahimsa, Truth says, ‘Find it out through me.’ When I look for Truth, Ahimsa says, ‘Find it out through me.’ So the rhapsody easily became one on charkha and ahimsa instead of that on ahimsa alone.

Young India, 4-6-1925

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai’s account of Gandhiji’s tour in Bengal

² Vide “Talk to Students at Dacca”, 17-5-1925.

234. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BOGRA¹

May 22, 1925

Replying Mahatmaji thanked them for the addresses and assured them he would hand over the purse to the Khadi Pratishtan for cheapening khaddar and distributing charkhas free of charge to the poor. In this connection Mahatmaji paid a tribute to Dr. Ray with whom his connection dated from 1901. It was the late Mr. Gokhale, said Mahatmaji, who introduced him to Prafulla Chandra and since then their mutual relations had grown firmer. It was in the fitness of things that he should think himself fortunate in visiting this district which recalled to his mind the glorious work done and being done by Dr. Ray for the poor.

Mahatmaji added that his conviction in the potency of the charkha had been strengthened by Dinajpur and Bogra where for the first time he had seen rich and poor, fathers and little boys and girls, untouchables and Brahmins, all sitting together and spinning for the country's cause. This he said, augured well for the future.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 24-5-1925

235. SPEECH AT TALODA²

May 22, 1925

At the meeting in Bogra I said that for me a visit to this place was a pilgrimage, and I say it here again. Perhaps you do not know the sacrifices made by Dr. Ray as much as I do, and when I heard that this was one of the many centres of his activities, I decided to make this pilgrimage once. Moreover, when I came here and saw that the greater number of those who had been helped by him were muslims my joy and my regard for him rose immeasurably. For, only when Hindus serve Muslims in this manner and Muslims serve Hindus will there be a spontaneous union of hearts between Hindus and Muslims. I very much regret that neither Maulana Shaukat Ali nor Maulana Mahomed Ali is present here to witness this rare sight. The condition of the country today renders it difficult for our workers to leave their tasks and go anywhere. But I have no doubt that both the brothers will be very happy when I tell them about this place.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 7-6-1925

¹ Gandhiji was presented with addresses on behalf of the Municipality, the District Board and the public.

² Where a khadi centre was run by Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ray

236. LETTER TO KALYANJI MEHTA

Jeth Sud 1 [May 23, 1925]¹

BHAISHRI KALYANJI²

I have your letter. Tell Parvati³ to write to me occasionally. I hope you take great interest in the Bardoli work. I am keeping well. I enclose a letter of blessings for Chi. Rukhi. I trust the marriage was celebrated with simplicity and everything went off smoothly. My tour in Bengal will be further extended.⁴ I shall have to go to Assam too.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original : G.N. 2676

237. BENGAL'S SACRIFICE

I overflow with joy to see examples of purest sacrifice in Bengal. The whole family of a zamindar has taken to khadi. All the women spin. The men and women wear khadi exclusively. The zamindar has made over his house and his land for the use of Khadi Pratishthan. The sacrifice made by Satish Babu, who is the life of Khadi Pratishthan, is something extraordinary. He used to earn a monthly salary of Rs. 1,500 in the Chemical Works of Dr. Ray. He had been provided with a bungalow too. He could have got more if he had asked for it. He was doing khadi work even then, but he was not satisfied with that. His tender heart felt that, if he attempted two tasks at a time, both might suffer in consequence. He was the very life of the Chemical Works and, if he did not give his full time to it, it would certainly suffer. But, then, khadi meant service of the poor, and he did not think it right that he should do that work in his spare time. Just as it is a sin for a man to have two wives, so also it is wrong for a man to make two things his life's mission. Moreover, no sacrifice is too great in the cause of khadi. Arguing thus with himself he decided in an instant to leave the Works which he himself had built up. And now he meets his household expenses from the income from his meagre savings and devotes all the 24 hours of the day to the cause of khadi. He has by now opened eleven branches of his centre, out of which five are already in production, and he is thinking of opening more still.

¹ Gandhiji toured Bengal in 1925; *Jeth Sud 1* in that year fell on May 23.

² Congress leader of Surat district; educationist and author; first Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Gujarat State in 1960

³ Wife of Pragji Desai

⁴ It was extended up to August 31, 1925.

Through his efforts 5,060 spinning-wheels are plying. The number of handlooms weaving pure khadi is 597.

His wife, too, has joined her husband in this work. This good lady must be unhappy to have to face want in place of the plenty of former days, and it must be hard for her to be contented with one of the small blocks in a rented tenement in place of an independent bungalow to live in; but she bears all these hardships with a cheerful face.

Satish Babu's, however, is not the only instance of this kind. Many other young men have been making sacrifices which fill us with admiration. Satish Babu had much and he gave up much but he has no problem of meeting his daily needs. He has, on the whole, no hardship regarding accommodation. But there are about a hundred young men who receive Rs. 20 a month to meet all their needs. We cannot realize how difficult life in Bengal is without seeing the conditions ourselves. In the rainy season, they are forced practically to live in water. At any time the houses, all of them, may be washed away by floods. Even for going from one house to another they have to use small boats. The insanitary conditions at such a time are impossible to describe. These young men suffer such hardships and serve the people. Many of them are engaged in khadi work and some in national schools. Spinning, of course, is being done in all schools.

In these conditions, there can be no question of their being able to indulge their palate. They cannot always get milk and curds. The usual food is rice and dal. Pure vegetarians are rare in Bengal. Even those who do not eat meat eat fish. These poor workers do eat fish, if nothing else. We must admit that this is a great help when they do not get milk and curds. This fact does not detract from the value of their sacrifice. I have mentioned this fact of their having fish to eat, only because I do not want to be guilty of exaggeration in describing the young men's hardships.

All these young men are educated. Many of them were professors and drew big salaries. They do not regret their sacrifice. On the contrary, they feel joy in it. Were it not so, they would not be able to keep up the extremely difficult sacrifice they have made. When I think of their sacrifice, Gujarat's sacrifice, what little there has been, seems insignificant by comparison. The sacrifices which I see here made by the educated class can only be compared with similar sacrifices in Maharashtra.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 24-5-1925

238. MY NOTES

IF ONE IS BOYCOTTED?

A gentleman writes :¹

To this there is only one reply I can give. However unjustly *mahajans*² act, we should not take them to courts. Let them inflict any punishment they choose. If we submit to it, their hearts will melt and they will repent. Moreover, when a *mahajan* acts unjustly one should especially welcome being ostracized by it. There is nothing to be gained by remaining in a community in which people sell girls in marriage, in which the atmosphere is vitiated by hypocrisy and whose *mahajan* connives at its members eating meat and drinking. The institution of caste is only a tradition and not an essential part of dharma. Membership of a community confers some advantages. When, however, the institution becomes an instrument of immorality, the best course is to defy it. The principle on which we have acted in resorting to non-co-operation with the Government should also be applied to one's caste and one can non-co-operate with it.

But in this case there is no need at all to do anything of that kind. Here it is the community which ostracizes a member. The latter should welcome this as a happy event. But this can be done only by one who has followed dharma in his conduct, who has served the community and willingly obeyed its rules which promote morality. Only a man of self-control will welcome ostracism, the man who lives for pleasure will be hurt by it. But, then, it is not for a person of the latter type to interest himself in the abolition of untouchability, it is work which should be taken up only by a man of self-control. This movement is not intended to enlarge the scope of enjoyment in life; it is meant to increase opportunities for service, to see that no one is excluded from the scope of our service.

INDIAN STATES

A gentleman has asked me this question.³ There is some truth in what he says, but there is also another side to the question. Where the subjects have some spirit in them, the ruler will not act unjustly. To a

¹ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had asked whether *mahajans*,

which ostracized those who discouraged untouchability but took no action against members who were guilty of real sins, should not be taken to courts of law.

² Representative bodies managing the affairs of communities

³ Not translated here. The correspondent had stated that, from its very nature, the rule of Indian Princes tended towards despotism, and asked Gandhiji whether he favoured the continued existence of Indian States.

people without spirit, what difference does it make whether they are ruled by a king or have a republican form of Government? What will they do with power who do not know how to use it? That is why I have often said: "As the subjects, so the ruler."¹ Wherever have seen injustice being done, I have observed that the subjects are also to blame, because of their weakness. In such States, every official acts as if he himself were the ruler.

I have not favoured the existence of States where there is no control over the rulers. The form and degree of control are matters for the ruler and subjects in each State to decide. Wherever the subjects are vigilant, it is impossible to do injustice. Wherever they slumber, there is bound to be injustice no matter what type of Government they have. We can have an Indian Government with a clean and perfectly just administration. We have before us the example of Rama's rule. The evils we find in the present-day Indian States are to be attributed, on the one hand, to the evils among the subjects and, on the other, to those of British rule. Hence the prevailing anarchy in the Indian States should occasion no surprise. When some Indian States, though subject to evil influences from both these directions, enjoy a reputation for good administration, does not this fact speak well for their sense of moral responsibility? In all that I have said or written on this subject, I only mean that it is not right to hold that there is nothing worth preserving in Indian States and that the best course is to abolish them. It is quite possible to reform them and, if reformed, they can become model governments. I certainly do not mean that they should continue to exist in the same condition in which they are today.

ZAMINDAR'S SERVICES

Chaudhari Raghuvir Narayansingh is a zamindar of Meerut. He has not gone back on the sacrifices he had made at the time of the non-co-operation movement. All the members of his family are khadi-lovers. He had taken a pledge, at Belgaum, to enrol 500 spinning members the Congress. Referring to that pledge, he writes :¹

It is true that Chaudhariji has not been able to enrol 500 spinning members. Even so, his enthusiasm for the cause is some

¹ Reversing the saying, "As the ruler, so the subjects."

² The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had expressed his regret that, owing to the illness and death of his elder brother, he had not been able to fulfil his pledge, assured Gandhiji of his continuing interest in khadi and given details of the work he had been doing for the cause.

thing which others would do well to emulate. If many rich people join in this work, spinning and khadi would make rapid progress.

JAIN “ MUNIS”¹ AND SPINNING-WHEEL

I have received several letters about the report which appeared in *Navajivan* of the conversation I had in Palitana on the spinning wheel.² I do not wish to be drawn into a discussion on this subject; it may not, however, be out of place to clarify a few points. I have studied Jain Shastras according to my lights, but I know that I am not at all qualified to explain their meaning. In the conversation referred to, I only explained the meaning of ahimsa and of being a *muni*. It is possible that Jain philosophy does not accept my meaning. I would be sorry if that was so, and admit that my view was different from the accepted Jain view. Even so, I should have the right to state what appeals to my reason and my heart. I may be mistaken in my view and, if I am, I am bound to suffer for my error; if I have erred through ignorance, I must correct my error as soon as I realize it. My explanation of the meaning of ahimsa and of being a *muni* ought not hurt any Jain. Why should anyone feel hurt when there was no intention on my part at all to cause any pain? If someone does not agree with our view and we are convinced that we are right, we may by all means think that the other person is a fool, but why should we feel hurt?

Having said this, I repeat in all humility that at this time it is the sacred duty even of *munis* to work at the spinning-wheel for general welfare. As they are entitled to have food and drink in order that they may live and serve others, so it is their duty to spin for the service of others. In my humble view, therefore, a *muni* who refuses to do work which may save even one soul does not deserve to be called a *muni*.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 24-5-1925

¹ Monks

² Vide “Discussion with a Jain ‘Muni’ at Palitana”, April 3, 1925.

239. NEEDLESS EXPENDITURE

A long letter lies before me. It contains a well-deserved but gentle criticism of our present movement and of the workers engaged in it. I reproduce below extracts from it which one should read :¹

I have given a summary of the 25-page letter almost in the correspondent's own words. The writer is a thoughtful person and has said everything with a good motive. I know nothing about some of his allegations, but it is indeed my experience that public funds are being misused a great deal. I have even criticized this from time to time. I have known many instances of more money than was necessary having been spent on the comforts of workers. This practice is very much less prevalent now, but I must admit that there is still room for reform. There is certainly some substance in the complaint that expenses on conveyance are incurred much too readily. We now wish to serve the poorest of the poor and to be their representatives. I have no doubt, therefore, that there should be much greater simplicity in our lives than there is at present. A carriage must not be hired so long as one can walk the distance. Public workers arriving as one's guests need not be treated to banquets. Workers come together not to enjoy dinners but to render service.

I have not understood what the correspondent has in mind in the veiled reference he has made to the subject of association with women. The point did not become clear to me even after I had read the whole letter. But one can guess a little from the analogy the writer has used. I have no doubt that seeking women's company for its own sake is sinful and reprehensible. Workers who are guilty of this can render little service to the people. But association with women in the ordinary course of public work is unavoidable and, therefore, to be accepted. We have kept women very much suppressed. They have lost their womanhood. A woman has a right to go out of her home in order to serve, it is her duty to do so. As day by day women come to take greater part in our movement, we shall see more and more men and women coming together in meetings. This seems to me quite a normal situation.

That *brahmacharya* which can be observed only by living in a forest is neither *brahmacharya* nor self-control. Many would like to live in a forest. Everyone will find such solitude beneficial in some

¹ Not translated here. The correspondent had complained of the workers' love of comforts and their preference for foreign articles, and also drawn Gandhiji's attention to the needless expenditure incurred on his account whenever he visited a place.

measure. But it is to be sought in order that it may help one in reflection and in striving for self-realization, and not for one's safety. He alone who, though living in the midst of the busy world, is unaffected by its concerns is a man of self-control and lives in safety.

The walls which were erected in the old days may have been necessary in those times. But we see in Europe in these days that, though large numbers of men and women mix with great freedom, they are able to preserve their moral character and purity. If anyone believes that it is impossible to preserve one's purity in Europe, he betrays his utter ignorance. It is true, certainly, that it is difficult for us to preserve our purity in Europe. But the reason is not that women enjoy great freedom in Europe, but that people there look upon enjoyment as the only good in life. Moreover, we are not accustomed to the freedom that obtains in Europe in these matters.

The example of Europe is useful to us only to a certain extent. To follow it in every respect would be dangerous. My aim in referring to it is merely to show that the idea of association with women being reprehensible in all circumstances, or its being sinful for a man of self-control, is not true at all times and in all places.

In introducing whatever reforms are necessary in our culture, we should take into account the general atmosphere in our country. On the one hand, we have to introduce reforms in the conditions of women's life and, on the other, we have to guard against any harmful consequence during the transitional stage. We shall also have to take some risks. I have received complaints from one or two places to the effect that all is not well there. I have been inquiring into the matter to the extent that it lies in my power to do so.

According to me, it is desirable for a man and a woman to avoid being alone together at all times and in all places, in order to safeguard their purity. If the relationship is pure, there is no need for privacy. There is need for reform in our education, our speech, our diet and our habits. The very thought of our obeying in modern times some of the injunctions of the Shastras which were laid down for their times makes me shudder. As it was thought to be a sin even to look at a woman, the fear has taken possession of us that we cannot look at a woman without evil thoughts. A son feels purified by the sight of his mother. There can be no sin in a brother's innocent look at his sister. Sin depends on the state of one's mind. A man who can never look at a woman without an evil thought had better put out his eyes, or live in a forest till he was pure enough. Anyone who keeps looking at a woman without reason and yet protests that he has no evil thought in his mind is a hypocrite. But the man who is afraid to look at a woman

when he happens to meet one should overcome his timidity. It is definitely sinful to stare at a woman who is not known to us, but there can be no inflexible rule in this matter. No matter how many screens you erect, a polluted mind will look for opportunities for sin and, not getting them, will at any rate go on sinning mentally. A pure mind will survive temptations which assail unexpectedly and preserve unsullied purity.

Finally, the man of self-control should, without resentment, keep in mind the suggestions made by the correspondent, be vigilant and go on with his work of service.

But the most important part of the foregoing letter concerns me. I think that the correspondent's criticism is fully justified. For the expenditure that is being incurred in my name the responsibility, I have no doubt, rests on me. I often feel that much needless expenditure is incurred for my sake. I have quarrelled good-humouredly with a number of my friends over this matter. In many cases, I write in advance about my needs. Despite this, excessive love will not refrain from excess. It incurs expense under one excuse or another. All this cannot always be prevented, however much one tries. Maybe this is because of my weakness. It is possible that my mind secretly craves for pleasures about which I am not conscious. I am a mahatma in name, but it is certain that I am an *alpatma*¹. Else why do I not completely discourage all excess, even at the risk of hurting my friends? Let me hope that such a time too will come. I have done many such things in my life. Here, I only acknowledge my fault and lighten it somewhat, and assure the correspondent that his letter has made me more vigilant and I will remain so in future.

I shall have to defend myself on one point, namely, sanitary conveniences. I learnt 35 years ago that a lavatory must be as clean as a drawing-room. I learnt this in the West. I believe that many rules about cleanliness in lavatories are observed more scrupulously in the West than in the East. There are some defects in their rules in this matter, which can be easily remedied. The cause of many of our diseases is the condition of our lavatories and our bad habit of disposing of excreta anywhere and everywhere. I, therefore, believe in the absolute necessity of a clean place for answering the call of nature and clean articles for use at the time, have accustomed myself to them and wish that all others should do the same. The habit has become so firm in me that even if I wished to change it I would not be able to do so. Nor do I wish to change it. My host is put to some trouble in

¹ A small soul

providing these facilities. But to order out a commode from Bombay on that account is certainly wrong. A secluded spot, a hole dug in the ground, if it is open land, and a few steps around it are all that I need. It is necessary for this spot to be near the place where I sleep. In cities this is possible only if a commode is provided, and so many friends use it. But it is not necessary to get a commode made in Bombay. Any carpenter can make the box and a half kerosene tin can serve as the pan. One can point out many more devices for maintaining cleanliness and meeting our needs.

None of the equipment need be of foreign make. The principle of khadi certainly implies that even the other articles we use should, as far as possible, have been made in our own country. Wearing khadi can never mean licence to use all other articles of foreign make. But khadi also does not mean that one should hate a thing simply because it is foreign-made. Khadi means conservation, not destruction. The destruction implicit in the process of conservation is inevitable. Hence we should conserve only that which is absolutely necessary. We cannot do without cloth, and cloth can easily be produced in India. The textile industry provides employment to crores of people in India. Hence khadi means safeguarding their means of livelihood. Wearing khadi, therefore, is a sacred duty and, for the same reason, wearing foreign cloth and for that matter even Indian mill-made cloth is morally wrong. But a medicine called "iodine" which is imported from the West and which cannot be produced in India is a necessity and, therefore, acceptable though foreign-made. But those public workers who use foreign, or even indigenous, articles merely to increase their comforts violate dharma. A servant of the country can never be guilty of this. It is, thus, altogether wrong for a servant to take mangoes all the way from Bombay to Mayavati merely to pander to his palate. If a servant spends two rupees where only one will do, it is open theft.

I, therefore, give below what I have often conveyed to friends about my needs. Anyone who keeps ready more conveniences for me than those indicated below will not be obliging me, nor serving the people, nor helping himself.

I want the place for answering the call of nature to be as clean as that for sleeping.

I shall be satisfied if I have a clean place with fresh air in which I can work and rest and sleep. A bedstead is not necessary. I carry with me what I require as bedding and covering and hence, there is no need to provide a bed or mattress for me.

For food, a maximum of three seers of goat's milk every day

and two sour lemons will suffice for me. The dry fruit which I need besides these two, I carry with me. I do not require ghee made from goat's milk. If I need a preparation made from goat's milk during a journey, I get it made before I start and carry it with me. I consider it a great sin to get ghee made from goat's milk at great cost.

No car is needed for my comfort. But one can certainly be pressed into service to save time.

It is certainly not necessary to have a first-class bogey for me. For myself, I do require second-class accommodation at present, but third-class accommodation will be good enough for my companions. Sometimes, men and women friends travel with me at their own expense. They arrange for their own accommodation in trains.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 24-5-1925

240. MESSAGE TO "FORWARD"

May 25, 1925

Forward with the spinning-wheel. For I know that through it we can give strength to the Swarajists. Let the readers of *Forward* . . .¹ every house with the wheel and we shall have Subhas Chandra Bose in our midst in no time.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the original : G.N. 8049

241. LETTER TO N. C. KELKAR

May 25, 1925

DEAR MR. KELKAR,

I have your note. Of course we must not enter upon arbitration unless we have a proper deed of reference. The parties know that I have insisted upon that from the first. I have also stipulated that they must not bind me to time.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : C. W. 3114. Courtesy : Kashinath N. Kelkar

¹ The source is illegible here.

242. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

May 25, 1925

CHI. RAMDAS,

I am enclosing herewith the letter you wanted to be returned.

You must have read the story of Nanda.¹ Meet poet Hansraj, and ask him to read that story twice or thrice, and then compose a poem about it. I wish to publish the poem if it comes out well. If he finds the task beyond his capacity, let me know. The purpose is to sing it from house to house and also among the untouchables.

There has been no letter from you now for almost a week. I am in Calcutta today. I shall be going to Burdwan either tomorrow or this evening. I shall return here by the 27th for the Committee² meeting. My health is fine.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

I had preserved one of your letters for some purpose. Reading it again today, I realize that you have completed 29 years. I have not noted the birthday of any of you brothers, hence I rarely think about such things. Growing in age means having one's life shortened. It means so many days or years less for endeavour. Is it something to be sorry for or to be happy about? One can take it either way. Happiness and sorrow are the same. Or they are echoes of one's mind. But you have put them to good use. You have grown in self-restraint. May God keep you happy and in peace and may He grant you a long life.

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Ramdas Gandhi Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

¹ Which appeared in *Navajivan*, 10-5-1925, under the title "Untouchable Saint Nanda"

² Congress Working Committee; *vide* also the following item.

243. NOTES

LATEST RETURNS

Here are the latest returns, supplied by the All-India Congress Committee, of Congress membership :

	PROVINCE	Last month		Current month		Total
		A	B	A	B	
1.	Ajmer ..	2	15	..	..	17
2.	Andhra ..	..	..	..	..	1,965
3.	Assam ..	113	1	..	..	114
4.	Bihar ..	718	261	..	..	979*
5.	Bengal ..	354	1,919	..	..	2,273
6.	Berar ..	..	..	6	20	26†
7.	Burma ..	42	28	33	28	61
8.	C.P. (Hindi) ..	..	..	..	..	500
9.	C.P. (Marathi)	..	80	52	..	..
132						
10.	Bombay ..	231	133	242	201	443
11.	Delhi ..	83	62	243	647	890
12.	Gujarat ..	2,095	101	..	..	2,196
13.	Karnatak ..	376	344	..	..	720
14.	Kerala ..	..	..	..	..	..§
15.	Maharashtra ..	408	292	..	..	700
16.	Punjab ..	50	574	50	754	804+
17.	Sind ..	73	192	107	234	341
18.	Tamilnad ..	..	..	..	nearly	1,400
19.	U.P. ..	237	467	..	..	1,484**
20.	Utkal ..	..	..	..	..	310††
		4,862	4,441	681	1,884	15,355

*103 out of class B sent yarn spun by family members.

†Figures for 3 out of 4 Districts not received.

§No information was received even for March.

+ It is not known how many of these actually paid subscriptions.

**780 members are unclassified.

††Of these, only 116 members paid their subscriptions for April up to middle of April.

These returns are an interesting study for those who believe in the new franchise, or those who would make the Congress an effective and efficient working institution. Kerala was made a new Province at Nagpur. It gave promise of much work and greater sacrifice, but today Kerala is almost dead to the Congress call. It will not even condescend to send an explanation to the All-India Congress Committee. It has Vykom to its credit, but no person or institution can eternally live upon its credit. He who does not add to his credit loses what he has. C.P. (Hindustani), also a new Province, and which has distinguished itself before now for its pluck, is satisfied with sending a stationary return in round figures. I suspect the figure 500. Why not 499 or 501? It has not given the classification. An explanation is necessary to show the meaning. Has there been no increase upon 500? Have there been no defaulters? Are they all self-spinning members? Or, have they all sent yarn spun by others? If not, in what way have they sent their quota? Or, has the Congress taken up the agency for those who wanted to become members and purchased yarn for them in order to save the members the trouble of buying and examining the yarn? If the Congress has taken up the agency, on what terms has it done so? These are the questions to which one would fain have answers. Andhra has a record wholly unworthy of its past traditions, because, I presume, it is torn with internal dissensions, and therefore, its capacity for growth has become paralysed. Tamilnad fares no better. It could easily make a much braver show if it could but settle its eternal Brahmin-non-Brahmin controversy. The condition, however, does not daunt me. I am a hardened criminal, slow to reform. The black picture I have drawn is for me a reason not for altering the franchise, but for adhering to it; not for watering it down, but for strengthening its main purpose. I can see no way of making the Congress a truly national organization, responsive to national want and representative of the masses and capable of action at a given moment, without discipline, without the co-operation of all its parts, and without a due sense of responsibility in every member. 15,000 members are more than enough for the national purpose, if they would be true to their creed and satisfy all self-imposed tests. All the observations that I have made and I am making about this incessant

travelling to which I have subjected myself convince me of the necessity of making Congress predominantly a self-spinning association. Nothing but this very simple discipline will cure the nation of the lethargy that has overtaken it.

Young India, 28-5-1925

244. *RYOTS' CRY*

As my Bengal tour progresses, the addresses I receive are becoming more and more businesslike. Instead of containing praises of me and my work, they are becoming instructive, containing valuable information. One such address was from Tipperah Ryots' Association. It contained these pregnant sentences :¹

Let me assure the reader that I have only omitted the usual opening and the concluding brief one-sentence paragraphs and half a sentence of unnecessary epithets. I am prepared to believe that there is exaggeration in the foregoing statement. But I cannot help remarking that, on the whole, it is a fair statement of the ryots' position from their own point of view. The most remarkable part in the statement is that relating to six months' unemployment. It is an echo of the other parts of the country. Many people work on their miserably small holdings for six months, and for six months they labour in factories far away from their homes. A studious reader will notice that this unemployment naturally occupies the first place in the tale of woes. It is also mainly the cause of the other troubles mentioned. If they had steady work in their own homes for the whole of the year, they would not be obliged to run to the money-lender. If they had anything to lay by, they would not be obliged to sell their jute at rates dictated to them. Six months' industrial employment must revolutionize their lives.

But they say they do not know spinning. They want me to tell the Congressmen to take note of the fact. I wish I could fire Congressmen with my faith in and zeal for the charkha. Of course, they should, as representatives of the people, spread themselves among them and take to them the message of the wheel. In taking that message and in inducing them to spin, they will automatically know many things about them and share their sorrows as well as their rejoicings. Congressmen may not descend upon villages as locusts

¹ Not reproduced here. The address dwelt on the plight of the food-growing and jute-producing farmers of Tipperah due to low wages, under-employment, inequitable prices for their produce, lack of drinking-water, litigation, etc., and appealed for relief.

upon crops, but they should approach them as loving messengers to understand their wants and to help them to better their condition. I should not be at all sorry or upset, if, after having gone there to spread spinning, they find it necessary to render some other help instead. Let them go to the villages and stay there as servants. Everyone whom I meet agrees that it is necessary to work among the villages but few actually do so. Of those who have gone to the villages the majority find the spinning-wheel the proper instrument of service. But the villages are seven hundred thousand and we have not perhaps seven hundred true village-workers in all India. The ryots' address is a rebuke and a reminder to us. It will be time to speak of swaraj when we have a respectable number of workers in the villages.

Young India, 28-5-1925

245. THE DRAWBACKS

The more I see the Bengal life the more do I realize its immense possibilities in many directions. It has given the world's greatest poet of the day. It has given two scientists¹ who are among the greatest in the world. It has singers who are hard to beat. It has painters whose art has spread from one end of India to the other.² It has sacrifice to its credit which even Maharashtra cannot rival. When I wrote in answer to the revolutionary friend, I had not seen with my own eyes the workers in the malarial districts, working among the people on a mere pittance. I had not actually known that there were young men who were living in such penury and want that they had contracted diseases that were due purely to want of proper nourishment or change to a healthy climate. I have now seen such places and such men. Both men and women of Bengal have a special talent for spinning. I have watched both working at Chandpur, Chittagong, Mahajanhat, Noakhali, Comilla, Dacca and Mymensingh. Everywhere I have found their work to be on the whole superior to any I have noticed in India. They were not professional spinners, they were not even habitual spinners, for most had come to please or to honour me if not to humour me. And yet their work was not to be despised. But for want of technical skill, this talent and this sacrifice are running to waste. The majority of the spinning-wheels I saw were indifferent machines. They were either not working properly or they were so made as to make their working heavy and give not the maximum, but the minimum of revolutions of

¹ Dr. J. C. Bose and Dr. P. C. Ray

² Vide "At It Again", 7-5-1925.

the spindle. Their yield could, therefore, be very poor. I worked at one such wheel for fully thirty minutes. My average output is 130 yards per half-hour. On this Bengal wheel it was only 30 yards. With a proper charkha it is possible easily to treble the output. It is no small gain to the nation or the individual to treble his earning in any given hour. Bengal has a very good and very cheap wheel. Khadi Pratishthan has an excellent wheel that works well and sells at rupees two and annas eight. I have not known a cheaper machine in all India of the same type. I do wish that Bengal will adopt the Pratishthan model. It is also necessary for an expert to travel to all the places where wheels are working and put the wheels in order and destroy where repair is impossible. The expert may also demonstrate the superiority of the wheel he may recommend. All this work can only be done by men who know and who will give the whole of their time and attention to khaddar work to the exclusion of every thing else. Such organization is the Khadi Pratishthan and such a specialist is Satish Babu who has given up everything for the sake of the wheel. Then there is the unwholesome competition of mixed or half khaddar with the pure. If the Congress resolutions have any weight with Congressmen, the latter at any rate can have nothing to do with mixed khaddar. I hope, therefore, that Congress organizations that are manufacturing or supporting half-khaddar will cease to do so. Half-khaddar is generally that stuff whose warp is made of mill-yarn. Now it is the warp which enables us to test the quality of yarn. And if we get into the habit of using mill-spun yarn for warp, we shall never improve the quality of hand spun yarn and hence we shall never be able to reestablish hand-spinning as a cottage industry, nor succeed in achieving the exclusion of foreign cloth.

Young India, 28-5-1925

246. NATIONAL SERVICE AND PAY

Thus writes a correspondent¹ It is evident that he is not a constant reader of *Young India*, or else he would have noticed that I have said repeatedly that I would deem it an honour to belong to paid national service. My travelling and other such expenses stand on a different footing. I cannot charge them against the Congress without a

¹ Not reproduced here. The correspondent, who described himself as a Khilafat and Congress worker drawing an allowance, referring to "Notes", 30-4-1925, said he found himself in a fix at leaders like Gandhiji, the Ali Brothers, Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das considering it "beneath their dignity to be put on the nation's Civil list".

vote. I do not travel in virtue of any resolution of the Congress or at its instance. I travel at the call of different provinces. It would be quite wrong for me to charge these expenses against the Congress or to ask the Congress to vote them. The correspondent does not know that even members of the A.I.C.C., when they attend in answer to a summon from the Congress, make no charge against it. The Congress funds would be soon exhausted if such a charge was made. But, if I became a whole-time Congress worker in the technical sense of the term, and if we had a paid national service, I should be the first to put myself on the pay list for the sake of encouraging others. Such a service we have not yet established and I have found many practical difficulties in evolving a scheme, whether for the whole of India or even for Gujarat. More than once I have been obliged to drop it no sooner than I had conceived it. The correspondent, therefore, need have no qualms of conscience in drawing pay from the Khilafat Office for work honestly done. If it be any consolation to him, let him know that the Ali Brothers did charge the Khilafat Committee travelling expenses when they travelled at its instance. Let him have the further consolation of knowing that the Khilafat Committee bore my travelling expenses twice or thrice, when I travelled with the Ali Brothers on what was regarded as mainly Khilafat work. I could even then have fallen back upon friends, but I deemed it an honour to call myself one of the Khilafat Party. If Ali Brothers do not and did not charge their personal expenses against the Khilafat Committee, it was because their obligations were larger than they could legitimately ask the Khilafat Committee to discharge. If they had, it would have been a bad precedent.

Young India, 28-5-1925

247. NOTES

HAKIM SAHIB

Hakim Sahib Ajmal Khan has sent an Urdu letter to me from Marseilles. I translate below the relevant portion :

We left Bombay [on] 10th April and we have reached Marseilles today, 22nd April. My health was somewhat better on the way. I was sorry not to have been able to meet you before I sailed. God willing, I shall give myself the pleasure on my return. I shall feel deeply ashamed when anyone asks me about the condition of India. For what shall I be able to say except that it is wretched,—that its two great but unfortunate communities are fighting to their hearts' content among themselves. How I wish that those who are engaged in widening the gulf would have pity on India, on Asia, indeed, on their own respective

communities, and would turn their faces towards the true path and would put life into the lifeless Congress. Dr. Ansari is well and seems to have benefited by the change.

Those who know the good soul will readily appreciate and share his great grief over our dissensions.

‘THE SIAMESE TWINS’

It is a sign of the times that there should be people who think that as none of them is with me during my tour, there must be some rupture between me and the Ali Brothers, or the ‘Siamese twins’ as Maulana Mahomed Ali delights to call himself and his big brother. Some friends at Noakhali told me that many people suspected an open rupture between us. I told them that there was none and there was likely to be none, but that, if a rupture did ever take place between us, I would not be slow to advertise it as I have advertised our friendship. But I warn the reader against hoping for or expecting any such announcement, if he wishes to avoid disappointment. Friendships are not easily made, they are less easily broken. They bear much strain. The only strain they cannot stand is dishonesty or faithlessness. Let no one imagine that the differences between Maulana Shaukat Ali and myself about Kohat have put any strain whatsoever upon our relations. It would have been a false friendship if either of us had, in order to please the other, concealed his honest opinion.

“Then why was not one of them with us?”, was the natural and next question. I told the inquirers that Maulana Shaukat Ali was tied down to Bombay till he had repaired the broken barque of the Khilafat Committee and Maulana Mahomed Ali could not be spared from his two papers which were taxing him beyond his strength. Moreover, the fact is that there is not that imperative necessity today for us always to be travelling together that there was in 1920-21. On the contrary, at the present moment very available worker is required to attend to his allotted task. The programme of work is before the country. It has got to be worked. I travel as the inspector general to see how the new franchise is working. I travel in order to test for myself the value of the new franchise. Having taken over the burden of office I can best discharge it, during this year of grace, by travelling, wherever I may be wanted, with a Mussalman friend if possible, or, even without if necessary. So far as the Hindu-Muslim question is concerned, I have had my say. I have prescribed the cure. It has been found wanting for the time being. I must now wait, watch and pray. I discharge my obligation in that respect nowadays by simply reciting and re-affirming my creed. My sole energy is being devoted to the spinning-wheel and untouchability.

CART AND CHARKHA

During my tour in Bengal, I meet with all kinds of ingenious arguments against the wheel from the ingenious Bengalis. Most of them have been examined in these pages. But as readers never remember what they read in journalistic literature, a journalist is always safe in repeating the same thing so long as perhaps he takes care to repeat at fair intervals. One of these friends asked me whether I propose to replace the railways with country carts, and if I did not, how I expected to replace mills with wheels. I told him that I did not propose to replace railways with carts, because I could not do so even if I wished. Three hundred million carts could not destroy distance. But I could replace mills with wheels. For railways solved the question of speed. With mills it was a question of production in which the wheel could easily compete if there were enough hands to work as there were in India. I told him that as a matter of fact a villager could manufacture for himself sufficient cloth cheaper than mills if he did not count the value of his labour. And he did not need to do so as he would spin or even weave during his spare hours. It is remarkable how false or incomplete analogies deceive people. In the case in point, the difference between mills and railways on the one hand and wheels and country-carts on the other, is so obvious that the comparison should never have been made. But probably the friend thought I was against all machinery in every conceivable circumstance. Probably he had in mind my objections to railways stated in my *Indian Home Rule* though I have repeatedly said that I am not working out the different fundamental problems raised in that booklet.

WASTE OF EFFORT?

Another argument advanced was that the spinning-wheel was a waste of effort. It was an astounding argument advanced without any thought given to it. I showed that anything done with a purpose could not be regarded as waste of effort. The spinning-wheel was presented to the nation for giving occupation to the millions who had, at least, for four months in the year, nothing to do. I told the objector, too, that seeing that the wheel produced at least 100 yards of yarn per every half hour it could not be regarded as waste of effort. Moreover, it not only was not a waste of effort, but a sound economic proposition. For, what was required for the millions was a universal productive occupation which could be taken up during odd moments and which did not require any special talent or long course of training to learn. Such an occupation was only hand-spinning and no other.

RISE AND FALL

The District of Noakhali is a promising centre of khaddar work.

It had evidently much work to its credit when the khaddar movement first started. The following report of its rise and fall, handed to me at Noakhali, cannot fail to be of general interest :¹

The moral is obvious. Workers must not lose heart. They must continue their work in the face of all odds even as a resourceful merchant does. Till khaddar becomes current coin, we must become voluntary merchants, not for personal but for the country's gain. Khaddar work must be above the shifting party-politics of the Congress. It may change its programme fifty times but never its programme of the charkha and khaddar, on which depends the fortune of the poor and dumb millions.

FALLEN SISTERS SPINNING

At Noakhali, I was told that two fallen sisters were not only spinning, but that they were entirely supporting themselves by spinning. These were not young girls but women over forty who could no longer sell their shame but who would, but for spinning, have lived on begging. They were, therefore, strictly speaking, weaned from begging and not from their original trade. It is, however, a great thing for Noakhali to come in touch with these sisters and interest itself in their welfare. I was also told that some of them, though they had not given up their calling, had taken to spinning. I do not know if it could be considered a gain for such sisters to spin if they would not give up their calling. It may well be used to cover their shame. At the same time there is no doubt that spinning could not be recommended to them as a means of livelihood. They are used to earning so much as one to two rupees per day if not even more. They must have either weaving or even embroidery or other fancy work which would bring them a fair remuneration. It is, too, not a question that man can tackle. It must be reserved for the fair sex to rise to the occasion. Not until a woman of exceptional purity and strength of character rises and devotes herself to the task of redeeming this portion of fallen humanity will the problem of prostitution be tackled. No doubt man can do much among men who degrade themselves by enticing young women to sell themselves for their lust. Prostitution is as old as the world, but I wonder if it was ever a regular feature of town-life that it is today. In any case, time must come when humanity will rise against the curse and make prostitution a thing of the past, as it has got rid of many evil customs, however time honoured they might have been.

¹ The report, not reproduced here, concerned the cotton-growing district of Noakhali, with its 55,000 weavers, and in referring to the fall in khadi consumption and consequent fall in output, stressed the potentialities of production, given necessary organization, funds and workers.

SPINNING IN MEERUT

Chaudhari Rughbeer Narayan Singh, writing from Meerut, says that though he promised at Belgaum to enlist 500 members under the new franchise, he was not able to do so within the stipulated time owing to the serious illness of his brother who, I am sorry to report, is no more. But now with the aid of Babu Jyoti Prasad, a Swarajist *vakil* and other friends, he has been able to get 647 members of whom 200 are self-spinners. This is certainly good so far as it goes. But let me remind the Chaudhariji that he was to enlist 500 self-spinning members. I hope that he and his co-workers will bear the fact in mind and not be satisfied till Meerut has that number of self-spinners. The Chaudhariji further says that they have been organizing spinning competitions among both men and women and that these are attended by many people. On the whole, he reports that, though the progress is slow, it is steady. They have also a class for teaching spinning and carding.

SPINNING IN GOD'S NAME

Some young men of Bowringpet have sent me over 3,200 yards of yarn spun by them during seven days following the Ram Navmi. They describe the ceremony of repeating *Ramanama* during these seven days by all people, young and old. But these young men, besides taking part in that ceremony, spun simultaneously. It is an example worth copying. I know several young men who concentrate on God whilst they are spinning. Those who spin for sacrifice can surround the act with all that is noble and good. In Dacca, some musicians called on the day of my silence to entertain me with *sitar* playing. Now Monday is not merely a day of silence but it is also a day of editing. I could ill-afford, therefore, to listen to their music. But I did not want to disappoint them. I, therefore, wrote for them a message that I would spin whilst they played on the *sitar*. They readily agreed. The result was that I spun better than usual. The hand was steadier for the music. I always use a noiseless charkha. It, therefore, did not interfere with my enjoyment of the music. On the contrary it enhanced the pleasure of listening to the music and the music enhanced the pleasure of spinning. And neither interrupted my communion with God. The hand, the ear and the heart acted in perfect harmony. Let the sceptics test the experience for themselves.

INDISCIPLINE OR INDIFFERENCE?

I receive letters from various Provinces complaining that the Head Office does not get returns or answers from Districts in spite of repeated warnings and reminders. What are they to do in such a case, they ask. The ordinary answer would be "disbandment". A

subordinate office that does not obey or respond to the head office is worse than useless. The new franchise tests the quality of obedience from the individual member and the sub-committees. A member's constancy is tested from month to month in that he or she has to send his or her quota of yarn from month to month. An organization is not worth much if its members will not take the trouble of paying their subscriptions regularly. I know that the complaint about non-payment and non-attendance is as old as the Congress itself. Irregularity of payment has not crept in since the new franchise. Imagine what would happen to a firm or a government whose employees did not attend to their work regularly or majority of whose subscribers or rate-payers did no pay rates or subscriptions regularly and without call? The firm or the government would cease to function. The Congress is, or should be, more than a firm or a government. Yet its members have to be coaxed to pay their rates or subscription. How can the Congress produce the desired effect? I do not suppose that the A.I.C.C. has got its quota of yarn. I am convinced that the provincial headquarters as well as the A.I.C.C. should be absolutely firm in securing the quota. The Congress is no stronger than the strength of regularity with which the members and groups are doing their self-imposed tasks.

SENTIMENTAL NONSENSE

There is sentiment that is sensible and useful, such, for instance, as love for one's country and consequent toil. There is sentiment which is nonsensical and useless. Of this latter kind is the following :¹

I sympathize with the young graduate, but I cannot help saying the suicide he suggests is a crime. All fasting is not meritorious. The candidate for self-immolation can not only not advance swaraj by his suicide, but he would certainly retard it, if he committed the crime of self-murder. It bespeaks want of faith in oneself. I honour the determination not to seek employment under the Government. But surely, suicide is not the only alternative. If the national school in question does not support him, he has dozens of opportunities for earning an honest livelihood and supporting his parents. Has he the will to labour with his hands? I do not know a single honest and willing worker who is unable to get suitable work in a national or public organization or in a private firm. I know that national work

¹ In the letter, not reproduced here, a frustrated correspondent referred to his dilemma in choosing between non-co-operation and co-operation with Government for his family's sake, and sought Gandhiji's opinion as to the propriety of the correspondent's fasting unto death "for the salvation of the motherland and for the well-being" of his family.

awaits the willing through paid service of honest and industrious young men and women for its full development. The young man can become a weaver or a carpenter and earn fair wages. He can apply to, say, the Khadi Pratishtan and if he has the requisite qualifications, he would get employment there. A young man should never give way to despondency. He should have self-confidence enough to know that real merit never goes unrewarded.

100-YEAR-OLD WHEEL

At Comilla, a charkha was shown me which was said to be hundred years old and still in working order. The present owner of the wheel is a widow over 58 years. Her mother had it from her mother-in-law. The owner became a widow at the age of 14. She has had her own and her people's cloth woven out of the yarn spun by her. She is said never to have purchased foreign cloth for herself or her people.

Young India, 28-5-1925

248. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CALCUTTA¹

May 28, 1925

Addressing the gathering Mahatmaji said that he had told them one thing and he did not know whether they had heard it or not. He would speak to them one thing which they would hear by ears and he had told them something which they had heard by eyes. He had shown them practically his only message of charkha and he could not speak anything more than that. Referring to the significance of one saying, he said, that they would go to cinema and see the deliverance of actors and actresses on the screen but what significance there could be on their cinema visit if they did not try to take to heart the morals and the spirit of the play and try to translate it in their own life? There was no significance of one's utterances if one did not practise them in one's own life. So what he would say and what Dr. Naidu had said he had explained with his own hand.

Proceeding Mahatmaji said that he would be all the more sorry if he had to speak anything more than what he had shown. Before Bengal tour he did not demonstrate his message to the public but in Faridpur he had begun that. They had seen him spinning short and coarse thread and his intention was not surely to show them his thread but to impress them with his own practice so that they could imbibe it and work up to it. He was sitting amongst the citizens of Calcutta, but his heart was always with the suffering masses in the remotest villages of Bengal. He wished to

¹ The meeting was held at Harish Park in Bhowanipur in the evening. Gandhiji addressed the meeting after Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu had spoken.

mix with the masses, with the neglected poor cultivators, with down-trodden untouchables. While attending to his wheel and to the songs his heart was amongst those poor women of East Bengal who had been suffering from starvation and with those down-trodden villagers who were treated as untouchables. They died of starvation for his sake and, for their sake they did not get full meals every day. He wished to mix with them and try to discern the cause of their woes and help them in their salvation.

Referring to Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu's appeal, he said that Dr. Naidu had asked them to join and help the Swaraj Party. To him this appeal meant that they must do something for swaraj. He could only interpret it in that way. How could those youngsters present in the meeting enter the Councils? Chittaranjan might go to the Council with only a few Das Guptas with him and they had gone there. But all of those present in the meeting could not aspire for that. Once Chittaranjan Babu had told them at Faridpur to go to the villages and work with the masses. In the words of Deshbandhu he could explain his message and say that mere entrance into the Swaraj Party would be no real work. They must go to the masses and live with them if they wished to uplift them. They might give a handful of rice as a dole, but this would not infuse real life and enthusiasm in their heart.

In East Bengal many poor villagers had told him that they had to sit idle for six months in a year having no work to do. They wanted charkha to be introduced amongst them. They did not know where charkha could be had and where they could get cotton. So they must go to them with the message of charkha and educate them in plying the wheel. They must purchase khaddar produced by their poor brethren and sisters with yarn spun by them.

Mahatmaji continued, wherever they might go and travel whether in Calcutta or in Delhi or in any other city, they must always think of the poor cultivators, their heart must always be with them, expressing their gratitude which they morally owed to them. Whatever they ate was produced by these poor cultivators, whatever amenities they enjoyed in cities was the outcome of the toil of their starving brothers and sisters. They were leaders sitting at the desk and writing articles and speeches. But if they wanted to do something for the masses they must spin and put on khaddar. One sister had told him that, when she went to East Bengal, she saw people wearing khaddar, but when she came to cities, she was disappointed to see her sisters with foreign clothes on. What more painful a fact could be than this!

Alluding to an incident during his Champaran work, Mahatmaji said that, in a train his wife met a woman who had only one piece of khaddar with her. She had told his wife that she used only that piece of cloth always. When she had to bathe in the Ganges she had to do it with her body practically naked and would put on that cloth after finishing her bath. This was a very painful fact and he expected that they would not let such occurrences recur.

Mahatmaji appealed to his sisters in a most impressive tone that, if they wished to establish *Ramaraj*, they must try to emulate Sitaji. Sita Devi never used

foreign clothes, she used to spin regularly and they must spin like her.

Speaking about untouchability he said that *sanatan* dharma had nothing as untouchability. This age-honoured magnanimous religion had no scorn and spite in its fold. If they were to save this religion from decay, they must do away with this evil eating into the vitals of their religion. Gokhale had said that the whole world would look upon India as pariah because they had looked upon their brothers and sisters in the same light. He saw that this saying of Gokhale was true to every word.

Concluding his speech, Mahatmaji said that the few yards he had spun there had only advanced him on the way to swaraj by so many yards and his only prayer was that they should spin for the swaraj of Hindustan, for Deshbandhu, for the untouchables, for the Hindus, for the Mussalmans and for all other castes of Hindustan.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 29-5-1925

249. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAMDAS THAKURDAS

*Jeth Sud 7 [May 29, 1925]*¹

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I have your letter. I am sorry to know that you will not be able to take up the treasurership of the Gauraksha Mandal. May I hope you will view it with sympathy.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

SIR PURUSHOTTAMDAS THAKURDAS
NAVSARI CHAMBERS
OUTRAM ROAD
FORT, BOMBAY

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 6196. Courtesy : Purushottamdas Thakurdas

250. LETTER TO SAROJINI NAIDU

SANTINIKETAN,
May 30, 1925

DEAR MIRABAI,

I have your letter as also your telegram. Your description of your place is so enchanting that you make me jealous. May the rest there restore you to tolerable health. I suppose it is useless to hope for complete restoration in your case.

¹ The postmark is "Santiniketan, May 30, '25". *Jeth Sud 7* fell on May 29.

Everybody felt like you the non-necessity of attending the W.C. So there was only Dr. Varadarajulu¹ besides Jawahar and myself. All the same I pardon you for not coming. The rest you are giving yourself is absolutely necessary. You want me to call a meeting of 12 representatives. I do not see the utility at present. No one wants unity of the heart for no one wants to sacrifice anything. You cannot force on a people what they are not ready for. But you evidently believe in the present possibility of achieving it. If you or anyone else calls such a meeting, I would gladly attend. I must not lead.

If girls are bolder with me than boys it is because the former respond more quickly to my call. But I shall make no distinction and therefore send love to both and you also, on condition that you get well quickly.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From the original: Padmaja Naidu Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

251. LETTER TO KHWAJA ABDUL MAJID

ON TOUR,
May 30, 1925

DEAR KHWAJA SAHEB,

I have your letter at last. I hope you will be able to transfer to Delhi without any difficulty. I suppose it is better for you to issue your appeal after the transfer. I am afraid you may not enter the Councils whilst you are doing the University work.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

KHWAJA SAHEB ABDUL MAJID
NATIONAL MUSLIM UNIVERSITY
ALIGARH

From the original: A. M. Khwaja Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

¹ Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu

252. LETTER TO SHANKERLAL BANKER

*Saturday, Jeth Sud 7 [May 30, 1925]*¹

Correct mistakes and read.

BHAI SHANKERLAL,

I have your letter. Do not worry about the length. The Working Committee did not meet after all. Only three members² were present. I have acquainted myself with Dr. Naidu's view. I shall also know Deshbandhu's view since I shall be meeting him in Darjeeling. Regardless of the outcome you should carry on the work without worrying. We must not worry about anything when we are doing our duty.

I have sent a telegram to Arjun Lal Sethi that the Working Committee could not meet, but that I am willing to give my personal view. He must convey whatever he has in mind within a week. It is planned to convene another meeting of the Working Committee. We will at least manage the quorum. I shall ascertain the views of other members before that. Do not worry about the authority of the Board. Let me worry about it. Do not be perturbed by the fact that the solution of the Ajmer imbroglio will take a little time. You can certainly open any shop, etc., you wish to have in Ajmer. Let him appeal against it if he wants. He will surely not stop any work by resorting to physical force? Who can stop you from working in Jaipur and other such places? It is also Dr. Naidu's view that the Board can do any independent (khadi) work that it chooses. Provincial Khadi Boards cannot make appointments without consulting the Committee. We do not have much to do with the provincial Board. Who is connected with the shop opened in Bombay? You can extend your activities in Rajputana as much as you wish without the intervention of the Provincial Board. That is also Jawaharlal's view. Even then, you need not do it if you do not feel strong enough. You may consult me again if you want.

There is nothing at all to be done if Sethiji abuses Jamnalalji. He was at one time a dependent of Jamnalalji. The abuses from a dependent do not have to be answered. Nor need there be any angry reaction. That is Sethiji's nature. It would be good for you to live in solitude for a few days. If nothing else, you may come to me for some days and also talk things over.

¹ Inferred the contents of the letter. In 1925 *Jeth Sud 7* corresponded to this date, a Saturday.

² Viz., Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu, *vide* p. 305.

If Jawaharlal did not have to go to Dalhousie the Committee could have been called in July.

I am at Santiniketan today. I shall reach Calcutta on Tuesday. The same day I shall leave for Darjeeling for a three-day stay. It is not possible to spare more days for Darjeeling. My health is fine. I had a long talk with the Poet today—four hours. It is very likely he will start plying the charkha. In any case he will not oppose it. We are meeting again. I have built great hopes on Bengal. You will see it from my articles in *Young India*.

Take good care of your health. I am also going to Assam for 10 or 12 days.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

I am not revising this letter. It is time to go to bed. I may not write a separate letter to Anasuyabehn. She will have all the news from this.

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 32692

253. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

SANTINIKETAN,

*Jeth Sud 7 [May 30, 1925]*¹

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I have your letter. I had put off writing to you as I thought you would be coming for the Committee meeting and we would then talk about everything personally. I was not at all worried that you did not come. I had inferred from Girdhari's letter that you would definitely come.

I am constantly on the look-out for someone or other for the College²; but none has appealed to me. If Jugalkishore³ comes, it would in a way solve the problem. He is without doubt a man of character. From his letters to Gidwani, I am not fully satisfied. If Gidwani thinks of coming and can come, it would be all right. For the present there is none else I can think of. I always think that it would be better if we found someone from the South.

¹ From the book, *Panchven Putra ko Bapu ke Ashirvad*, p. 36

² Gujarat Vidyapith

³ Acharya Jugalkishore; joined the Vidyapith staff; later, A.I.C.C. Secretary; Minister in U.P. Government

Is it necessary to have the inaugural function of the College performed in June itself? I will be in Assam in the later part of June. Then immediately I must go to Bihar; but if it is necessary to go to Wardha directly from Assam, I shall first go there and then proceed thence to Bihar. I shall spend one month in Bihar. Ever since people have come to know about my visit to Wardha they have been asking me to visit other places also. There are letters from Nagpur, Amravati and Akola. I think it advisable to visit those places from which there are invitations. I consider it my duty to tour all the places where I am wanted during this year. If I do so, please draw up the programme for my C.P. tour and, if it is possible and convenient to you, it will be better if you accompany me.

Please let me know

1. when I should go to Wardha;
2. whether or not I should tour C.P. and
3. if I tour C.P., whether you would draw up my itinerary and accompany me.

I do not think I shall be able to go to the Ashram for several days to come. After Bengal, I have to go immediately to Bihar, C.P. and other places. I can return only after these tours are over. This means it would probably be in September.

The Working Committee did not meet as there were only three members present—Jawaharlal, Dr. Naidu and myself. Though Aney was to come, he did not. Hence we could not decide anything about Ajmer. However, if you think it advisable to come and see me in that connection, do so. We need not be perturbed about it. I am myself going to write to Arjunlalji saying that whatever he has to say, he should tell me.

I hope all of you there are in good health. I am keeping well. Today, Saturday, I am in Bolpur. I shall stay here till Monday. On Tuesday I shall go to Calcutta and from there I shall go to Darjeeling for three days. I shall send you my further programme which will be fixed today or tomorrow.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the photostat of the Gujarati original : G.N. 2852

254. INTERVIEW WITH RABINDRANATH TAGORE¹

May 30, 1925

Mr. Gandhi explained very carefully his own meaning, showing that he did not believe in the sub-divisions of castes of modern days, but believed that the division into the main vocational castes was scientifically correct. But he did believe in a vocational division of manhood in which there was no question of inferior or superior but rather of different functions being performed in the body corporate of humanity.²

The Poet doubted if even such vocational divisions, when perpetuated, led to anything else but sterility in the long run. The Poet contended that to make this depend on birth was unscientific and unnatural because in mankind nature aimed at variety and personal choice and freedom.³

Mr. Gandhi again explained with great earnestness and elaboration his own position. In the end the Poet asked him to explain at length his charkha and khaddar programme.

Mr. Gandhi described his own experience in East Bengal, and how the revival of spinning had already put new life into the villages there. The Poet was evidently deeply impressed because his own heart has ever been touched by the sufferings of the villagers. Mr. Gandhi explained clearly that he did not wish the educated classes to do anything else, except to spin for a very limited time every day, in order to represent in a living way, their sympathy with the poor and the oppressed, and the brotherhood of man. He asked the Poet for his own invaluable help in the great enterprise which he had undertaken. After the most cordial greeting the interview came to a close.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 2-6-1925

255. MY NOTES

KATHIAWAR'S CONTRIBUTION

The people of Kathiawar were required to contribute Rs. 20,000

¹ Gandhiji arrived at Bolpur on the night of May 29. He was received by C. F. Andrews, among others, and drove to Santiniketan. On arrival, he was escorted to a flower-decked room of the Poet's Santiniketan house. Gandhiji, it is reported, asked Tagore : "Why bring me to this bridal chamber?" Tagore replied with a smile : "Santiniketan, the ever-young queen of our hearts, welcomes you."

During this three-day stay, Gandhiji had talks with the Poet. No detailed report of these, however, is available. Andrews also had several interviews with Gandhiji on May 30, but reports of these are not available. Andrews appears to have conveyed to Gandhiji his views on the opium problem and the condition of the tea-plantation labourers of Assam.

² This sentence is from a report in *The Hindu* 1-6-1925.

³ *ibid*

for the propagation of khadi. Shri Manilal Kothari has sent me a telegram, saying that the sum has been collected. In his latest telegram he informs me that he has received from a friend Rs. 5,000 for cotton and Rs. 1,000 for distributing spinning-wheels to the poor. This together with the funds collected by me adds up to Rs. 20,000. I thank the people of Kathiawar and Shri Manilal for having made up the required sum with such speed.¹

PRISONER PRAGJI DESAI²

Shri Kalyanji, who has just returned after seeing Shri Pragji in Karachi writes :³

The suggestion here is that in South Africa he was rather sensitive, it being his first experience of imprisonment. Now he has been seasoned and so it is quite natural that he should have learnt patience.

SCHOOLS FOR “ANTYAJAS” IN KARACHI

In the same letter Shri Kalyanji informs me that Shri Narandas has been running in Karachi four schools for *Antyajas* at his own expense, that those schools have Brahmin teachers and that, as the children are helped to clean their teeth, are given a bath and fed in the school itself, they keep quite clean. The practice of helping pupils to clean their teeth deserves to be introduced in other schools too. It is generally not realized that physical health depends in great measure on the cleanliness of one's teeth. If it were, teachers of schools where the children's teeth are not kept clean would be regarded as deserving punishment.

HOLIDAY FOR EMPLOYEES

Always ready to welcome anything good, I do not mind accepting it from wherever I see it. The Bible has enjoined that Sunday should be dedicated to God. Very few Christians observe that injunction in the spirit in which it was meant to be observed. But almost everywhere in the West Sunday is observed as an off day, that

¹ Here followed a paragraph under the caption “A Century-old Spinning-wheel”, not reproduced here. Gandhiji had written in more or less identical terms under “Notes”, 28-5-1925.

² Pragji Khandubhai Desai, Gandhiji's associate in South Africa; later, Congress worker in Gujarat

³ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had stated that Pragji was quite comfortable in the prison and wanted Gandhiji to know that he was not the kind of prisoner he used to be in South Africa.

is, as a holiday. This practice does not reduce the output of work. On the contrary, the common experience is that the work is done better and better. A friend from Bombay, who thinks that it would be good if private firms in India followed this practice and observed one day in the week as holiday, writes :¹

I do not know whether anyone will attach weight to my advice. But I fully support this suggestion. I have no doubt at all that if the merchants take time off and allow the same privilege to their employees, even at the risk of less work and less income in a month, both the merchants and their assistants would benefit in a number of ways. The Government departments do observe Sunday as a holiday, but we cannot say that the people have lost anything thereby. English firms are closed every Sunday, but we do not know of any loss suffered by them on that account. I have not heard of big profits made by shops which remain open from morning and do business till late in the evening, with the help of lights. The disadvantages of the practice are obvious enough. Neither the shopkeeper nor his assistants get even breathing time. Those who spend almost their whole day in the shop and are at home only when they eat and sleep cannot be regarded as house-holders but should be looked upon as living in their shops. They cannot look after their children, let alone give them their company. Moreover, they must have medicines daily to keep them healthy. The assistants are in a worse plight still. The proprietor attends the shop of his own free will and it is, therefore, natural that he may be able to take interest in the work then. He may even absent himself if he so desires. An assistant passes the whole day thinking “When shall I be able to leave?” No wonder, in these circumstances, he does not keep good health. Instead of this, if he gets a Sunday or any other day as an off day every week and if he has to work only for a fixed number of hours every day, he would remain contented and be more ready to regard his employer’s work as his own.

Many reforms like these do not come about because no one is willing to take the lead. Even if one trader from among many gives the lead, the other traders will follow suit. If shop assistants, too, think about the matter with some sense of responsibility and place a plan or proposal respectfully before their employers, there is a chance of its being accepted.

¹ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had stated that private firms in the country did not give their employees even half a holiday in the week, and requested Gandhiji to write about this in *Navajivan*.

FRANCHISE REDUCED TO MOCKERY

A volunteer gives expression to his feelings as follows :¹

I have deliberately refrained from giving the name of the village or the taluka. It is in Gujarat. I state this lest someone should think that I have translated a Hindi or English letter. Since I am always outside Gujarat, touring, I only see from a distance the bright side of things. I had been telling myself that the 2,000 voters in Gujarat were hundred per cent sincere. And now I have the above letter.

I assume that the facts as reported in the letter above are true; and since generally it happens that what is true in one place will also be true in other places, how if the same state of affairs obtains elsewhere? If it does, we shall have frankly to admit the fact. Gujarat will shine with two instead of 2,000 such spinner- voters, but two lakhs of papersoldiers in place of 20,000 will be of no service. Necessary facilities should certainly be provided but, even in spite of them and in spite of our appeals, if people are not willing to spin and give yarn, we cannot force them to do so and need not maintain their names on muster.

What would then happen to the franchise clause? As long as I attach importance to spinning and visualize no improvement in India's economic condition without it, I shall stick to it as the qualification for the franchise. Mine is the beautiful condition of the mother who hugs her child more closely to her bosom the more the others dislike and slight it. As others' ill opinion does not make a mother doubt the value or promise of her child, I too cannot entertain any doubt about the value of the franchise qualification or about the beneficial results likely to follow from the adoption of spinning. I will, therefore, cling to the spinning-wheel and advise my co-workers to do likewise.

It is also my view that we should see that spinning for social benefit does not prove costly instead of helping to make khadi less costly, that we need not flatter anyone too much and provide facilities which are expensive. If the cost of inducing others to go on spinning is greater than that of the yarn produced, such spinning serves no useful purpose. For that means that in inducing someone to spin, we give him something instead of receiving something from him. This kind of business means bankruptcy. It does not bring the benefit which spinning is supposed to do.

¹ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had described the state of affairs in his village and the practices followed by Congress members after spinning had been made a qualification for the franchise.

The experiment of spinning should be conducted on a scientific basis. This means that we should see how many truly selfless men and women spinners we get; they alone are sincere workers who, of their own accord, spin 2,000 yards of yarn and send it [to the Congress office] or, if they happen to be poor, get cotton from the Congress office and spin it and return the yarn produced.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 31-5-1925

256. ENTERING VILLAGES

Wherever I go I observe more suffering than happiness and also discover that we ourselves are the cause of that suffering.

Most of the welcome addresses which I received in Bengal mentioned the ravages of Kalaazar and other diseases. The workers in Bengal have responded admirably to my appeal. I had asked that welcome addresses should contain information about the people's condition rather than praise of me. I find my suggestion fully acted upon in most welcome addresses and I have by now plenty of information. In some places the population is dwindling because the people have been dying of various diseases. Now to the diseases of the body has been added the curse of a plant called water-hyacinth, that plays havoc with cereal crops. I do not know its Indian name. It is said that some person unwittingly brought it from the West. From wherever it was introduced, it is to be seen stretching for miles in the waters of the Padma river. This plant destroys cereal crops. Wherever it is seen growing, the paddy crops in the fields on the banks of the river in those parts have been almost completely destroyed. The Government has of course launched measures to destroy this poisonous weed, but so far none of them is known to have proved effective.

Who will help regions suffering from such hardships? And how? Without knowing the problems of villages, no remedies can be devised. The condition will improve only when the prevailing state of ignorance in rural areas is replaced by the light of knowledge. The people do not know the rules of healthy living. They bathe in and drink from the same tank in which they clean their bodies, scrub utensils and from which cattle drink. It simply does not occur to anyone to drain away stagnant water from marshy swamps by means of a shallow canal; even if it does, it is nobody's job and, therefore, no one does it.

The people are too poor to afford wholesome and nutritious food, which they need, let alone being able to pay for medicines. Villagers, it is assumed, do not require change of air.

Some customs too are so cruel that they kill both the body and the soul. Girls of very tender age are married off! A girl of 13 becomes a mother! A seven-year-old girl becomes a widow! Some of them do not know their husbands. How can a seven-year-old girl know what a husband is?

Should we look to the Government for a remedy for this? Will a cure for these customs be found when we have swaraj; is it not, rather, that swaraj will never come till we find a cure for them?

There is, of course, one easy remedy. The educated classes should, in a spirit of humble service, go into villages and study the condition of the people. In doing so, many will fall ill and many will die. We shall find the remedy when we have learnt to bear all this. It is only then that the people will understand and adopt the remedy that has been found. I certainly believe it will be difficult, if not impossible, to convince people with arguments addressed to their reason. The people will understand only through their heart, and they alone can speak through their hearts who have won the people's confidence through service, love and sacrifice. We shall find it written on every page of the history of the world, and especially of the history of India, that the people are guided by their emotions and that reason is helpless before them. May it be that the heart always takes precedence over reason? Can it be that where reason is not purified by the Ganga, the heart is unavailing? Ravana's reason, being untouched by the heart, was of no service to him despite its command of magic, whereas Rama's, purified by the sacred influences of the heart, easily remained invincible.

The Deshbandhu says that there can be no swaraj unless the villages are properly organized. Others too say the same thing. My experiences in Bengal also teach this very lesson, that till we enter the villages we shall never know India.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 31-5-1925

257. SPINNING IN BENGAL

The first lap of my tour of Bengal has concluded without any mishap. I say "without mishap" because many of my friends had doubts whether my health would be able to stand its strain. What I saw in Bengal has surpassed my expectations and inspires hope for the future. There are big zamindars here who spin along with members of their families. Here I saw in Dinajpur and other places zamindars, lawyers, barristers, untouchables, Hindus and Muslims, all sitting together in big meetings and spinning. I saw here in Bengal hundreds

of well-to-do men and women spinning beautifully. They do not spin daily, but the very fact that so many men and women are skilled in spinning and occasionally sit down to spin pleases me. I have not seen such skill anywhere else in India. What men and women learn with effort elsewhere, I found people doing naturally here. Just as people generally have a separate dress for weddings, etc., as also separate dresses for wearing at home and in the office, so also many people have included khadi too in their wardrobe. There is hardly any other part of India in which we shall see this.

Here I did not find a climate of opposition to khadi. The No-changers and Swarajists both use khadi, some more some less. I came across only three persons who said that the spinning-wheel would not help, and they too were not leading men. Here Moderates and extremists all use khadi a little more or a little less.

No other province can beat the slivers made here. No particles of dust and wool are ever found in them. In some places cotton called *devkapas* is being used for spinning. This does not need carding at all, nor ginning. The cotton easily comes out when removed with the fingers; it is made into slivers by arranging together the fibre-lengths and then spun into the finest yarn. Another variety of cotton which is grown in the hills is of a very inferior quality. Its fibres are extremely short, and it is not smooth. This cotton certainly needs to be carded, but when that is done no particles of dust and wool remain. The standard of its carding is inferior but, since the people are accustomed to careful carding, no one does the work in a slipshod manner. The yarn too which we see in the market does not contain dust and wool particles. It is rarely of a count under ten.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 31-5-1925

258. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

SANTINIKETAN,

*Jeth Sud 8 [May 31, 1925]*¹

BHAISHRI DEVCHAND,

I have your detailed letter. I dare not do anything on my own. I am therefore sending your letter to Ramjibhai². Let him read and discuss it with you and then do what you all think proper. We want somehow to fill Kathiawar with khadi and make the life of the farmers

¹ From the postmark

² Ramji Hansraj of Amreli

simple and happy. If you think it necessary to invite Maganlal and Lakshmidas to decide about it, you may do so.

Vandemataram from

BAPU

[PS.]

I shall be a month and a half more in Bengal. I have then to visit Assam.

BHAISHRI DEVCHAND UTTAMCHAND PAREKH

BARRISTER

JETPUR, KATHIAWAR

From a photostat of the Gujarati original : G.N. 5693

259. *LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL*

*Jeth Sud 8 [May 31, 1925]*¹

CHI. MANI,

I have your letter. If I thought of writing a long letter, I would not be able to write at all. I therefore rest content with writing this short one. I hope you have already received the bangles which were sent from Calcutta. I have bought some more in Dacca; these you will have only when I return. Mahadev, I believe, has written a long letter in reply to yours as regards Chi. Dahyabhai. If Dahyabhai wishes to take up a gainful occupation let him do so by all means. I am glad to know that he is now in good health. Ask Chi. Yashoda² to write to me. All the three of you should attend upon Father and share his burdens to the best of your ability. I will have to stay on in Bengal for a month more.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne, p. 23

¹ As in the source

² Dahyabhai's wife

260. LETTER TO SHANKERLAL BANKER

Sunday [May 31, 1925]¹

DEAR SHANKERLAL,

I forgot to mention one thing in my letter yesterday. The orphanage needs to raise a loan of Rs. 10,000. They give 9 percent interest. If they give a guarantee and mortgage their land would there be any difficulty about the Board lending them that amount? They are willing to agree to whatever conditions we lay down. The value of the land along with the building is definitely more than Rs. 10,000. Please consider the matter and let me know at your earliest. If you think it proper to reply telegraphically, do so. Between Wednesday and Friday I shall be at Darjeeling.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original S.N. 32691

261. SPEECH AT SANTINIKETAN²

May 31, 1925

I do not ask you to give up your poetry, literature or music. All I ask is that, side by side with these pursuits, you give half an hour every day to the charkha. No one has till now advanced the excuse that he does not have even half an hour to spare. The charkha will help us overcome our narrowness. Today a North Indian visiting Bengal has to tell others that he is an Indian. Bengalis living in other provinces regard themselves as foreigners. Similarly, South Indians become foreigners as soon as they set foot in North India. The charkha is the only device which makes us all feel that we are children of the same land. We have so far accomplished nothing. Let us accomplish some little thing at any rate. Boycott of foreign cloth is something which all can equally further, towards which all can contribute equally. Untouchability hurts Hindus alone; the quarrels between the Hindus and Muslims will also be over some time or other; but if there is no khadi, the whole country will remain sunk in utter poverty. In Central Africa they have a malady known as sleeping sickness. When it strikes anyone, he becomes unconscious and, after

¹ From the contents. Gandhiji was in Darjeeling from June 3, 1925, a Wednesday, to June 6, 1925.

² A brief report of this speech was also published in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 3-6-1925.

lying for months in a state of paralysis, dies at last. We also have a kind of sleeping sickness here in our own country, and the sole remedy for this sickness is the charkha.

[From Hindi]

Hindi Navajivan, 18-6-1925

262. INTERVIEW TO DR. H. W. B. MORENO

SANTINIKETAN,

May 31, 1925

The Anglo-Indian question was gone into fully with Mahatma Gandhi on his being again interviewed by Dr. H. W. B. Moreno. At the outset Dr. Moreno pointed out the difficulties involved in Mr. Gandhi's advice as to spinning and wearing khaddar; Anglo-Indians would find such difficulties insurmountable in adopting this peculiar method of employment even assuming that the arguments in favour of khaddar as advanced by Mr. Gandhi were correct.

Mr. Gandhi admitted that it was not easy to win over an entire community, such as the Anglo-Indians were, to the way of adopting such methods of occupation, but he was prepared to exercise his patience on their behalf. He would be satisfied for the present if only the favourable mental attitude was achieved by Anglo-Indians as regards his spinning programme. Spinning was meant principally to relieve the distress of the suffering masses; spinning was the common bond of union between rich and poor and he would advise even Englishmen, resident in India and eating up the salt of India, to be true to the land of their adoption and to take to spinning.

Dr. Moreno pointed out that at present Anglo-Indians had some definite representation in the Councils, in the Assembly and in other public bodies. What would be the fate of this minority community, if swaraj should come in? What place would they occupy along with the greater communities of India?

Mr. Gandhi replied that he could foresee no disastrous consequence if the Anglo-Indians were to come in, along with the other communities. He held that the Hindu and Muslim communities should go out of their way and grant Anglo-Indians even preference in India's representative institutions, for the simple reason that they were minorities and required greater protection.

I think that I am giving undue preference to it. I alone know that I am performing what I consider to be my parental duty towards this child, irrespective of what others may say.

Dr. Moreno pointed out that Anglo-Indians at present, by virtue of long association and by their particular mode of living were eminently suited for the positions they now held in the Railways, in the Customs Service, and in other such

departments of employment in India. Did “Indianization” mean the taking away of these posts from Anglo-Indians and giving them to Indians? That was a grave foreboding the Anglo-Indian had in his mind, now for some time.

Mr. Gandhi replied that the great test for all service should be efficiency. If Anglo-Indians were suited for such posts, by all means let them retain them for some time to come. When Indians would in time qualify for these posts, on the grounds of efficiency, they could not be restricted from holding them, but by that time there might be other avenues of employment that could be open for Anglo-Indians. He did not want a levelling down so far as the communities of India were concerned, it should be a levelling up. He preferred to go in a railway carriage which was propelled by a locomotive driver of a qualified European or Anglo-Indian type, such as now were to be seen, rather than have an indifferent Indian driver at the engine.

Dr. Moreno touched on the woeful condition of Anglo-Indian education and referred to the attempts sometimes made in the Legislative Councils to cut down the grants for European education, on the grounds that they were too liberal as compared to the educational grants given to other communities and the taking away of them meant social ruin for the community in the near future. Mr. Gandhi said :

There lies the mistake. I should go out of my way to placate Anglo-Indians because they are in the minority and need special protection. When the riots broke out in Bombay in which Anglo-Indians and Parsis alike were brutally assaulted, I spoke words of fire to my Indian brethren. In the unity of all parties in India, I always refer to and include Anglo-Indians, Parsis, Jews, and so forth; without these there could be no unity, except the tyranny of the great over the small. The greater communities of India, such as the Hindus and Muslims, had solemn obligations to perform towards the lesser communities.

Referring to the education of Anglo-Indians, he would say that it did not improve much their morals, for while travelling he often noticed that Anglo-Indians, instead of having the virtues of the European and Indian communities, had the vices of both. The worst expressions of abuse in the Indian vocabulary and the vilest words of the English language were mingled in their common speech. Such depraved tastes had to be rectified by the Anglo-Indians themselves. The reason why this still continued with the community was because they isolated themselves and had ceased to assimilate what was best in their neighbours. On railway platforms he had even noticed that their physical tastes were becoming depraved; and stealthily they would purchase and consume unnoticed the most unwholesome trash exhibited for sale in the way of foodstuffs. The physical taste was an index of the mental taste.

Dr. Moreno pointed out that it was a patent fact that up to now Anglo-Indians had taken little or no interest in Congress activities. During the time of Surendranath Banerjea’s leadership of Bengal, Dr. J. R. Wallace, the then leader of the community,

was invited to join the Congress, but when this idea spread in the community Dr. Wallace was ostracized for some time.

We should welcome you in the Congress. Why do you not come in? Whose fault is it, if you stand outside? I for one would welcome you with outstretched arms, as I would welcome the Jews or Parsis. The Congress is no true national institution if it does not embrace all parties. As regards the yarn franchise Anglo-Indians could get over the difficulty, as others at present did, by purchasing yarn locally and forwarding it on.

Dr. Moreno said there was a tendency in the community to divide itself into two classes, one leaning towards the European side, the other to the Indian side, but opinions were fast veering round.

Mr. Gandhi stated that he himself had noted the change of opinion of Anglo-Indians towards the idea of classing themselves as Indians. He gathered this from his talks with his many Anglo-Indian friends. He deprecated such a vain expression of sentiment found among certain Anglo-Indians based on a mere theorizing of the pigmentation of the skin.

The real difficulty lies when you consider the poor of your community. They are degenerating and are adopting the vices of the lowest classes of Indians, because the breach is becoming wider between them and their more affluent brethren. For the richer Anglo-Indian there is no communal problem, he is receiving more than he deserves. The problem of the poorer classes is the problem for Anglo-Indian thinker to solve. We have our problem of the untouchables. You have the same problem in another form.

He decried the false mode of existence adopted by an Anglo-Indian railway station master in South India whose friendship he enjoyed. After twenty years of service this man secured a salary of Rs. 300 a month, but as he had to live up to European standards he could not save a pice after providing for the wants of his wife and his four children and giving the family the advantages of a suitable education. This Anglo-Indian had told him that he was forced to maintain such a standard of existence, although he felt it was ruinous, simply because he knew that if he adopted any other standard, his future promotion in the railway would cease for all time.

Dr. Moreno said that he was but voicing some of the difficulties the community laboured under and sought Mr. Gandhi's advice as a true friend of India. His community was a community of the soil and had permanent interests in the country.

Mr. Gandhi said in reply that he appreciated such sentiments. The abiding interest of the Anglo-Indian community was eulogized by all Indians alike. There was little to separate the Anglo-Indian from the Indian. He was glad that Dr. Moreno had so freely talked the matter over with him. He had seen many other Anglo-Indians as well in his travels all over the country. They came and sought his advice from time to

time; scores of such Anglo-Indians came to see him privately and consulted him on all communal affairs, but though they admitted the justice of his arguments, they failed to carry them out into practice. They lacked the moral courage of action. He advised Dr. Moreno not to slacken in his mission in life, which was the only policy of future salvation to the community. He asked him not to be disconcerted by the criticisms and think and move in narrow circles. The intelligentsia of Bengal and the toiling masses of the country was a case in point.

At the conclusion of the interview Dr. Moreno asked Mr. Gandhi to allow him to ask a series of set questions affecting the Anglo-Indian community in Mr. Gandhi's paper, with a view to securing studied answers on the issues involved. Mr. Gandhi said :

I shall welcome such questions as a friend of your community, as indeed of all those who are born or resident in India. I shall be glad to do what I can do to clear the issue so that we may have a better vision of the future. After all, we are both working for a common purpose : the uplift of India, your country and mine.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 2-6-1925

263. LETTER TO G. V. SUBBA RAO¹

June 1, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I am wholly unaware of many things mentioned in your letter².

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat : G.N. 3624

¹ G. V. Subba Rao Pantulu; General Secretary of the Congress in 1914; re-elected in 1917 but resigned

² This is not available.

264. LETTER TO JITENDRANATH KUSARY

June 1, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I congratulate you on the progress made by you in so few days. I hope it will continue.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

SJT. JITENDRANATH KUSARY

SATYASHRAM

BAHROK P.O.

DACCA DT.

From a photostat : G.N. 7187

265. LETTER TO S. A. VAZE¹

SANTINIKETAN,

June 1, 1925

I have carefully gone through your memorandum². It is very valuable and closely reasoned. But there is a chance of its being understood to mean that you will favour if there was to be a choice legislative discrimination. So far as I can see, you will make no such choice. A statute is a difficult thing to amend. A regulation or mere practice without regulation can be easily varied. Only some of us can become judges, but how would we relish the idea of a whole class being statutorily excluded? The proposed legal bar would not affect perhaps a single Asiatic. Nevertheless it must be resisted. The formula is : no legal bar and no stiffening of the administrative distinction, but on the contrary a relaxation of administrative inequality. I know all the parties on the stage. In spite of the proverbial slimness of Smuts, he is more equitable than Hertzog or Beyer or Cresswell. I tell you these things merely to help you to make your position clearer. If, however, you are of opinion that in any event if discrimination has to be made, it must be solidified into legislation, I have nothing to say.

¹ Secretary, Imperial Citizenship Association and member, Servants of India Society; worked for the benefit of Indians living abroad

² This is not available.

Only, in that case, we must agree to differ. Even in the extreme case of Australia, when the Australian statesmen wish to become reasonable, they can do so without resort to any legislative amendment.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. G.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

266. *SPEECH AT BHOWANIPUR, CALCUTTA*¹

June 2, 1925

Mr. Gandhi said that the spinning-wheel was near to his heart and he was glad to learn that it had found a place in the curriculum of the National School. He hoped that boys would apply themselves to it and become expert spinners. He expected every man, woman and child, who felt for the masses, to ply the charkha for at least half an hour a day. Mr. Gandhi declared that the charkha was the one visible link between the masses and the classes.

Mr. Gandhi also dwelt on untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity.

The Hindu, 4-6-1925

267. *VYKOM*

The public must not be allowed to forget the Vaikom struggle.² Let them understand that the satyagrahis are, at the present moment, undergoing a higher form of discipline than they were doing before. Formerly they were plying their wheels in front of a physical obstacle to their further progress. It was barred by a barricade guarded by the police. Now, as the reader is aware, the barricade has been removed, the guard withdrawn and so is the notice of prohibition. The satyagrahis are, therefore, voluntarily submitting to the self-imposed moral restraint, no doubt, in the clearly expressed hope that the *savarna* Hindus directly concerned will relent and that the Government will themselves make an early declaration that the roads are open to the so-called unapproachables as they are to every other human being and even to cats and dogs. The Hindu Government of Travancore owes the suppressed classes a double duty, the one that every humane government owes to suppressed humanity under its care, and the other, a Hindu Government owes to Hinduism, that the

¹ Gandhiji was presented with addresses on behalf of the National School and Sevak Samiti at Bhowanipur in South Calcutta.

² *Ezhavas* and other backward class Hindus were not allowed access to a temple and the roads leading to it at Vykom (also spelt as Vaikom) in Travancore, now a part of Kerala State. Satyagraha was organized against this discrimination in 1924

State will lend no countenance to an inhuman superstition that has crept into Hinduism.

So far for the State.

The *savarna* Hindus of Travancore promised, and they owe it to themselves without the necessity of any promise to me, that they would not allow any rest to the Government till the roads in question were thrown open to the 'unapproachables'. They assured me that they would hold meetings throughout Travancore showing clearly to the Government that they regarded the prohibition as inconsistent with Hinduism and intolerable. Besides holding public meetings, they were to promote a monster petition signed by *savarna* Hindus demanding the opening of the roads. I wonder if those gentlemen who gave me the assurance are keeping their promise?

And now for the 'unapproachables' miscalled. I understand that they are getting restive. They have a right to do so. I am further told that they are losing faith in satyagraha. If so, their want of faith betrays ignorance of the working of satyagraha. It is a force that works silently and apparently slowly. In reality, there is no force in the world that is so direct or so swift in working. But sometimes apparent success is more quickly attained by brute force. To earn one's living by body-labour is a method of earning if by satyagraha. A gamble on the stock-exchange or house-breaking, either of which is the reverse of satyagraha, may apparently lead to an instantaneous acquisition of wealth. But the world has by now, I presume, realized that house-breaking and gambling are no methods of earning one's livelihood and that they do harm rather than good to the gambler or the thief. The 'unapproachables' may force their way by engaging in a free fight with the superstitious *savarnas* but they will not have reformed Hinduism. Theirs will be a method of forcible conversion. But I am further told that some of them even threaten to seek shelter in Christianity, Islam or Buddhism if relief is not coming soon. Those who use the threat do not, in my humble opinion, know the meaning of religion. Religion is a matter of life and death. A man does not change religion as he changes his garments. He takes it with him beyond the grave. Nor does a man profess his religion to oblige others. He professes a religion because he cannot do otherwise. A faithful husband loves his wife as he would love no other woman. Even her faithlessness would not wean him from his faith. The bond is more than blood-relationship. So is the religious bond if it is worth anything. It is a matter of the heart. An untouchable who lives his Hinduism in the face of persecution at the hands of those Hindus who arrogate to themselves a superior status is a better Hindu than the self-styled superior Hindu who, by the very act of claiming superiority,

denies his Hinduism. Therefore, those who threaten to renounce Hinduism are, in my opinion, betraying their faith.

But the satyagrahi's course is plain. He must stand unmoved in the midst of all these cross-currents. He may not be impatient with blind orthodoxy, nor be irritated over the unbelief of the suppressed people. He must know that his suffering will melt the stoniest heart of the stoniest fanatic and that it will also be a wall of protection for the wavering *Panchama* brother who has been held under suppression for ages. He must know that relief will come when there is the least hope for it. For such is the way of that cruelly-kind Deity who insists upon testing His devotees through a fiery furnace and delights in humbling him to the dust. In his hour of distress let the satyagrahi recall to his mind the prayer of the fabled godly Elephant King who was saved only when he thought he was at his last gasp.

ANGLO-INDIANS

I observe that some writers have laughed at the suggestion made by me to Mr. Moreno that Anglo-Indians like every other Indian should spin and wear khaddar. It is easy enough to laugh at the suggestion, but I have confidence in my remedy and I know that the ridicule will very soon give place to warm approval. As I entertain no ill will against Anglo-Indians and as my conception of swaraj provides for them just as much as any other born in India, or who have adopted India as their home, I know that Anglo-Indians will not misunderstand me in the end, even if some may do so for the time being. Not making any distinction between Indians and Indians, I have the good fortune to meet many poor-class Anglo-Indians. To live at all comfortably they must make common cause with the other poor Indians. They must share their sorrows and, so far as may be, live their lives. Surely, khaddar can be common to all, and why should they not spin side by side with the others? There is no shame in adopting that one visible universal bond of sympathy between the poor of the land and themselves. Why should the Anglo-Indian be behindhand in identifying himself with the poorest of the land of his birth? It is the false sense of superiority which he has been taught to adopt for himself over the ordinary Indian that has really made him a comparative stranger in his own land. And he cannot possibly be assimilated with the English. It is impossible for him to regard any other country as his home. If he attempted to emigrate to any of the Colonies, he will share the same fate and the same disabilities as the ordinary Indian settler does. I have, therefore, said in all humility, but in absolute sincerity which comes from deep conviction, that he should revise his ideas of life. He should be, what in reality he is, one

among the millions. He will then, having a due sense of proportion, adopt the virtues of both his parents and render an immense service to himself, to his country as also to his European parent. Occupying a position that most becomes him, he will be able to speak to Englishmen with effect and from vantage-ground of personal experience. I do not suggest, and did not suggest, to Mr. Moreno that Anglo-Indians, even the poorest among them, might be satisfied with spinning as a means of livelihood. But there is no reason whatsoever why the highest among them should not spin from the national standpoint. I have, of course, no hesitation to suggest that some of them who are poor may become accomplished weavers. It is an additional calling which those who are adapted for it may learn for the sake of earning an honest livelihood. Because those who become accomplished and artistic weavers can earn as much as forty to fifty rupees per month.

Young India, 4-6-1925

268. KHADI PRATISHTHAN

I have elsewhere dealt with the development of spinning as part of flood and famine relief. It is an experiment standing by itself. But the experience gained therein by Acharya Ray and his right-hand man, as he loves to call Satish Babu, was not to end with the experiment. They are both chemists. Their scientific minds compel them to explore the possibilities of the wheel and khaddar as a permanent supplementary industry for the Bengal agriculturists. From a small experiment it has developed into a big organization called Khadi Pratishthan. It has branches in many parts of Bengal and contemplates opening more. Its object is to manufacture and sell pure khaddar and popularize the wheel and khaddar through publications, lantern lectures, etc. In order to give it a more stable character, it has been converted into a public trust. I have before me the trust-deed and the balance sheet. I mention these facts as I promised an inquirer at a public meeting at Pabna that I shall deal with the Pratishthan work in the pages of *Young India*. I was recommending the universal adoption in Bengal of the Pratishthan charkha as I have found it to be the best available in Bengal, and as experiments are being daily made to improve it. The inquirer in question thereupon complained of the high prices of Pratishthan khaddar. And I promised to deal with the complaint through these pages. The charge may be considered true in a sense. The idea is to manufacture khaddar on the largest scale and to introduce the wheel in every home. The authors of the trust want to make khaddar self-supporting and improve the quality of yarn. The management must work in those centres too which are not at present

favourable for khaddar manufacture. Thus, it pools all the khaddar it manufactures and charges an average price. It follows, therefore, that those who operate in favourable centres only can sell khaddar cheaper than the Pratishthan. This is no matter for embarrassment for the time being, as the few centres that are manufacturing pure khaddar have their own customers who do not concern themselves with the prices. The Pratishthan sells khaddar even now at a loss but it seeks to minimize the loss. It cannot always be run on donations. I am satisfied that every attempt is being made to reduce the price of khaddar sold by the Pratishthan. It cannot be too widely known that nobody has any private interest in the Pratishthan. The main actors have their own sources of income. They have given to the Pratishthan. They take nothing from it. So far I have inspected five other organized centres of khaddar manufacture. These are the Abhoy Ashram at Comilla, Dr. Prafulla Ghosh's Ashram at Malikanda, Pravartak Sangh's at Chittagong, Satsang Ashram at Pabna and Duadando Khadi Kendra. The latter I have not seen personally, but I had the pleasure of meeting the principal workers and seeing their khaddar and wheels at Hooghly. The Pravartak Sangh has hitherto dealt in half-khaddar too. But it has now definitely decided to deal exclusively in pure khaddar so far as Chittagong is concerned. It had already started the experiment at Kutiaudu, but the management made the final decision for the whole of the Chittagong District during my visit there. They have still half-khaddar at their Calcutta depot and at the head office at Chandranagar. But they are striving to do away with half-khaddar altogether at the first opportunity. They accept the principle that it is not in the interest of the khaddar movement to deal in half-khaddar. All these activities are good. Some work is being done officially too by the Congress organizations. As a matter of fact, I regard all these organizations as Congress activities in spirit though not in name. What is, however, necessary is to co-ordinate these scattered forces and economize time, talent, labour and funds. The heads of these organizations must meet together, compare notes and evolve a joint programme of action. It must come in time. In any case, the question is whether the time can be hastened. The Khadi Pratishthan has an advantage over all in that it has men who have dedicated themselves solely to the spread of the message of the charkha. It has great organizing talent at its service. It has a celebrated name behind it. It has, therefore, limitless scope for expansion. Hence it is that I commend its activity to the whole of India in general and Bengal in particular. I invite the critics to examine it critically and demonstrate its short-comings if they discover any. I invite sympathizers to study its accounts which are an open book and help it. And I invite the

indifferent to throw off their indifference and, after studying it, oppose its activities or support them. Dr. Ray has a world-wide reputation as a scientist. But the millions of his countrymen will not know him for the fine soaps he may manufacture, nor yet for the careers he has found for many a young Bengali. They will know him for the light and comfort his khaddar work may bring into their humble cottages. Let his organization be like a vast banyan tree, giving shelter to all small sister organizations that would receive help and guidance from it. The Khadi Pratishthan is more than the Chemical Works, great as they are. For the former has its roots in the country's soil. It is not a super-imposition. It requires more deliberate handling for its growth. It will evoke the best in every one of its organizers, if it is to grow into a huge national organization. May it fulfil all the expectations of which it seems to me to give promise.

Young India, 4-6-1925

269. NOTES

A BASELESS CHARGE

I have heard the charge that the Congressmen, i.e., Swarajists killed the charkha in Bengal. It is a baseless charge. In the first place, the charkha is not killed in Bengal. In the second place, whatever setback the movement might have received, it is not due to the Swarajists any more than it is due to any other party. Let me here acknowledge that the Swarajists have everywhere co-operated to make the charkha demonstrations a success. They have taken part in organizing them and also in spinning. Some Swarajists are out-and-out enthusiasts with their whole families. I have already written about my host in Faridpur.¹ His wife and his children were devotees of the wheel. They supply the yarn for the khaddar required for the family use. The wife of Sjt. Basant Kumar Mazumdar is also an enthusiast. She organized a big demonstration at Comilla, Jogen Babu of Dinajpur is himself a regular spinner and it was a treat to watch the whole of his family spinning dexterously. Indeed, the best spinning demonstration of the tour was at Dinajpur. I could multiply such instances. What is true is that the Swarajists do not pin their whole faith to the charkha as, say, I do. Of this they have made no secret. They would not enter the Councils if they believed wholly and solely in the constructive programme. Their position is incredibly simple. They believe in the constructive programme including the charkha. They believe, too, that without it swaraj cannot be obtained. But they also believe it to be

¹ Vide "Bengal Notes", 7-5-1925.

necessary to capture the Councils and all representative or semi-representative institutions through which pressure can be exerted upon the Government. This is an honest attitude at which there can be nothing to cavil. And the Bengal Swarajists at any rate are, in my opinion, living up to their faith.

CORRUPTION?

Whilst I am discussing the doings of the Swarajists, I would like to advert to the charge of corruption brought against them. Some distinguished public men came to me and warned me against playing into the hands of the Swarajists and urged me to use my influence to purify the political life of Bengal. I told the gentlemen that I had no reason to believe the charges they were making, but that, if they would give me chapter and verse and be prepared to substantiate them, I would gladly investigate and, if I found them to be true, I should have no hesitation in denouncing the party. I told them, too, that I had heard of these charges before and that I had brought them to the notice of Deshbandhu Das who had assured me that there was no truth in them, and that, if my informants could produce names and specific charges, he, Deshbandhu, was perfectly willing to have them investigated. The gentlemen told me that the belief about corruption was common property, but that it was not always possible to give legal proof. I told them that in that case we must follow the golden rule of not believing what could not be proved. If we did not follow the rule, no public man's reputation would be safe.

After this interview I had forgotten all about the charges. Hardayal Babu, however, returned to the charge with double fury at Chandpur.¹ But I could not treat his denunciation seriously, nor did he expect me to. Although he and I belong to the same school, our methods of looking at public men and activities are different. Behind my non-co-operation there is always the keenest desire to co-operate on the slightest pretext even with the worst of opponents. To me, a very imperfect mortal, ever in need of God's grace, no one is beyond redemption. Behind Hardayal Babu's non-co-operation there is fierce distrust and disinclination for reverting to co-operation. He wants mighty signs whereas a mere gesture suffices me.

But I had the charge repeated in an unexpected quarter. I pricked up my ears and became serious. I began a little gentle inquiry. I was, however, relieved on my reaching Calcutta by Babu Nalini Sircar, the chief whip of the Swaraj Party, Babu Nirmal Chandra, Babu Kirenshekhar Ray and Babu Hirendra Nath Das Gupta

¹ Vide "Interview to Hardayal Nag", before 12-5-1925.

coming to me and offering unasked to answer any questions I might have about the Swaraj Party's doings in any matter whatsoever. I thereupon mentioned all the charges I had heard. They were able to give me complete satisfaction about them and invited me to investigate further and even to inspect their books. But I told them that I could not possibly inspect their books unless there was more authentic information about the charges. As it was, I had nothing beyond unsupported allegations. They assured me that there was not a vestige of truth in the charge of bribery and corruption.

I appeal to those who are ready to make charges to be chary of believing the stories that may be brought before them regarding their adversaries. Do we not know the Government has been badly sold by its informants? Do they not know that even Ranade¹ and Gokhale were shadowed for a long time? Do they not know what scandals were talked about the late Sir Pherozeshah² and even Sir Surendranath Banerjee? Even the G.O.M. was not beyond the reach of calumny. A gentleman in London once gave me such details that he at least required me to approach the great patriot whom I worshipped. Well, I did approach him with trembling and fear. I sat down at his feet and I remember the occasion as I looked into his benign face and pleadingly asked whether what was said to be could be true. It was a garret which the G.O.M. was occupying as his office in Brixton. I shall never forget the scene. I came away knowing that the charge brought against him was a simple calumny. What would happen to me if I were to believe all I have been told about the "selfishness and perfidy" of the Ali Brothers whom I believe to be above corruption and perfidy? There are enough differences to divide us, but why accentuate them by giving a ready ear to every charge of baseness brought against opponents? I find enough justification for honest differences. Let us then honour our opponents for the same honesty of purpose and patriotic motive that we claim for ourselves. One gentleman who spoke about the so-called Swarajist corruption was candid enough to tell me that in spite of it all there was no other leader in Bengal but Chittaranjan Das. There is room enough for all to serve. There is no room for jealousy when all wish to serve. I believe in trusting. Trust begets trust. Suspicion is foetid and only stinks. He who trusts has never yet lost in the world. A suspicious man is lost to

¹ Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901); social reformer and author; Judge of the Bombay High Court

² Sir Pherozeshah Merwanji Mehta (1845-1915); first Parsi to be called to the English Bar; member of Bombay Legislative Council in 1893; was associated with the Indian National Congress since its inception and became its President in 1890.

himself and the world. Let those who have made of non-violence a creed beware of suspecting opponents. Suspicion is of the brood of violence. Non-violence cannot but trust. I must at any rate, refuse to believe any-thing against anybody, much less against my honoured fellow-workers, unless I have absolute proof. But Hardayal Babu will say, "Do you want us to disbelieve the testimony of our eyes and ears?" I say, yes and no. I have known people whose eyes and ears have deceived them. They see and hear only what they would like to see and hear. To these I say, "Do not believe even your eyes and ears when you have unbiassed testimony to the contrary." But there are others who have seen, heard and known, but have not been able to impart the truth to others. They must persist in their belief even though the whole world may be against them. Only before them I shall plead for a little toleration for those like me who, in spite of all their desire to see the pure truth, fail to see it in the light the others see. I am yet unconvinced about the corruption ascribed to the Swarajists. And those who believe the contrary must bear with me till they convince me.

PREFER DEATH TO SPINNING

In one of my talks with students, one of them said, "Do you know why we do not spin? There is no excitement about the wheel. Our education has unfitted us for any such work. Many of us would prefer death to spinning. Death on the gallows we can gladly embrace, but spinning is an impossibility. Give us something grand. We love romance and there is none about spinning." I told my romantic friend that there was more romance about the spinning wheel than he thought. And why did he accuse Bengal that has given India a Bose and a Ray of being purely romantic in the sense of being unpractical and dreamy? I told him that those who found some excuse or other for not spinning were really not lovers of the country. Would not a father follow even ridiculous instructions of physicians if thereby his dying child could be saved? It was common cause between my audience and me that India's millions were in a dying condition and that spinning could solve the problem of their distressful poverty. Indeed, one of the most astonishing and pleasant experiences during my Bengal tour has been the absence of resistance to spinning on the part of all parties. I have invited all my visitors to oppose spinning if they did not believe in it. But apart from the three persons whose arguments I combated the other day, I have not met with any opposition to it. And even the three who opposed me were themselves dressed in khaddar. It has been a matter of great joy to me to see big zamindars and lawyers spinning side by side with *Santhals*, and little girls and boys at spinning demonstrations which have been a regular

feature in the programme at every centre I have visited. Therefore, the romantic objection had no bottom to it. Unfortunately, the ordinary student lacks application except for the sake of passing his examination. Real love of the country should be a far greater incentive to application than the desire to gain a pass certificate. There is as much romance about solving a difficult geometrical problem or working an arithmetical sum requiring long additions and multiplication as there is about spinning. And if the Bengali boy does not plead want of romance about his examinations, he has less reason to plead it about spinning, which is as necessary for national as an examination is for individual sustenance.

CHINA TO MEDITERRANEAN

A fine old Mussalman friend met me at Mymensing and our conversation naturally turned upon khaddar. I observed that he had not khaddar on and gently asked him whether he believed in it. "Oh yes, I do." I then gave him my definition of khaddar. It was no use. "All cloth however and wherever manufactured between China and Mediterranean is khaddar for me. You see my swadeshi is not narrow," retorted the friend. In vain I tried to show that his first duty lay towards India's millions from whom he derived his livelihood, that India was well able to manufacture all the cloth for her needs and that India's teeming millions were semi-starved for want of an industry supplementary to agriculture. Like Lucy he persisted in his proposition with the fullest self-satisfaction. He had made up his mind and therefore no argument could produce any impression on him. It would have been just the same if I had told him that the English colonials, though they belonged to the same race and religion, protected their industries by imposing heavy tariffs against the sister colonies and England itself and that every man's primary and natural obligation was to serve his needy neighbour in preference to one more remote. But I had no time. The company had to break up for another appointment. As if, however, to emphasize his point and yet to show that we were friends in spite of our differences of opinion, he smilingly put a few rupees in my hands for the furtherance of my work, all the while repeating his formula "China to Mediterranean". If he ever sees these lines, let me tell him that, if many people were to follow his formula, the several thousands of Mussalman sisters who are today supplementing their husbands' earnings in Bengal by hand-spinning would be without that necessary addition to their all too slender resources.

SINDH'S APATHY

A Gujarati correspondent writes to say that he observed some khaddar on the persons of Gujaratis in Karachi and that a spinning class for ladies was being conducted under Mr. Ranchhoddas's management, but that there was little or no khaddar among the Sindhis themselves. He adds that beyond a few Congressmen who could be counted on one's fingers, there was to be seen hardly a Sindhi who wore khaddar in Hyderabad. This is remarkable because there are in Sind fine and honest devotees of khaddar. The reason could only be that, among the Hindus, Amils are too educated and Europeanized to believe in the simple message of the charkha, that the *bhaibandhs* are too occupied with their foreign-silk trade even to think of khaddar and that the Mussalmans of Sind are as yet too untouched by the national spirit to appreciate anything in terms of India. All honour to the few who persist in khaddar and spinning in an atmosphere so adverse as in Sind. I have little doubt that if their faith survives the present ordeal, it will infect the highly "civilized" Amils, the preoccupied *bhaibandhs* and the non-nationalist Mussalmans.

KHADDAR IN COORG

A Correspondent writes :

The present "Khaddar Stores" was opened only a couple of months back and we have been getting our supply of pure khaddar stuff from the Tamilnad Congress Committee's Vasthralayam at Tiruppur and already about Rs. 5,000 worth of khaddar clothes have been bought and sold. The khaddar has spread in these parts. A few months back you would not have found many among the thousands wearing this material. But now, after the session of the National Congress, you will find many in a hundred wearing pure khaddar.

Already there is a good number of charkhas working. A strong committee has been formed to push on hand-spinning in this country.

Such is the happy experience of all who open new centres. But after a time they slacken. Let us hope that the reports from Coorg will be progressively good. To be so, honest organizing is all that is needed.

Young India, 4-6-1925

270. FLOOD RELIEF

It was impossible for me to visit Bengal and omit the flood area and the relief given there by Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray's committee. It was a place of pilgrimage for me first because of my association with the Acharya since 1901 and secondly because of the

successful manner in which he demonstrated the efficacy of the Charkha as an instrument of relief and an insurance against future distress. If the villagers were well instructed in the methods of dealing with floods and famine and were also accustomed to an occupation besides agriculture which is impossible in times of flood or famines, much time, money and labour that are generally required on such occasions could be saved. When people are taught at such times to depend upon charity for their sustenance, they lose their self-respect and also the use of their limbs. Demoralization then sets in and at last such people are reduced to a state worse than that of mere lower animals. For the latter have at least pleasure in living. The former are dead to life. I, therefore, wanted to see as much as I could with my own eyes what the charkha-mad chemist had done in the relief area.

I was taken to Bogra and thence to Talora where I met the distinguished countryman in his element. "This hut is more precious to me than the palatial Science College. I got more peace and quiet of mind here than elsewhere. And the charkha is growing on me. It gives rest to a mind distracted by study of books!" Talora is a little village where the Relief Committee has one of its centres. The committee has bought a piece of land about 20 *bighas* and erected bamboo huts with thatched roofs amid surroundings of great natural beauty. There is malaria in East Bengal which is nature's revenge for man's neglect of her laws. But East Bengal has vegetation which gives it a beauty that is hard to excel. Man has succeeded in making it malarial but not yet in robbing the land of its natural beauty.

Here in restful surroundings I learnt the whole story of the relief operations. The address presented to me would not adorn me with a single adjective. Its six typed foolscap sides are a recital of facts and figures which I propose to digest for the benefit of the reader.

The great flood overwhelmed parts of Rajshahi and Bogra districts in the September of 1922, devastating nearly 4,000 square miles of Northern Bangal. The loss was estimated at one crore rupees. The first difficulty felt was that of organizing the Relief organization and co-ordinating the activities of Relief parties that sprang up like mushrooms. Everyone who knows anything of relief works knows that the mere will to serve for money are of no avail if the requisite knowledge and ability are wanting. By judicious handling overlapping and ignorant management were checked. The affected area was divided into fifty centres. The head of this vast organization was no other than Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose, now His Majesty's guest in the Mandalay fort. He was assisted by Dr. Indra Narayan Sen Gupta. This agency distributed food stuff to the value of Rs. 25,606 and clothing

worth Rs. 55,200 besides 80,000 pieces and 75,000 old jackets and shirts. It distributed also fodder of the value Rs. 1,274 and 52 waggonloads of straw received as gift. Ten thousand huts were constructed under its supervision. "Materials were brought to the doors of the villagers, labour charges were given to them in instalments after the previous ones were properly utilized and inspection reports submitted." Supervision was so strict that there were only three cases of defalcation of Rs. 1,500, Rs. 350 and Rs. 200 respectively. These were soon detected and money was duly realized. The construction of huts cost Rs. 1,12,755. If at Kalikapur land was to be reclaimed, embankment was a necessity. It was strictly speaking the District Board's work. But that body, being unable to shoulder the burden, the Committee built the embankment a mile long costing only Rs. 5,775 and reclaiming 6,000 *bighas* of land. Gradually, as the things settled, the Committee thought of engaging the villagers in some work if they gave them food and clothing. So they were given paddy to husk. A quantity was advanced to each distressed family which had to return husked rice to the centre appointed. Each family was entitled to retain the fixed quantity for its maintenance. There were 14 such operating centres. 20,000 mouths were fed for 4 months from these centres. Out of 50,000 maunds of paddy 27,400 maunds of rice were realized. There were no defaulters. This operation cost Rs. 43,000. Side by side with this relief medical assistance was freely given.

But this did not satisfy the Committee's ambition. It wanted to deserve the generous aid it had received from the public by doing permanent work. It wanted to make the people self-supporting and self-reliant in times of trouble. I must give the details of the introduction of spinning in the language of the address :¹

Brilliant as the results are, they are nothing compared to what they are likely to be. A stage must be reached when it will be no longer necessary to take cotton to the doors of the villagers and receive yarn from them, but when they will get cotton and sell yarn in the ordinary course, as they are doing in the Feni District in Bengal today and in several villages in the Punjab, Rajputana and elsewhere. The organization of the charkha seems to me to be so complete that I do not anticipate any difficulty in the evolution of the movement in

¹ This is not reproduced here. It gave an account how spinning brought relief to famine-stricken people in Ichamargaon, Talorea, Champapur, Durgapur and Tilakpur in Bengal.

the direction indicated.

This experiment marks, too, real progress in the Hindu-Muslim unity. A predominantly Hindu organization is helping a predominantly Mussalman population with the sole purpose of improving their economic status. It has Mussalman workers who are never made to feel that they are not as valuable as the Hindus. Indeed, by sheer ability two of them occupy the highest rank among spinners. I had the good fortune to watch 32 volunteers spinning. All spun at the rate of over 400 yards per hour but the Mussalman spinner spun 720 yards per hour. Let me note that these volunteers are paid the market wage. Satish Babu to whose genius the whole of this organization is due told me that he had found by experience that it was better to pay the wholetime voluntary workers full wages if one is to expect exact discipline from them. The wages he pays the 62 volunteers average Rs. 25 per month.

Young India, 4-6-1925

271. DRAFT OF LETTER TO ANNIE BESANT¹

June 4, 1925

DEAR DR. BESANT,

I have your kind letters. I have shown your memorandum² to Mr. Gandhi who came here last evening and we have both come to the conclusion that whilst with certain necessary amendments your draft manifesto can be accepted by us personally, it has no chance of acceptance by Mr. Shastri³ Mr. Jinnah⁴ or Pundit Malaviyaji not to speak of others who have declared themselves uncompromisingly against civil disobedience. We feel that unless there is a clear understanding among all parties on the exact terms of our demand and upon the remedy we should adopt in the event of rejection, it would be futile to put forth anything as a national demand. The other

¹ This was drafted by Gandhiji on behalf of C. R. Das, and signed and despatched by the latter on June 5. Mahadev Desai has recorded, in his diary on June 4, that C. R. Das remarked to his wife : "I would have taken three days in drafting this reply. Gandhiji did it in 15 minutes."

² This was regarding the Commonwealth of India Bill which she had drafted.

³ Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri (1869-1946); educationist and orator; President, Servants of India Society, 1915-27; member, Viceroy's Legislative Council and Council of State; Agent-General of the Indian Government in South Africa

⁴ Mahomed Ali Jinnah (1879-1948); barrister and statesman; first Governor-General of Pakistan, 1947-48

difficulty in our way is want of a clear understanding between Hindus and Mussalmans and Brahmins and Non-Brahmins. We therefore feel that at the present moment we should concentrate our attention on privately cultivating the opinion of men whose voice counts in national affairs. This I am doing to the best of my ability.

I have not wired to you any definite reply as I could not convey to you the above by wire. I am sorry I have not been able to send you anything encouraging.

Yours,

From a photostat of the draft : S.N. 10674

272. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

DARJEELING, BENGAL,
June 5, 1925

CHI. RAMDAS,

I get your letters regularly. I write this with the mountains of Darjeeling in front of me. It pricks me that you are not here to share with me the view. But I derive satisfaction from the thought that you are enjoying the scenery there and that it gives you peace. What profit talking about the Himalayan scenery to one on death-bed? Only the sight of bread will satisfy the hungry. Therefore true scenery for a person is that which satisfies the mind. What effect can the scenic beauty have on the thousands of Gurkhas staying here? They do not even see it. It is my blessing and my prayer that you may find complete rest and peace there.

I had written that as a general rule when we had a difference of opinion with our superior officers, we should obey the officers. I had written this with Devchandbhai¹ in mind. He is in charge of the work there. You have asked for double the quantity of cotton. If Devchandbhai does not agree, do not be disheartened. Accept his decision cheerfully. Thus alone can an individual or a nation rise.

There are occasions when one must seek forgiveness not from another but from one's inner self. The transformation in the heart can cause miracles. Sometimes seeking forgiveness does harm rather than good. If I have still not made you understand this do ask me. Harilal sees me often. I meet him and talk to him very gently. I do not worry. There is a sentence in the *Gita* which means that one cannot change one's nature by force. Our duty is to try to remove our faults. To be lethargic in that is sin. We may only make the endeavour, leaving the

¹ Devchand Parekh

fruit of it in the hands of God. Therefore, renouncing the desire for the fruit, we should act.

Now there is no part of your letter left unanswered. I am not sending blessings to Ch. Jaisukhlal, etc. That does not mean that they do not have my blessings. They certainly do. It is unnecessary to write.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Motana Man, pp. 29-30

273. LETTER TO NISHITHNATH KUNDU

[DARJEELING,]¹

June 6, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter². I am now trying to discuss the thing with Deshbandhu.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

NISHITHNATH KUNDU

DIST. CONGRESS COMMITTEE

DINAJPUR

From a photostat : G.N. 8020

274. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

Jeth Sud 9 [June 6, 1925]

CHI. NARANDAS³

No news from you. I want you to send me every month your report on khadi work. It will be better still, if you send it every fortnight.

It seems you have not been able to make an inquiry about Shri. . . . Now do so quickly. There are allegations of misappropriation and adultery against him. How can you possibly make an inquiry in the matter of the allegation of adultery? With regard to this I would only ask you to go to . . . with your eyes open. Examine the accounts

¹ From the postmark

² This is not available.

³ Nephew of Gandhiji

minutely, so that if they are found to be kept honestly I can unhesitatingly declare them to be so.

You know that I have already written in *Navajivan* about the allegations made against him.

I hope you all are keeping well.

My regards to Khushalbai and Devbhabhi¹.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 6292. Courtesy : Narandas Gandhi

275. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Jeth Sud 14, Saturday [June 6, 1925]²

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Efforts have been made to get money from Badrul. But there has been no success. Something will certainly come from Naik in the end. A sum of Rs. 4,000 has so far been received from him. Instructions have been sent that this should be paid to the Committee there. Shuaib has been entrusted with the task of collecting money from these two sources. Keep in touch with him.

You will have regained your health. What is the condition of your nephew?

We are at Darjeeling. We shall leave Darjeeling on Tuesday.

Blessings from

BAPU

MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI
93 BAZAR GATE STREET
FORT, BOMBAY

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

276. SPEECH TO WOMEN MISSIONARIES ³

June 6, 1925

I accepted your invitation to speak before you only in order that I may have an opportunity to explain certain things which I wanted

¹ Addressee's mother and wife of Khushalbai

² From the postmark

³ Delivered at the School of Indian Languages, Darjeeling, conducted by Miss Rowlands, for missionaries serving in India

you to understand. The movement with which the Deshbandhu and others including myself are identified is a movement for self-purification. This does not mean that it is not a political one; it is indeed very much a political movement. But what is political and what is religious? Can life be divided into such watertight compartments? The whole machine is run by one person from one place. If that person and that place are clean and pure, then all the activities will also be clean and pure; if they are both tainted, then all the activities will also be tainted. I am amused at such distinction of our various activities, because my experience has been different. I have never made such distinctions. The seemingly different activities are complementary and produce the sweet harmony of life. Politics separated from religion stinks, religion detached from politics is meaningless. Politics means any activity for the welfare of the people. How can anyone who seeks God remain indifferent to this benevolent activity? And since according to me God and Truth are one, I will always cherish the wish to see the rule of truth prevail even in the domain of politics.

To try to explain Jesus' teachings to the followers of Jesus is like carrying the Ganga water to Varanasi. But although I am myself not a Christian, as an humble student of the Bible, who approaches it with faith and reverence, I wish respectfully to place before you the essence of the Sermon on the Mount. If, while doing so, I do not place before you frankly my inmost thoughts, I would be unfit to address you as brothers and sisters. I remember the speech I delivered in 1916 before a conference of missionaries in Madras.¹ I had observed at that time that the missionaries were making a grave error in counting the numbers of their followers. I have absolutely no faith in the proselytizing activity that is being carried on today. It may have benefited some persons, but the benefit is of little account when compared with the harm which has followed. Religious controversy serves no purpose. God wants us to profess what we sincerely believe. There are thousands of men and women today who, though they may not have heard about the Bible or Jesus have more faith and are more godfearing than Christians who know the Bible and who talk of its Ten Commandments. Religion is no matter for words, it is the path of the brave. And my humble intelligence refuses to believe that a man becomes good when he renounces one religion and embraces another. I can cite numerous instances of Indians and Zulus who have

¹ Vide "Speech on Swadeshi at Missionary Conference, Madras", February 14, 1916

become Christians but who know nothing of Jesus' way of love or sacrifice or his message.

In this connection, I recall the talk I had with a missionary named Mr. Murray in Johannesburg. A friend had introduced me to him hoping that I would become a Christian. We went out for a walk in the course of which Mr. Murray cross-examined me by asking me a number of questions. When he had cross-examined me enough, he told me : "No, friend! I do not wish to convert you. Not only that, I will never try to convert anyone in future." I was very much pleased. He even accepted my interpretation of Jesus' teaching! Quoting from the Bible itself,¹ I had said to him : "Not he who says 'God, God' shall gain deliverance, but he who surrenders himself to God and does His will, he alone shall gain it. I am aware of my weaknesses. I am struggling against them with what strength God has given me, not with my own. Do you wish that, instead of thus struggling with my God-given strength, I should repeat parrotwise that Jesus has washed off my sins and that I have become pure?" He looked up, stopped me and said : "I understand what you say."

I am today talking to you with the same emotion with which I talked to my friend then, because I want to touch your hearts just as I wanted to touch his. Why do you want merely to count heads, why do you not go on with silent service? Will you please tell me why you wish to convert people? Should it not be enough if, by coming into contact with you, people learn to live pure and noble lives, they give up the way of untruth and darkness and take to the path of truth and light? What more do you want than that you take up a helpless child and help it to earn the means wherewith to feed and clothe it self? Is not this sufficient reward for your work? Or is it that you wish to make the person whom you serve say without conviction, "I have become a Christian"? Today we see competition and conflict among different religions for counting the number of their followers. I feel deeply ashamed of this and, when I hear of people's achievement in converting such and such a number to a particular faith, I feel that that is no achievement at all, that on the contrary it is a blasphemy against God and the self.

Your work does not end with serving people. You should identify yourselves with them. Only when you meet the poorest of the poor will you be able to render true service. In this connection I recall the words of Lord Salisbury² to a deputation of missionaries which waited on him. Those missionaries had arrived from China and were

¹ *St. Matt.* VII, 21; XXI, 28-31

² 1830-1903; Prime Minister of England, 1885-86, 1886-92 and 1895-1902

seeking Government protection against the Boxers. Lord Salis-bury told them : “I am not unwilling to offer you protection. But will it do you any credit? The missionaries of old were brave. Trusting that the only true protection was God’s they opposed all obstacles and sacrificed their lives. If you must go as far as China for the propagation of religion, you should seek such protection as the godfearing seek and take the risks which one would take for whom religion is one’s very lifebreath would take.” Those were the words of an honest and practical man. You, too, if you wish to serve the people of India, should go on with your work moving about with your life in your hand. Whatever the failures or harassment you may have to face, serve them in a truly missionary spirit.

If you would breathe life into these poor people, embrace the programme which I have been placing before every Indian today and enter their lives along with it. Through no other kind of work can you fulfil the command of Jesus as well as you can through this.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 21-6-1925

277. *INVASION IN THE NAME OF RELIGION*

I have received a long letter about the struggle that is going on in the *Lad* community. The writer has made an honest attempt to provide me with lots of information and shown that all possible steps have been taken to reach a compromise. I am prepared to believe that. But my intention is not to write or suggest something about the *Lad* community but to place the thoughts provoked by it before Hindu society.

On the one hand, unification is going on for the protection of Hinduism, on the other, the weaknesses which have entered Hinduism are corroding it from within. That is to say, just as a worm in the heart of a thick log of wood goes on eating it, and, even if we put a covering on it from above or apply some solution to it, the wood will ultimately be eaten away, similarly if we do not destroy the worm that has entered the heart of Hinduism and is consuming it, no matter how much we protect it from outside, it will surely be destroyed.

In the name of preservation of the castes, the castes are being and have been intermingled. The restraints of caste have disappeared, only its excesses have endured. These restraints were intended to preserve religion, these have now become retrograde and are now corroding it. The castes should be four in number but they have become far too many. The castes having become extinct, communities have become divided into sub-castes and, like cattle

wandering about in a backyard being forced into a pen, we who are without a master have been caught up in the mesh of sub-castes and are held prisoner there. The castes gave sustenance to the people; the sub-castes have proved destructive to them. Instead of serving the Hindus or India, we have been engaged in protecting our sub-castes, that is, our shackles, and have been draining our intelligence, and our money in solving problems arising therefrom. A hunter stands in front of the foolish honeybees intent on destroying their honeycomb, while they are arguing about the control of one another's residence. When the distinction between *Visha* and *Dasha* deserves to be obliterated, how can there be any question whether *Visha* is greater or *Dasha* is greater? When the need is to unite the *Vania* community throughout India, how can there be any room for the distinctions and quarrels between *Dasha* and *Visha*, *Modh* and *Lad*, *Halari* and *Ghoghari*?

The castes came into being because of the professions, while the sub-castes subsist on account of the relationship of marriage, etc. As long as I conform to these restrictions, what does it matter if I run a wine shop, bear arms or sell canned beef from foreign lands? In spite of doing all this, I can be an honoured member of the *Vania* community. Whether I observe the principle of one-man-one-wife or flirt with many damsels is no concern of my community; and regardless of what I do, I can pass as a rich man of the community, can compose new scriptures for it and can win honour from it. It takes note of where I dine or where I marry off my son or daughter, but it will not scrutinize my conduct. As I have now returned from abroad, I cannot enter the *sanctorum* of the temple of Kanyakumari, but if I have openly been leading an adulterous life, no one can stop me from entering it!

There is no exaggeration in this picture. This is no dharma; this is the extreme limit of *adharma*. This does not mean protection of caste but its annihilation. I who am keen to preserve the caste system shall prove incapable of doing so if *adharma* is not done away with. In this travesty going by the name of caste, instead of the destruction of the excess, there is danger of caste itself being annihilated.

Now let us see how the innumerable castes can be preserved. A religion in which non-violence predominates protects castes by means of violence. A man who has broken the artificial and improper restrictions of caste is not shown his "mistake" but is instantaneously boycotted. Boycott means his harassment in every way; his meals are stopped, no girl is offered to him in marriage, he is denied obsequies and this punishment descends even to the heirs of the boycotted man! This means leading an army to kill an ant or, to speak in the language

of this age, Dyerism. By such harassment, communities of a thousand or two thousand people instead of continuing to live will perish. Destruction is desirable but destruction brought about by force is harmful. If this destruction is brought about deliberately, then alone will it provide sustenance to society.

The best remedy is that the *mahajans* of the various small communities should join together and constitute a single caste, and that this big association should merge with other associations and the four castes should become a single caste. But in the present atmosphere of weakness such a reform would be considered impossible.

That is to say following dharma is as easy as it is difficult. Just as every organization can promote the growth of dharma, individuals too can do likewise. An individual should be fearless and follow what he regards as dharma and if he is boycotted he should not worry. He should courteously welcome the three punishments of the caste and should regard them as free from compulsion. There is no benefit in giving caste dinners, very often there is in not giving them. I for one regard it a sin to give dinners after a person's death. Even if a girl cannot be found for a boy or a boy for a girl in the same community, that too need not cause worry, because it is no punishment to one who does not believe in the existence of sub-castes. There will certainly be no difficulty in getting a suitable match from the reformers of other groups if the boy or girl herself is worthy. But if there is difficulty, dharma consists in putting up with it. To a man of character and restraint these are no troubles at all. He bears with them with a composed mind. If he does not receive help from his community at the time of his death, why should it trouble him? There will be others to help. I have already written about a hearse. We can do with little help if it comes into use. And one who cannot command even that little help should engage labourers. One who is so poor as not to afford even labourers is a creature of God and he should be confident that He would send him succour from any quarter. Satyagraha consists in not being bothered by punishment. Just as satyagraha is a golden weapon with which to fight the Government, so it is to fight the caste-organization, because both the ailments are the same and hence the remedy too is the same. The remedy against oppression is satyagraha. Satyagraha alone can preserve Hinduism or any other religion.

It is my humble advice to every lover of religion that he should keep clear of the petty squabbles of the communities and should remain devoted to his duty. His duty is to protect his religion and his

country. Protection of dharma does not lie in according unjustified protection to small communities, but in leading a life of religion. Protection of religion means protection of every Hindu. The protection of every Hindu consists only in ourselves being men of character. To acquire character means to follow the vows of truth, *brahmacharya*, ahimsa, etc. To become fearless means to cease to fear any man, to trust in God and fear Him alone, to know that He is witness to all our actions and all our thoughts and to tremble even to entertain evil thoughts, to help every created being, to regard even a follower of another religion as a friend, to pass our time doing good to others, etc., etc. The existence of sub-castes can, at the present time at any rate, be considered as pardonable if their activity on the whole gives sustenance to religion and country. The caste which uses the whole world to promote its own interests will be destroyed. The caste which permits itself to be used in promoting the welfare of the world will live.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 7-6-1925

278. IN BENGAL

I am not able to leave Bengal and Bengal will not let me go. I have already spent a month here and must spend another. A swift trip to Assam in the meantime cannot be avoided. Shri Phookan writes : “Assam has not done much. But you must give it a chance to show what it can do in the matter of khadi. Give it at least a week.” Without his writing all this, I would have gone on a mere invitation because I hope for much from Assam. Moreover, Assam is so far away that one cannot go there often. But the most important reason for my going there is that perhaps few provinces have suffered as much as Assam did in 1921. Assam’s crime was that it had banned opium. For that reason hundreds of youths had to go to jail and bear several other hardships. This had such a bad effect that panic spread among the people and they could not stand up fearlessly. One needs no argument for going to this province. Therefore, I promptly accepted S hri Phookan’s invitation. Now I have to reach Assam by the fifteenth. I may spend two weeks there. After that I would resume and conclude the Bengal tour. Even so a part of Bengal would remain uncovered.

I am not able to leave Bengal because I hope for much from this province. The more I come in contact with the Bengalis, the more I am fascinated by their simplicity and self-denial. Wherever I turn, I find around me youths ready to sacrifice themselves. They are full of

ardour for serving the country. They are ever on the look-out for ways of serving it. Some work is going on without anyone taking note of it, because the description of it can never be interesting. Simple life in itself is interesting. The more interesting such life is, the less so is the description of it. The greatest joy lies in perfect peace. How can one describe this peace or joy ever now? How can one describe the peace and joy of a man who collects around him the village children and teaches them day after day with a father's love? Who can equal him in his joy or snatch it away from him? It grows daily because he sees how his work of teaching bears fruit. He has no thought about whether he has one pupil or many. His thoughts do not extend beyond the lesson. His work is his own and he can make or mar his own happiness.

I have a feeling that workers of this kind are found mostly in Bengal, and scattered in many places there. There is little mutual contact among them. Each one is preoccupied with his own work. I often have the honour of meeting such persons. The more I see them the less willing I am to leave the province. It is in such workers that I see the seeds of swaraj. In them lies India's hope. They don't speak, their work does.

LANGUAGE OF THE HAND

Having seen such workers I had in one of my speeches uttered, without knowing, the phrase : "the language of the hand". This meeting was held in Calcutta. I reached there in time. Many men and women were still coming in. The meeting was to begin with music, but the musician had yet to come and it would be some time before I was due to speak. I took out the case containing my *takli* which I always carry about with me for spinning with whenever I get time. I have been a poor student in working on the *takli*. I have not become as adept as I should have. Where my fault lies no one has been able to tell me. But I am not going to be defeated by the *takli* and so goes on the battle between us two. I do spin some sort of yarn. Hence I utilized this time in plying the *takli*. All the slivers I had were used up and there was still some time before I was to speak. Then I thought out what I had to say and said something like this to the audience :

Where is the need for me to speak now? Ordinary speech proceeds from the tongue and is heard by the ears. But I have been speaking with my hands and, if you had used your eyes, you would have heard it. In a speech made by the tongue, the link between the tongue and the heart may sometimes be lacking. There is something

in the heart, but it is something else that is spoken. Such a flaw finds no place in the language of the hand, because it has no connection with the heart. You may ascribe one meaning you like to the action of the hand on seeing it. The yarn spun out by the hand can never go in vain. I have spoken much with my tongue and you have heard enough with your ears. But Bengal taught me to speak with my hands. The students of Faridpur gave me my first lesson. I have not forgotten that since then I have been plying the charkha at many meetings and, as at Faridpur, I speak with my tongue too while I work on the charkha. I thus show the connection between the tongue and the hands. I see the age of silence coming when the language of the hand will be regarded as the true language. This language, the dumb and the unlettered too can speak and the deaf, if they have eyes, can hear.

But spinning yarn is not an end in itself. By doing so I showed you that, although you have my body here, my heart dwells in the huts of Bengal's villages. Through spinning I keep in constant touch with them because I know that this yarn is the thread of life for millions of poor, struggling Indians. If we do not ply the charkha for their sake, then there will be no flesh on their bodies. If we do not spin, they will remain naked though clad, and they will remain idle though working. They must work on the charkha regarding it as Annapurna. We have to work at it as at a *yajna* to show them the way, to give them peace, and to make khadi cheap. They must work on the charkha during all their leisure hours. We should do that for half an hour a day for their sake and as a *yajna*. They won't ply the charkha if we don't. If we don't ply it, who would remove its shortcomings, who would then create a science of the charkha and who would measure its capacity? It was with our hands that it was destroyed, so by our hands must it be revived. These and many other meanings were contained in the speech I made with my hands. We have extorted enough from the poor peasants and it is our dharma to repay them by plying the charkha.

SANTINIKETAN

And is it only one temptation that Bengal holds for me? There are many. How can I do without going to Santiniketan? I write these notes from there on a silence day. The inmates of Santiniketan fill me with peace supreme. The girls sing sweet songs. I have talked to the poet for hours on end to my heart's content. I have understood him better, rather I would say he has begun to understand me better. His affection for me knows no limits. His elder brother, Dwijendra Nath Tagore, who is known as Borodada, has for me a father's love for a son. He totally refuses to notice my faults. In his view I have never

made a mistake. [He believes that] my non-co-operation, my charkha, my being a *sanatani*, my idea of Hindu-Muslim unity and my antipathy to untouchability are all worthy things. He has made my idea of swaraj his own. A doting father does not wish to see the faults of his son; similarly Borodada does not wish to see mine. I can only notice his infatuation and his love. I can't describe it. I make efforts to be worthy of that love. He is more than eighty years of age. But he keeps himself informed about the smallest things. He knows what is going on in India. He gathers his information by making others read out to him. Both the brothers have a profound knowledge of the Vedas, etc. Both know Sanskrit. *Mantras* and *slokas* from the Upanishads and the *Gita* are ever on their lips.

There are also devotees of the charkha in Santiniketan. Some ply it regularly and some occasionally. Most of them use khadi. I hope that in this world-famous institution charkha will find a larger place.

NANDINI BALA

Few Gujaratis probably know that there are some Gujarati children here. Some of their families stay here. There was one such Bhatia family and a daughter was born to them. The mother fell very ill and went off her head. So Gurudev's daughter-in-law adopted this girl and now she is bringing her up. The girl is about two and a half years old. She is Gurudev's darling. Everyone knows her as his grand-daughter. Nowadays Gurudev is resting. Since he has heart disease, doctors have forbidden all movement. He may not do even strenuous mental work. So twice or thrice a day he indulges in innocent jokes with this girl—Nandini—and tells her various types of stories. She becomes petulant if she is not told stories. She is now venting some manner of displeasure on me. She got ready to take a garland of flowers from me but now bluntly refuses to come to me. Who knows she may be avenging herself because I was talking to Gurudev during her story-time. How can one get to the bottom of a child's displeasure or a king's? If a king goes into a huff, a satyagrahi like me knows how to deal with him. But before a child's petulance my brilliant weapon loses its lustre. Moreover silence day intervened. And so I have to leave Santiniketan without winning Nandini over. To whom can I tell this sad story of my failure?

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 7-6-1925

279. KHADI IN KATHIAWAR

From the letters I receive from Kathiawar I find that those who had undertaken to enlist farmers and members of poor classes who would spin by hand seem to have succeeded. Devchandbhai¹ is very hopeful about this. It seems the workers are succeeding in finding such families without much effort. Devchandbhai believes that many more families would come forward [for spinning] if we had more workers and were in a position to supply more slivers at half price. But the question is whether it would be better to serve the families we have already enlisted or to welcome more families than we had provided for and meet their needs. Serving these families means strengthening the intermediate agencies, improving the spinning-wheel and helping the families to improve the quality of spinning and teaching them carding, etc. I cannot offer, and hold that I have no right to offer, any advice from this distance. I consider it dangerous to give advice without regard to the changing circumstances. I, therefore, wish to place before the workers my experiences in Bengal. I find here that hardly at any place do they supply slivers [to the spinners]. In fact they are supplied nowhere except in Calcutta, instead they supply only cotton. Thousands of women-spinners ask only for cotton, which they gin with their own hands. Those who know anything about spinning will see that persons who do the ginning and carding themselves naturally earn more. Anyone who has done these things will know that it is not difficult to attend to all these processes at home. In Bengal people have still not forgotten the old days and, therefore, they readily respond to these ideas. No one can surpass the slivers available in Bengal. One will never find any particle in them. Even if everyone who spins cannot do ginning in his home, why cannot he do carding? The carding instruments here are very simple and hardly cost four to six annas. They moisten a bamboo rod and bend it, and in many cases make the bowstring out of banana fibre. The striker, of course, they never use. Instead, they work with a finger. We may not go so far, it may not even be necessary to do so. But it is certainly necessary for those who are regular spinners to learn carding forthwith. I think it will be difficult to go on supplying slivers for ever. Another thing I observed here is that hardly anyone spins yarn of less than ten counts. The yarn available in the market is mostly of more than ten counts.

¹ Devchand Parekh

Leaving out *devkapas*, the cotton here is of an inferior quality to that of our *mathia*. The implements used on this side are cheaper than ours. I wonder if cheap instruments do not ultimately prove costly.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 7-6-1925

280. A NOTE OF ADVICE

June 7, 1925

Never make a promise in haste. Having once made it, fulfil it at the cost of your life.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat : G.N. 8735

281. LETTER TO THE EDITOR, "THE WORLD"

SABARMATI,

June 8, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter¹ with good wishes for which I thank you. In my opinion the speculation you ask me to indulge in is a vain speculation. Who knows what the whole present is? But we all know that the whole future will be a direct result of the present. The one change needful is humility and introspection. In our arrogance we want to reform the world without reforming ourselves. "Man, know thyself" is as true today as when it was first uttered.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

282. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA GURTOO

June 8, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I have read your circular letter. You do not seem to have seen any of the cruelties yourself. Unless there are proved specific

¹ This is not available.

instances, it is useless for me to give currency to the allegations. The cruelty appears to me to be too horrible to believe.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. BRIJKRISHNA GURTOO
VAKIL OF LUCKNOW
SOLON
SIMLA DISTT.

From a photostat: G.N. 10843

283. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, JALPAIGURI*

June 10, 1925

Addressing a public meeting Mr. Gandhi requested the merchants and businessmen to utilize their wealth and their business talent for the welfare of India. The educated classes, he said, had exclusively served India up to now. It was now the turn of the mercantile classes and masses to enter the field of constructive work before the country demanded all their business skill and farsightedness which, if they were devoted to the welfare of the country, would result in an annual saving of sixty crores of rupees, exclusion of all foreign cloth and production of khaddar enough to clothe the country. Everyone of seven hundred thousand villages in India was, in the opinion of the speaker, like a spinning and weaving mill thoroughly self-contained in the matter of machinery, labour and capital.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 11-6-1925

284. *TALK TO VOLUNTEERS, JALPAIGURI*¹

June 10, 1925

You say there is no fun in spinning. But I ask you, is there any fun in reciting the *gayatri*? Is there any fun in reciting the *kalma*? You do it as it is a duty, as it is a sacrament. Even so, spinning is a duty and a sacrament. India is dying. It is on death bed. And have you ever watched a dying man? Have you ever felt his feet? You find that they are cold and benumbed, though you still feel some warmth on the head and comfort yourselves that the life is not yet gone out of him. But it is ebbing away. Even so the masses of India—the feet of the Mother—are cold and palsied. If you want to save India, do it by doing the little that I ask for, I warn you. Take up the wheel betimes, or perish.

Young India, 25-6-1925

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account of Gandhiji's tour in Bengal

285. NOTES

ONE MORE RECRUIT

The army of my sweet-hearts is daily increasing. The princess among them is, of course, Gulnar, my deputy who was to occupy the autocratic chair in my absence as His Majesty's guest as often as I received the invitation. But the lesser stars are too numerous to mention. The latest recruit is Ranibala of Burdwan, a darling perhaps 10 years old. I dare not ask her age. I was playing with her as usual and casting furtive glances at her six heavy gold-bangles. I gently explained to her that they were too heavy a burden on her delicate little wrists and down went her hand on the bangles. "Yes, yes, give up the bangles to Mahatmaji", said her grandfather, Shyam Babu of the *Servant* fame. I thought this was generosity at somebody else's expense. "Oh, you do not know my daughter and my son-in-law. My daughter will be glad to hear that the girl has given her bangles to you and my son-in-law can well afford to do without them. He is a most generous-hearted man. He helps the poor." All the while he was speaking, he was helping Ranibala to remove the bangles and encouraging her. I must confess I was embarrassed. I was merely joking as I always do when I see little girls and jokingly create in them a distaste for much ornamentation and a desire to part with their jewellery for the sake of the poor. I tried to return the bangles. But Shyam Babu cut short all such attempt by telling me that her mother would regard it as an ill-omen to take back the bangles. I had made known my condition of acceptance, viz., that the girl should not ask for new gold bangles in the place of those given to me. She might have the beautiful snow-white conch-shell bangles if she liked. The girl and the grandfather accepted the condition. Well, whether the gift was a good omen for the family or not, I do not know. It proved one for the poor and me. For, the example proved contagious and at the ladies' meeting I addressed at Burdwan I got quite a dozen bangles and two or three pairs of earrings all unasked. Needless to say, these will be utilized for khaddar and charkha *prachar*¹ in Bengal. I notify to all the young girls and their parents and grand-parents that I am open to have as many sweet-hearts as would come to me on Ranibala's terms. They will be handsomer for the thought that they gave their prized ornaments to be used for the service of the poor. Let the little girls of India treasure the proverb "handsome is that

¹ Propagation

handsome does”.

The Secretary, Satyashram school at Baherok in the course of a letter says:¹

This is very good progress indeed. Let it not however be eleven days’ wonder. We are often charged with lack of sustained energy and application. I hope that the improvement so well begun will continue. I know that a good and noiseless charkha in the hands of a competent spinner is “a thing of beauty and a joy for ever”.

ANALYSIS OF COMPETITORS

The reader will be interested to learn the analysis according to provinces of the competitors who have sent in their essays on hand-spinning. Here is the list :

Andhra	4	Tamilnad	19
Gujarat	9	Bombay	4
U.P.	3	Bihar	2
Bengal	3	Maharashtra	3
Burma	1	Kerala	1
Orissa	2	Karnatak	1
Punjab	5	C.P. (Marathi)	1
Sind	1	Ceylon	1
A Gujarati, (London)	1	Anonymous	1
			<hr/> 62

The response made is a healthy sign of the interest that is being taken in the competition. We shall soon know the result as to quality. The examiners are busy examining the essays.

‘TOO HARSH A REBUKE’

A pleader friend writes :²

If what the friend writes about the supposed inability to test the quality of yarn without one being a weaver or a spinning expert were true, my remarks might be regarded as “too harsh a rebuke”. But, as a matter of fact, to distinguish weavable yarn from unweavable is a simple performance. The eye tells one whether it is even or uneven or fluffy, and a pull by the hand shows whether it is well-twisted or not. It

¹ This is not reproduced here. The secretary referred to the progress made by the boys in spinning during eleven days after Gandhiji’s visit.

² Not reproduced here. Referring to the article “Weavers’ Complaint”, under “Notes”, 14-5-1925, the correspondent had written, *inter alia* : “I cannot agree with your remarks that the spinner whose yarn is not quite up to the mark spins indifferently or without putting his heart into it and thus deceives himself and the nation. It will be unfair to determine the sincerity of a spinning member from the quality of the yarn he has been able to spin. The defects in the yarn may be due to want of proper knowledge as to the required twist.”

is, therefore, not necessary for one to be a weaver to know roughly the quality of yarn spun. Moreover, a careful man will go to a weaver to have his yarn tested by him. Thousands who are spinning well are not weavers at all, but they distinguish good yarn from bad without much difficulty. It is quite likely that the yarn sent by my correspondent was received at the Ashram. But, being incessantly on the move, I would not have got it. But, henceforth, he should adopt the suggestion I have made. In the jail, we had a sample of mill-spun yarn about two yards in length given and we were called upon to spin according to the sample. Everyone who cannot judge from directions should procure a little mill-yarn of a given count and draw a thread of that count and quality. It is, perhaps, now clear why I accused spinners, who sent indifferent ropes, of "stealing merit". But to show that I did not wish to do any injustice to any spinner I hasten to admit that there must be many like the pleader friend who have sent bad yarn, because they have known no better. But these are not many for the simple reason that warnings and instructions were repeatedly issued in these pages as also separately by the A.I.K.B. during the time that yarn was being delivered to it.

SPINNING IN SCHOOLS

The brilliant success that has attended the introduction of spinning in the Allahabad Municipal schools has been adverted to in the columns of *Young India* already. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru now reports :

The Municipal Boards of Lucknow, Farrukhabad, Banaras, Cawnpore and Mirzapur, and the District Boards of Jhanshi, Banda, Basti and Azambag have introduced or are introducing spinning in their schools. It appears that many other local boards in U.P. are considering the matter and are communicating with the U.P., P.C.C. in regard to it.

I venture to congratulate these municipalities on their laudable resolve. A serious obstacle in the way of introducing spinning in its schools that was complained of by the municipal education department of Allahabad, in its report, was the frequency with which the wheels got out of order and want of space. With careful handling, no spinning-wheel need go out of repair. But the complaint about space is a serious handicap in all cities. I commend to the attention of the school authorities the beautiful *takli*. It is carried in one's pocket. All the children can work it simultaneously. It can be used anywhere and everywhere. In the Allahabad municipal schools, for instance, there were only 334 wheels for 3,400 boys and girls to work at but of these one half remained idle for want of repair. I am sure that the wheels did not give more than 150 yards per boy or girl per 45 minutes. That means 47,250 yards daily at the most. A *takli* will not

yield more than 30 yards in the same time. But all the 3,400 can work at the same time. Therefore, one would get, through the use of the *takli*, 10,200 yards per day, i.e., more than double the quantity yielded by the wheels. The *takli*, therefore, is the best spinning instrument in the long run for schools and such groups. The *takli* takes no more time to master than the wheel. I, therefore, recommend the immediate adoption of the *takli* in the Allahabad municipal schools. They may retain the charkha for individual boys who may want to give extra time to them and are anxious to turn out large quantities of yarn.

Young India, 11-6-1925

286. NOT MAN'S WORK?

Thus writes a professor :

Personally, I have full faith in the spinning-wheel and khaddar. I fully understand that without khaddar there can be no common bond between the classes and the masses of India. And without a common bond, without feeling as one, no country can accomplish anything, much less India. Besides, I can very well understand that a success in sufficient production of khaddar is bound to result in excluding foreign cloth. Khaddar programme must be worked out to a success, if India is to achieve freedom.

But I am of opinion that you have begun at the wrong end. To ask able-bodied men to sit for spinning, like women, is what appears odd in the eyes of most of the people. I quite appreciate the reflection that we, at present, are no better than women. Still, the reality is that we, all of us, can't take up the work which has been associated in our country, for centuries, with women. Again, I would have consented to shake off this acquired notion, could I be persuaded to believe that at least the female population of the country have taken up the cause of spinning and that it still requires further support from the male population. To ask men to ply the spinning-wheel, while the female folk strut about in fine foreign saris, is putting the cart before the horse. Besides, the question of foreign cloth in India is not so much of men's creation as of women's and therefore, I think, to press the use of the spinning-wheel and khaddar on men, instead of women, is to begin the solution at the wrong end.

In my humble opinion, you should have left men alone, busy with their various sorts of political propagandas and should have taken your message direct to the women of the land. Let your great programme of charkha and khaddar be confined to women for the present and let men fight the battle of freedom with manlier weapons.

The letter was rather long. I have boiled down the argument without changing the language. It is evident the learned professor does not know the condition of the women of India. Or, he would

have known that, ordinarily, men do not get the privilege or the opportunity of addressing women. It has been my good fortune, no doubt, to be able to do so to a certain extent. But, in spite of all the facilities given to me, I have not been able to reach them to the extent I have reached men. He should also know that the women cannot act without the consent of men. I can quote several instances where men have prevented women from adopting the charkha or khaddar. Thirdly, women cannot make the inventions and the changes that men can make. Had the movement of spinning been confined only to women, it would have been impossible to make the improvements that the charkha has undergone during the past four years or to organize spinning in the manner it has been. Fourthly, it is contrary to experience to say that any vocation is exclusively reserved for one sex only. Cooking is predominantly the occupation of women. But a soldier would be worthless who cannot cook his own food. The whole of the cooking in camps is necessarily and naturally done by men. Moreover, whilst women naturally cook for the household, organized cooking on a large scale is universally done by men throughout the world. Fighting is predominantly men's occupation, but Arab women fought like heroines side by side with their husbands in the early struggles of Islam. Rani of Jhansi distinguished herself for her bravery as very few men did during the Sepoy Revolt. And today in Europe we find women shining as lawyers, doctors and administrators. The clerical profession is being almost monopolized by women shorthand writers and typists. Why is spinning not a manly occupation? Why is anything that will bring about the economic and spiritual uplift of India (and spinning will according to the professor) not manly enough for men? Does not the professor know that it was a man who invented the spinning jenny? Had he not invented it the history of mankind would have been written differently. Needle-work is essentially women's work. But the master tailors of the world are men. And it was a man who invented the sewing machine. Had Singer despised the needle, he would not have left his legacy to mankind. Had men taken care of spinning side by side with the women of India in days gone by, we would perhaps have never given up spinning as we did under pressure from the East India Company. The politician may devote himself to pure politics as much as he likes, but if we are to clothe ourselves by the joint effort of millions, the politician, the poet, the potentate, the pundit and the pauper, male or female, Hindu or Mussalman, Christian, Parsi or Jew, will have religiously to give half

an hour to spinning for the sake of the country. Religion of humanity is not the exclusive prerogative of any sex or class. It is the prerogative, nay the duty, of all. The religion of Indian humanity demands half an hour's spinning at least from everyone who calls himself or herself Indian.

Young India, 11-6-1925

287. AYURVEDIC SYSTEM

Kaviraj Gananath Sen writes :

I take this opportunity of drawing your attention to the fact that the speech you delivered when laying the foundation stone of the Ashtanga Ayurveda Vidyalaya¹ has been greatly misconstrued both by the public and by the Ayurvedic physicians of Calcutta. May I suggest that you will kindly explain that you did not mean to condemn Ayurveda itself or its conscientious votaries but only a certain section of them who lived by fraud? To me such an explanation appears to be urgently required in view of the fact that almost all Bengali papers are misinterpreting your speech and condemning us for not contradicting it.

I gladly comply with the request, the more so as it enables me to express my views about Ayurvedic medicine.

I must say at the outset that I was reluctant to perform the ceremony referred to as I was reluctant even to perform the ceremony of opening the Tibbia College by reason of the views I hold on Medicine in general as expressed in my booklet *Indian Home Rule*. Seventeen years' observation has made no material change in them. If I rewrote the book, it is just possible that I should state the views in a different language. But I could no more resist the organizers of my tour than I could a bosom friend like Hakim Saheb. But I told them that my speech might prove embarrassing. Had I been absolutely hostile to the movement, I should, of course, have declined the honour at any cost. But I could reconcile myself to the performance subject to the conditions I named at the meeting. I hope that the college of which I laid the foundation and to which I understand the founder, himself a *Kaviraj*, had devoted a princely sum, will contribute to the alleviation of real suffering and make discoveries and researches in Ayurveda that will enable the poorest in the land to know and use the simple indigenous drugs and teach people to learn the laws of preventing disease rather than curing them.

My quarrel with the medical profession in general is that it ignores the soul altogether and strains at nothing in seeking merely to

¹ Vide "Speech at Ashtanga Ayurveda Vidyalaya", 6-5-1925.

repair such a fragile instrument as the body. Thus ignoring the soul, the profession puts men at its mercy and contributes to the diminution of human dignity and self-control. I note with thankfulness that in the West a school of thought is rising slowly but surely which takes count of the soul in trying to repair a diseased body and which, therefore, relies less on drugs and more on nature as a powerful healing agent. My quarrel with the professors of Ayurvedic system is that many of them, if not indeed a vast majority of them, are mere quacks pretending to know much more than they actually do, arrogating to themselves an infallibility and ability to cure all diseases. These gentlemen have no humility in them. They will not study the Ayurvedic system and wrest from it the secrets which appear at present to be completely hidden from the world. They impute to Ayurveda an omnipotence which it does not possess, and in so doing they have made it a stagnant system instead of a gloriously progressive science. I know of not a single discovery or invention of any importance on the part of Ayurvedic physicians as against a brilliant array of discoveries and inventions which Western physicians and surgeons boast. In fact, Ayurvedic physicians' diagnosis, as a rule, consists in feeling the pulse which, I have known many to claim, enables them to know even whether the patient is suffering from appendicitis. Whether the science of the pulse ever enabled ancient physicians to diagnose every known disease no one can tell. But it is certain that the claim cannot be sustained at the present moment. The only thing Ayurvedic physicians can safely claim is a knowledge of some vegetable and metallic drugs of great potency which some of them succeed in administering for disease they only guess and, therefore, often with much harm to their poor patients. The advertisements of medicine that excite animal passions add immorality to incapacity and make those who resort to these practices a real danger to society.

I know of no association of Ayurvedic physicians that protests against or endeavours to check this ceaseless flow of immorality which is sapping Indian manhood and making of many old men monsters living merely to satisfy their lust. Indeed, I have known such physicians enjoying a status of respectability in medical society. Whenever, therefore, I get an opportunity I seize it to drive the truth home to the physicians Ayurvedic and Unani and plead for truth, humility and patient research. I am a lover of all that is ancient and noble. I believe that there was a time when Ayurvedic and Unani medicine served a noble purpose and was progressive. There was a time when I actively helped these physicians and believed in them. But experience has undeceived me. I have been grieved to find arrogance and ignorance among many such physicians. It hurts me to find a

noble profession being prostituted for making money. I have written this not to condemn individuals. I have merely reduced to writing the impression that has been left on my mind by a long course of observation of the practice of Ayurvedic physicians. It is no answer to say, as has been said, that Ayurvedic physicians have copied the evils I have named from their Western brethren. A wise man copies not what is bad but that which is good. Let our *Kavirajas*, *Vaidyas* and *Hakims* apply to their calling a scientific spirit that Western physicians show, let them copy the latter's humility, let them reduce themselves to poverty in investigating the indigenous drugs and let them frankly acknowledge and assimilate that part of Western medicine which they at present do not possess. Let them shun the irreligion of the Western scientists, which, in order to heal the body and in the name of science, subjects the lower animal kingdom to the hideous tortures which pass muster under the name of vivisection. Some will retort that there is warrant for vivisection in Ayurveda. If there is, I am sorry. No warrant even in the four Vedas can sanctify sacrilege.

Young India, 11-6-1925

288. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

ON WAY TO NAWABGANJ,

*Jeth Vad 5 [June 11, 1925]*¹

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I was glad to know that the letter which was dictated to Chi. Manhar is with you. It is quite right that you should come for the Working Committee meeting if you feel like doing so. If I particularly want your presence I shall send for you. I am on the look-out for a principal. I shall give one month to C.P. after the 16th of July. I have letters from the Municipal Committees of Amravati and Akola. I do not know their names. We should go wherever necessary. In the first place I would like to spend a quiet week in Wardha. This should be considered a more peaceful time than even the time I spent at Darjeeling. The tour should start after this. I am definitely here up to the 16th of July. I shall leave Calcutta for Assam on the 18th. From there I shall return to Calcutta on the 2nd of July. You have spun quite a lot of yarn.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original : G.N. 2853

¹ From the postmark

289. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

*Jeth Sud 5 [June 11, 1925]*¹

CHI. VASUMATI,

I get your letters regularly. I do write to you a letter every week. A reply does go to every letter received from you. When you are free from the work of the shop, I would wish you to have some peace. If you like the environment of the Ashram, you may find peace there. Both Janakibehn and Jamnalalji are very devout persons. Jamnalalji wants to give shelter to many widows. If your health is restored a little, I would like to take plenty of work from you. For that you should have steadiness. It will take us three months yet to return to the Ashram; perhaps more, but not less. I write this letter on board the steamer.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original : C.W. Courtesy : Vasumati Pandit

290. SPEECH TO STUDENTS, NAWABGANJ²

June 11, 1925

You all spin and wear khaddar but tell me how many of you always speak the truth and never lie?

A few boys raised their hands.

Well, now tell me how many of you occasionally happen to lie?

Two boys immediately raised their hands, then three, then four and finally, almost all.

Thank you, there will be always hope for those of you who know and own that they occasionally lie. The path of those who think they never lie is difficult. I wish both success.

Young India, 25-6-1925

291. REMARKS IN VISITORS' BOOK³

I was much pleased to note that spinning has been compulsory for the past four years. I have read the remarks of the Inspector about

¹ From the postmark. The *tithi* (date) according to Vikram Calendar should be *Jeth Vad5*, not *Jeth Sud 5*.

² Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account of Gandhiji's tour in Bengal

³ This was at the Bijhari School, Upashi, in the Nawabganj District. The school was experimenting with compulsory weaving of khaddar and spinning.

failure of spinning. I hold totally contrary views, but I know that it is possible to make spinning absolutely self-supporting, if not profitable. To that end I venture to suggest the following :

(1) Existing teachers should be induced to learn the art and the science of spinning, on promise of a prize or even a slight increment in pay.

(2) The yarn spun by the boys should be always tested and tickets attached giving the strength and count.

(3) Boys should be encouraged to improve the quality of their yarn from day to day.

(4) Yarn should be sold to the existing spinning organizations, such for instance as Khadi Pratishthan, at agreed prices always above the price of cotton. To this end cotton may be taken from the same organization.

(5) Weaving department I do not hold as a necessity, and should be kept up only if the salary of the weaving master is earned from it. I am glad in this connection to have the promise that all foreign or mill-yarn will be henceforth dispensed with.

(6) Special attention should be paid to carding which the boys must be taught to do for themselves.

(7) The charkhas make a great deal of sound foreign to them. This must interfere with good spinning. They can be and should be made noiseless. This is possible only when the spinning master knows the science of spinning which necessarily includes a knowledge of charkha repair. When the charkhas work well, they produce a musical sound which is soothing to the ear. They can be made a positive delight to the boys, besides being a lesson in sacrifice.

I congratulate the Committee and staff on their experiment and wish them every success.

Young India, 25-6-1925

292. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

*Friday, Jeth Vad 6 [June 12, 1925]*¹

CHI. MANI,

I have your letter. I am on the steamer today. The bangles are in Calcutta. I reach there on the 18th. After reaching there, I shall send them to you by parcel. Even if Devdas has not arrived at the Ashram, do make inquiries there as the parcel addressed to him will certainly be there. You may take it.

¹ As in the source

Dahyabhai¹ had shown his preference for agriculture and hence the advice I gave him. But if he is inclined to go abroad, I for one would not stand in his way. But there is one great difficulty for me. I would have to ask someone for the money. Some- one may come forward with an offer, but we should not accept money like that as far as possible. This is the ideal. But if we cannot live up to it, there is no harm in getting assistance and going. It will take me some time to return. I shall be in Bengal till 15th July. Dahyabhai may come here and have a talk with me; or he may wait till I return to the Ashram. We must not displease him in any way. I want to meet his wishes and guide him gently. There are three ways :

1. To take up private service.
2. To take up farming.
3. To go to America for further studies.

He may do any one of these he likes. I have no objection. The fourth way is to serve the nation and take a remuneration for it. But this is not to his liking and therefore out of the question. I wonder if he likes studying medicine. There is a national college here as well as in Delhi. Tell this to Dahyabhai if he does not know about it already. The college here is considered to be good. He can study here if he wants.

I am keeping quite fit. A few days back I had a slight cold, but that was nothing serious. At every place they provide sufficient rest for me.

Write to . . .² regularly. That will give him satisfaction. . . .³ is hungry for love.

Attend to Father to the best of your ability. When the wife dies and there is plenty of outside activity to attend to, it is the children who can make their father forget all his sorrow if they are devoted and attend upon him. I tell you both brother and sister this is my own experience as an obedient son of my father. I am also witness to the immense good done to children in such a case. Every moment of life I am enjoying the fruit of having served my parents as God. I write to you all this because I know that Father has a heavy burden to carry. I myself am unable to share it. I cannot find the time even to write to him. So I am passing on my responsibility also to you.

Take great care of your health. Do not worry if you have to stay longer [at the college] for your studies. Mahadev was telling me that

¹ Addressee's brother

² Omissions are in the source

³ *ibid*

both your brother and you are weak in spelling. Remove this defect. Whatever we learn, we must learn well. In case of doubt, consult a dictionary. Nothing else needs to be done.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne, pp. 24-5

293. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BHOJESWAR¹*

June 12, 1925

Mahatmaji spoke in Hindi and Badshah Mia translated it in Bengali. Mahatmaji, after thanking them for the address they had given him, said that they had asked him to speak about Congress. He would comply with their expectation. He said that, if they wanted swaraj in Hindusthan, they would have to do three things. Everyone, king or peasant, rich or poor, Hindu or Mussalman, man or woman, would have to spin at least half an hour daily. Everyone should try to bring about Hindu-Mussalman unity and to remove untouchability.

Mahatmaji did not believe their assertion that there was no untouchability in Bengal as it was in other parts of India. He said that Hindu religion never taught that they should not drink water touched by *Namsudras*, barbers and washermen.

Mahatmaji next advised them to forsake evils. He asked them not to drink, and not to visit the houses of public women.

Referring to Congress work, he said that those who thought the Congress to be dead were wrong in their conclusion. Congress was not dead. Its workers had practically died. Hitherto people knew that the Congress work meant speech-making and creating excitement. But that was not the real work of this great national organization. The duty of the Congress workers was to serve people and it was the want of that spirit of silent and unostentatious service that had thrown the Congress in the background. He said, as long as there were five real workers in the Congress, it could not die. Congress had no want of work to do as long as one single man of India puts on foreign clothes.

Referring to the duties of the Congress workers, Mahatmaji said that millions of Indians were starving. Let them give them the charkha and they would be able to save their brothers.²

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 16-6-1925

¹ Gandhiji was earlier presented with an address on behalf of the people of Dakshinapara.

² A purse of one thousand rupees was presented to Gandhiji.

294. LETTER TO C. R. DAS

[Before June 13, 1925]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I had very happy days with you. I feel that we have come nearer each other for the communion at Darjeeling.¹

Had a purse of only Rs. 7,000 at Jalpaiguri. This I have handed to Satish Babu with instructions to transfer it to the Charkha Committee you are appointing. At Jalpaiguri, too, I had the same experience as elsewhere. Spinners are there but nobody to organize them. There is a good girls' school here. They have about 20 wheels not one of which is passable. The poor school-mistress, though she spins fine, does not know a good charkha from a bad. The committee is unconcerned as to the condition of the charkha. This can be easily remedied if there was expert guidance. The proposed committee will supply that guidance.

I do want you to learn spinning both at the wheel and the *takli*. You can do it if you will but put your mind to it. If the Governor said, 'Spin and take what you want', you will work at the wheel for twenty-four hours and master it. Well, it is not the Governor who is saying it; but one who loves you and loves India does say : 'Spin and take swaraj.' Oh that we could do one thing of permanent value! To clothe ourselves through the wheel is not an impossible programme. The spinner whom Satish Babu promised will be with you as soon as we reach Calcutta. Do learn the thing and spin religiously for half an hour for the sake of the millions and in the name of God.² It will give you peace and happiness. And then when you are doing it, the young men over whom you exercise such wonderful control will also take it up. I hope fever will not worry you again.

A letter is going to Bhorlal by the same mail that will take this to you. We reach Calcutta by 18th. We are at Barisal between 14-16.

Please tell Basanti Devi to send her first quota of yarn to me. I

¹ Gandhiji was with the addressee in Darjeeling, where the latter was recouping his health, for five days. For Gandhiji's account of his stay and talks with Das, *vide* "At Darjeeling", 10-7-1925.

² For the addressee's attempts to learn spinning, *vide* "Notes", 18-6-1925, sub-title, "Spinning in Darjeeling".

want thirty days' collection made into strands of 100 yards each nicely and neatly. Nothing but first class work will be accepted from the Mayoress of Calcutta.

With love to you all.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

295. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MADARIPUR¹

June 13, 1925

It is dangerous, this association with fallen sisters, especially for young men. All that you need do is to entrust the work to your women, guiding them from a distance. The volunteers in their address asked me to tell them how they could push on their work. They are all under the vow of ahimsa, and as ahimsa is love, I can show them where they can concentrate all their energies with love as their weapon. Let them plead with the men who corrupt themselves and these women, let them open these men's eyes to the bestial, diabolical character of their offence, and wean them from their evil ways. Let them form a Ladies Volunteers League for the reclamation of fallen women and work through them. You have said in your address that Madaripur has been marked out by Government as the chief among revolutionary centres. Well, nothing short of a revolution is needed amongst the women of India to fight this evil and may Madaripur lay the foundation of that revolution.

Young India, 25-6-1925

296. SPEECH AT PUBLIC LIBRARY, MADARIPUR

June 13, 1925

In reply to the address Mahatmaji said that he was very much pleased with the address that was just presented to him and thanked the Hony. Secretary for it. He spoke very highly of the girl who took so much pains to beautify the nice bamboo casket with coloured khaddar and locally hand-spun yarn. From the synopsis supplied to him by the Secretary, he was glad to find that the Library possessed a good number of books and quite a large number of people assembled there every day to read the

¹ Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account of Gandhiji's tour in Bengal. Gandhiji referred to the fallen sisters, some of whom were spinning in a corner of the meeting.

books, magazines and newspapers available there. He was, however, anxious to know the exact nature of the benefit they derived by going through these books, etc. Be that as it may, Mahatmaji proceeded to say that libraries had now become indispensable in our daily life. These libraries, he said, had now become a part and parcel of our existence, and it gratified him to see that this library contained all sorts of newspapers and magazines. Mahatma Gandhi then spoke on the importance of public libraries, laying special stress on the selection of books.¹ Mahatmaji again thanked the Hony. Secretary for the address and the beautiful casket presented to him and then left the hall, the Secretary leading the way to the gate.²

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 18-6-1925

297. ABOUT "ANTYAJAS"

A gentleman has asked me some searching questions, which, being important, I give below :³

If the *Antyaja* members cannot stay where the other members of the conference lodge, certainly it cannot be said that untouchability has been eradicated. Our *Antyaja* brethren should have the liberty to do all that the other four castes can do. It is their duty to refuse to stay where the *Antyaja* members cannot stay.

SECOND QUESTION⁴

Just as members of other communities sit in one row with due regard for decorum, so should *Antyajas* be able to do as a matter of right. This volunteer did well when he politely got up and took another seat on being criticized by a *Vaishnava*. Good manners require that those who are in a large gathering should yield to the sentiments of the majority. If, in this particular incident, the correspondent yielded to the request of one so-litary *Vaishnava*, his conduct deserves especial commendation. It is not right for us to force others to conform to our views. Our dharma is to protect and serve *Antyajas*. We should, therefore, share such of their hardships as we cannot relieve.

¹ According to a report in *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 16-6-1925, Gandhiji said that "libraries should contain such books which could help the readers to become men."

² The Honorary Secretary requested Gandhiji to autograph the Visitors' Book. Gandhiji wrote : "I wish the institution every success."

³ The questions are not translated here. The first question was whether at the time of the conference it was not the duty of the delegates to see that the *Antyaja* members stayed with them.

⁴ It was about the seating at dinner of delegates who did not believe in untouchability.

THIRD QUESTION¹

When at every step we find injustice being done, we may help in stopping as much of it as we can. However we act, we are bound to do injustice in one way or another and therefore, when we must make a choice from among several courses, we should choose that which would do the least injustice.

FOURTH QUESTION²

Anyone who thinks or acts unworthily will find some reason for doing so. If I did not visit the *Antyaja* localities, I would not be able to meet all of them. In a public meeting they can get no opportunity of pouring out their hearts. In visiting their localities there is also the desire to stress the need for internal reform among them. The aim behind admitting *Antyajas* to public meetings is to make people accept their presence. We cannot ignore either of these aims.

Wherever, therefore, a public meeting is held from which *Antyajas* are kept out, I should adopt it as a general rule not to address it. If the incident reported by this volunteer to have taken place at Amreli³ did take place, it is a painful thing. The thought that *Antyajas* should be prevented from attending meetings in Gaekwar's Baroda State, and that too in Amreli, is unbearable. "If the sea catches fire, how can we put it out?" I, however, realize from the example of Amreli the need for greater vigilance on my part. May God help me.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 14-6-1925

¹ It was whether Gandhiji's staying, when on a tour of Saurashtra, in places to which *Antyajas* were not admitted, was not an injustice to those of them who wanted to see him but might not have been able to attend meetings addressed by him in their quarters.

² The correspondent had referred to Gandhiji's practice of visiting *Antyaja* quarters and said that this gave an excuse to the conservative elements in the local population to argue that *Antyajas* need not attend the general meeting. He had mentioned, as an example, the meeting at Amreli where this had happened.

³ A town in Kathiawar where Gandhiji received a Municipal address on April 4, 1925, and presided over the meeting of the managing committee of the Kathiawar Political Conference

298. *VIRTUES OF A VOLUNTEER*

A volunteer writes as follows :¹

It is true that I had once thought of fixing the rate of payment for voluntary workers. I had even discussed the matter with Vallabhbhai² and others. But we could not come to any conclusion. We felt at that time, and do so even now, that the ideal of Bengal and Maharashtra is too high for Gujarat. We felt that it would be almost impossible to induce the workers already engaged to accept only ten rupees as honorarium. The situation, as we saw it, was that the country would then lose the services of most workers.

Rules can be framed only when certain ideals come to be generally accepted. No rules can be laid down so long as they remain unusual. Gujarat has accepted the ideal of poverty only recently. Maharashtra and Bengal accepted it thirty years ago, or even earlier than that, and many young men were trained to live according to it. Very few institutions, therefore, can be run on the basis of the ideal of extreme poverty. In Gujarat we shall have to depend for the present on individual workers. A man who is sincere in his self-denial or ideal of self-control will not give up his way merely because others do not or cannot follow it. When we have a few Gujaratis who elect to live in extreme poverty and die in the same state, many more will come forward to adopt their way of life.

For the present we should accept poverty as the ideal to be reached and act accordingly as far as we can.

The most serious obstacle in our path which we have had to face was that of my illness, which prevented me from carrying out fully the experiment of poverty in my own life. I do not at all regard my present experiment as one of living in poverty. Men ascribe the same weaknesses to others which they themselves suffer from. One shivering with cold and covered in several garments believes that the whole world needs all that clothing. One who bathes in hot water pities anyone bathing in cold water. A person who cannot move about without a conveyance wishes that others should also have the same facility. I am in such a pitiable state.

I naturally feel that others should get what I eat. I travel by second class, so I hesitate to tell others firmly as I used to that they

¹ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had complained that there were different rates of honorarium for voluntary workers in Bengal and Gujarat, and requested Gandhiji to stress the need for voluntary poverty for such workers and fix a uniform rate of honorarium.

² Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950); Congress leader of Gujarat; later became the first Deputy Prime Minister of free India

should travel third. I feel the need of certain other facilities which others go without. I bear this situation, but feel sore about it. I know that this is my ignorance, or whatever it is, this is the truth. However loudly a man may speak about the things which he himself does not or cannot act upon, he can have no influence on others.

This certainly does not mean that the progress of the ideal of poverty in Gujarat is dependent on me. What I have said above is addressed to my co-workers and is a confession that I myself am unable to lead Gujarat along this path.

What is true about me is also true about my creation—the Ashram. Its inmates strive to observe the vows of non-possession, etc. They are tried men and women who feel it an honour to live in poverty. My belief is that they do not merely pretend. Nevertheless, we have not been able to embrace simplicity and poverty to the degree that we would like to. In order, therefore, not to obstruct the progress of anyone, all have the liberty to make any experiment within their ability, with the result that there are some who cook their meals themselves. The minimum expenditure per head which anyone has been able to reach is seven rupees a month. The two or three unmarried men, who experiment in this way of living do so, we believe, at the cost of considerable suffering to themselves. Those who have not been able to go so far bear with their additional needs as something they cannot help and strive to give up as many of them as they can. It must, however, be admitted that we do much less than what we have accepted as the ideal. We have tried hard to cultivate the spirit of self-denial in the Ashram, but our efforts have not met with much success. This having been my experience, I do not have the courage to ask others to undertake far-reaching experiments.

Would it not be better, then, if I asked those who are not yet ready for the ideal of service to come forward only after they have trained themselves for it? This cannot always be done in the field of public work. Where the aim is simply to train the workers, this rule may be applied. But where the aim is the attainment of a particular object, we should get the work done without violating any moral principles through any workers we can get. One of our aims is to educate *Antyaja* children. It would be best if we could get teachers imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice. If we do not get such teachers and if we have the funds, we may engage teachers of good character even by paying them handsomely. Similarly, it is our aim to propagate spinning and khadi. For this purpose, we may certainly employ workers of good character who cannot live in poverty, to the extent that our resources permit. In trying to gain everything, we run the risk of losing everything.

If we regard poverty as one of our ideals, it is my view, based on experience, that we shall reach it ultimately while working for the other aims.

The same argument holds good about tea, etc. It is not our aim at present to reform people's dietary habits. We should, therefore, certainly accept the services of a worker who takes tea.

We ought to exercise some discrimination about such matters. This world is a strange place. Some of us want to go through it without being caught up in all manner of enslaving concerns. To some swaraj means the rule of dharma—*Ramarajya*. They cannot tolerate violation of moral principles. For them, the path of swaraj is the path leading to *moksha*¹. Swaraj is an important milestone on that path. They believe that without crossing it they cannot attain *moksha*. But everyone does not accept this meaning of swaraj. Even so, the swaraj they want is included in the conception of swaraj explained above and, therefore, the seekers after *moksha* are unable to forgo their co-operation. There are some others who are not interested in swaraj at all but to whom the spinning-wheel is everything. Though millionaires, they have accepted spinning as a sacred duty. They want to end the poverty of the country. Those seekers after *moksha* want to keep these last, too, with them, for the spinning-wheel is an essential part of the swaraj which they want. The seekers after *moksha* journey on, accepting whatever sacrifices people are ready to make, and thus lighten their burden in the initial stages of their journey.

I wish that no one should draw wrong conclusions from my reply. I should be very happy to get a band of workers dedicated to poverty, I know that the coming of swaraj would be very much hastened if we had such a band of workers. Individual workers should always bear this in mind. But at the same time, we should also remember our weaknesses and shortcomings. The path we follow is the path of love. We may be strict with ourselves, but should be correspondingly liberal in our attitude to others. That is the way of non-violence. Our sacrifice should never make us proud. We should not be critical of the lesser sacrifices of others. It happens sometimes that a man carrying a load of five maunds may yet be a miser about his strength while a man carrying one maund draws upon all the strength he has. Between the two, the honest worker is the one who carries one maund. Hence, instead of sitting in judgment over others, we should examine our own record, use all our strength to force sacrifices from ourselves and, banishing uncharitable thoughts, accept with love whatever sacrifices others make.

¹ Deliverance from phenomenal existence

There is one question in the foregoing letter which has already been answered. Whether a public worker is rich or poor, it is our duty to see that, when we go to the villages, we do not become a burden on the villagers. We should live so as to give them the least trouble. Whatever little inconvenience we cause to them should be compensated by our services. We may demonstrate to them the methods of spinning and carding and, doing that work ourselves, add to their stock of yarn and slivers. Even in this matter, however, there is no one rule which can be followed in all places, at all times and by all persons. The villagers should never get the impression that any worker has come into their midst to have a happy time or to enjoy a picnic. There can be no absolute rule in things like this. I see that the rule that we should not let the village people exceed a certain limit in their hospitality to us is being proved right by experience.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 14-6-1925

299. MY DUTY

One gentleman writes :¹

We see in this letter, for one thing, an error which most people fall into. It illustrates our fond notion that big results can be achieved by preaching to people. Actually, it has been our experience through the ages that preaching has little effect. Hundreds of sadhus preach and hundreds of Brahmins recite daily from the *Gita*, the *Bhagavata*, etc. These things have practically no effect. It is true that preaching does seem to produce an effect something, but in actual fact the effect is the result of the actions of the man preaching and not of his preaching. If he preaches more than what he himself puts into practice, his preaching has no effect—such is the magic power of truth. However much we try to cover it up with a gloss of words, it cannot be hidden. If I myself do not possess the strength to climb the Himalayas, but advise others to climb them, my preaching will have no effect. If, on the contrary, I simply climb them without talking about it, hundreds will follow me. A man's practice is his best precept.

Moreover, one should be fit to preach. Though I myself refrain from violence towards animals, I must admit that I am not fit enough to dissuade others from it. I know that we have a duty towards animals, but cannot make others feel it. For that I need to have far greater purity, compassion and self-control in me. Without these, I cannot have deep spiritual knowledge and, in the absence of such knowledge,

¹ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had asked Gandhiji to appeal to the people in Bengal to desist from cruelty to animals.

I cannot find the proper language.

Without this kind of knowledge one cannot have self-confidence. I do not believe that I have the strength to persuade others to refrain from violence towards animals.

But I believe in God. I intensely yearn to serve the animal world. Man can explain his suffering, and can even try to free himself from it. Animals cannot do this. Knowing, therefore, that we have a twofold duty towards them and wishing that I had the strength to serve them, I feel ashamed that I do not have such strength; but I blame God for my weakness. Why did He not give me this strength? I constantly wrestle with Him, entreat Him. But God's will is His; He pays attention to no one's wishes, why should He to mine? It may be that He will fulfil my wishes more readily than others'. I assure the reader that when He grants me the requisite strength, I will not wait to be reminded of my duty by this correspondent. Meanwhile, my *tapascharya* will continue. May it not be that as I go on with the work to which I have devoted myself, I shall by and by get the strength to serve the animal world? I am sure I am not a miser. I have surrendered all my powers to Lord Krishna. If, therefore, I ever acquire the strength to stop violence to animals, I will not let it remain unused.

Meanwhile, there is nothing else to do but to endure what we cannot cure.

Innocent people are harassed in many parts of the world, but we do not regard it as our duty to stop their ill-treatment. Realizing that it is beyond our power to do so, we merely pray every day for the prosperity of the world and do nothing more. It is because of this helplessness that we cultivate patriotism as one of the virtues. That patriotism, however, which is imbued with the spirit of religion does the world no harm. To seek the good of one's own country at the cost of the rest of the world is false patriotism. Just as service to one's country inspired by the spirit of religion is also service to humanity, so my service of human beings includes service to the animal-world. My reason for this belief is that my service to human beings is not incompatible with the welfare of the animal-world.

There is a false, outward show of religion in our country. We want to do impossible or futile acts of what seems to us kindness but we would not do what lies within our capacity. In the words of Dhira Bhagat¹, we steal an anvil and resolve to make amends by the gift of a needle. If we put the idea in the language of the Gita, we omit to do what little good we easily can by adhering to our own dharma and cherish ambitions of doing what falls within the sphere of others'

¹ A medieval poet of Gujarat

dharma, *with the result that we succeed in doing nothing*. It is to explain this that I have taken the trouble to answer the letter in question and explain why I do not at present engage myself in this highest dharma of ending cruelty to animals.

We are not creators of the universe. We are not omnipotent. If we put to good use the strength we possess, it will increase of itself and we shall not then, if we are honest, fail to use it.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 14-6-1925

300. LETTER TO KHWAJA ABDUL MAJID

June 14, 1925

MY DEAR KHWAJA SAHEB,

Panditji¹ has written to me about you and sent me your letter to him. You must not saddle the whole responsibility on me. I am but a humble co-worker with you about the Jamia. You know better than I do what should be done. If you consider that consistently with the interest of the Jamia, you can and should contest the Council of State election, you should not hesitate to say and do as you feel. I have simply given my opinion of what I should do in your place. If you must consult friends, you should consult Hakimji, Dr. Ansari and if you don't mind, the Ali Brothers. As a matter of fact I am no judge in this matter. But you and the other friends must know the thing better than I ever can.

Whatever you do, let it be your decision and not mine, please.

My regards to you and Khurshed Begum.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

KHWAJA SAHEB ABDUL MAJID
JAMIA MILLIA
ALIGARH

From the original: A. M. Khwaja Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

¹ Motilal Nehru; *vide* also "Letter to Motilal Nehru", June 15, 1925.

301. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BARISAL¹

June 14, 1925

In a joint reply Mr. Gandhi said that, when he visited the place last time, he found Aswini Kumar Dutta, though not in the best of health, yet, alive. He was an extraordinary man, with innumerable qualities, a man who founded a number of institutions. He suffered for the country and made wonderful sacrifices.

Mr. Gandhi thought it their bounden duty to perpetuate the memory of a man of that character, but he was sorry to hear that attempts made to collect money to perpetuate his memory had not been crowned with success. He had heard with regret that sufficient funds had not been collected. He recollected vividly all that he had seen at Barisal on the last occasion and regretted that the Ali Brothers were not with him this time. He was not satisfied with the charkhas, though he was pleased to hear from reports that yarns produced in the district were much better than those of other districts.

Mr Gandhi appealed to the people to follow the Belgaum Congress resolution and to show a brighter record in the near future. He was pleased to note that the question of untouchability was not so acute in Barisal as in Madras and that Hindu-Muslim relations had not reached a deplorable state.

The Hindu, 16-6-1925

302. REMARKS TO FATHER STRONG

[June 14, 1925]

Father Strong of the Oxford Mission had invited Gandhiji to call on them and inspect their weaving. He paid a flying visit, and Father Strong showed him over the weaving shed. Gandhiji said to him :

But this is all mill-yarn and if you use mill-yarns you do not benefit the millions, but the millionaires. Weaving cannot be a cottage industry for the millions. For them the only supplementary occupation can be spinning. According to Lord Curzon, the annual average income of an Indian was 30 rupees, according to our calculation it is 26. And if it is the average income of the masses excluding the classes, the actual would be much less. Now if by spinning you can add 10 rupees to this, would it not be a fortune to them? You may not miss 5 rupees, but to those who have nothing, 5 rupees is a fortune.

Young India, 25-6-1925

¹ Gandhiji was presented with three addresses, by the Municipality, the Reception Committee and the Samaj Sevak Sangh. About 5,000 people attended the meeting.

303. LETTER TO RAJA MAHENDRA PRATAP

[On or before *June 15, 1925*]

I continue to hear from you from time to time. I know that we differ in our outlook upon life. I know there are as many minds as there are men. But as cold and heat cannot coexist in the same place at the same time and in the same circumstances, so can violence not coexist with non-violence at the same time and place and in the same circumstances.

Yours sincerely
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

304. LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU

BARISAL,
June 15, 1925

DEAR PANDITJI,

I was distressed to learn from your letter of relapse and Jawahar's fever. I hope both of you were free soon after your letter and that you are both now enjoying the bracing atmosphere.

I have wired¹ to you about Khwaja². He is wrong in saddling me with responsibility. But if he must, what can I say but what I should do in his place? If the Jamia breeds intolerance, it is Khwaja's fault. He is its head. It was started by the best of Mussalmans. It may be reformed, if it has become bad, but in my opinion it must not be allowed to die for want of care. It must, therefore, claim Khawaja's undivided attention if it is to prosper. He is not a mere figure-head, but he is the soul of the movement. He is also administrator. I am therefore objecting not on the ground of principle but policy, that is, in the present case, more if possible even than principle. The only way Khwaja can seek election is by finding a substitute equally efficient for the college.

Moreover I am not the only party to advise. Khwaja has to consult Hakim Saheb and Dr. Ansari if he will not also consult the Ali Brothers. They are co-trustees with him. I hope you now appreciate my difficulty. I feel that I am helping the party with all my heart. I

¹ This telegram is not available.

² A. M. Khawaja of Jamia Millia Islamia, Aligarh

want to help it more for my own satisfaction than for that of friends much as I prize their satisfaction.

You may show this to Khwaja if it will help him to come to an independent decision.

Yours truly,

M. K. G.

[PS.]

I hope you received my letter in reply to your first letter.¹

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

305. LETTER TO ANTOINETTE MIRBEL

[As at] SABARMATI,

June 15, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I was delighted to receive your letter.² But I must not encourage you to undertake what is a long and expensive journey for the mere purpose of seeing me. Nor is it necessary for you to see me for your spiritual progress. It comes through service rendered in the name of God.³

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

MADAME ANTOINETTE MIRBEL

100 RUE BRULE MAISON

LILLE—NORD, FRANCE

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

¹ Gandhiji had written a postcard to Khwaja on May 23, but this is not available. Acknowledging it on May 25, Khwaja had written, *inter alia*: Pandit Motilal Nehru is pressing me to stand for the Council of States and I had asked for orders as I had written to him that, having placed my services at your disposal for the year, I shall do nothing without your permission. Panditji met me on his way to the hills and took upon himself to secure your permission. Still I have made no announcement without hearing from you.

² In her letter of January 26, 1925, the addressee had introduced herself as a married woman of 36, frustrated by the bigotry, "the narrowness of the spirit" of her religion and greatly impressed by Theosophist literature. Having waited 11 years to meet her "Master of Compassion", she longed to become Gandhiji's disciple and wanted Gandhiji to fix a date for her visit to the Ashram.

³ To this Antoinette Mirbel replied on July 6. *Vide* "Letter to Antoinette Mirbel," 13-8-1925.

306. LETTER TO SARAT CHANDRA BOSE

June 15, 1925

MY DEAR SARAT BABU,

I am glad you at once understand that another meeting could only be treated as a counter demonstration. Non-violence is love. It works silently, almost secretly. Hence the saying: the right hand knoweth not what the left is giving. Love has no play as between friends and relatives. These love one another from selfishness, not from enlightenment. It has play only as between opponents so called. It demands, therefore, the highest charity and all the chivalry one is capable of showing towards those who oppose or persecute one.

In the light of the above please consider and answer the following charges they brought against you yesterday after you had left.¹

I find it impossible to believe any of the charges. You need not answer them now. You may do so when I call on you. But if you would give a categorical answer in writing, you may do so.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. G.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy : Narayan Desai

307. COMMENTS ON A LETTER ²

[Before June 16, 1925]

I have much pleasure in printing the foregoing as received. Sardar Jogendra Singh has written from the depth of his heart. I value his advice. I have a vivid recollection of the conversation referred to by the Sardarji. He questions the advisability of my having entered into the agreement with the Swarajists.³ Nine months have nearly gone by since it was entered into. But I have seen no reason to repent of the agreement. I have sacrificed no principle. The Congress is no preserve

¹ In the source here follows a sentence, obviously by Mahadev Desai, which reads: Here follow charges about hindering even constructive work, vilifying Congress members, collecting yarn without authority, refusal to deliver Congress furniture, etc.

² This was written before C. R. Das's death at Darjeeling, which took place on June 16, 1925. For the text of the letter by Sardar Jogendra Singh, *vide* Appendix I.

³ For the text of the statement, *vide* "Joint Statement with Swaraj Party Leaders", November 6, 1924.

of any single individual. It is a democratic body with, in my opinion, the widest intelligent franchise the world has ever seen. For it gives statutory recognition to the dignity of labour. I wish it was the sole test. It accommodates all shades of opinion save violence and untruth. The Swarajists had a perfect right of enforcing their will by a battle of votes. I was unprepared for it; for I have known the voting power to demoralize the people, especially when the electorate has not been accustomed to use independent judgment. I was bound as a sane man to recognize the growing power of the Swarajists. They were willing to give the predominant place to the constructive programme. More could not be expected from them. If I had forced them to the vote, they might not only have made Council-entry the national programme, but they might, in the heat of battle, have even thrown overboard the constructive programme or relegated it to an insignificant place. So much for the principle.

In practice the agreement has largely laid to rest the acerbity between Pro-changers and No-changers. It has enabled both to work the joint programme in tolerable harmony. I witness the benefits of the pact in the South. I witness them in Bengal. I do not share the opinion that Swarajists have failed. I do not attach much importance to promises made at the hustings. It is the tacitly recognized law that like promises made at marriage, those made at election times must not be taken too seriously. Once grant the premise that Council-entry is not wholly bad, the Swarajists have nothing to be ashamed of about their achievements. They have spoken fearlessly in the Council halls; they have outvoted the Government; they have shown that the Government does not enjoy the confidence even of the electorate of its own creating; they have shown a discipline and solidarity hitherto unknown among Councillors and above all (for me at least), they have introduced khaddar in these forbidden places and have not been afraid to appear in their daily national costume which, at one time, as if we were ashamed or afraid of it, we wore only in our homes. Have not the proceedings of the Swarajists set the Government a-thinking? It is true that the latter has flouted public opinion. It is true that it has gone its way in the face of hostile votes. The Swarajists could not help it. If they had the power behind, they would have dislodged the Government and dared it to defy their vote. That power has still to come. It is coming slowly but surely. The Government knows that it dare not act against public opinion for all time. The Swarajists have made it feel more than before the weakness of its position. I have political differences with them, but their bravery, discipline, patriotism command my admiration. And I should do all in my power consistently with my principles to help and strengthen them. I remain

as the head of the Congress only so long as it pleases them to keep me there. Where I cannot help, I must resolutely refuse to hinder.

For me personally, non-violent non-co-operation is creed. I heartily endorse the Sardarji's statement that Non-co-operation is co-operation in essence and stronger than the might of armies. And if I could convert but the major part of educated India to my view, swaraj can be had without further effort. The conviction is daily growing stronger that there is no peace for India, and indeed for the world, save through non-violence. For me, therefore, the spinning-wheel is not merely a symbol of simplicity and economic freedom but it is also a symbol of peace. For if we, Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis and Jews unite in achieving the universalization of the wheel in India, we shall not only have arrived at real unity and exclusion of foreign cloth, but we shall also have acquired self-confidence and organizing ability which render violence wholly unnecessary for regaining our freedom. Success of the charkha to me, therefore, means victory of non-violence, such as to serve as an object-lesson for the whole world.

The Sardarji advises the introduction of electric power in the villages side by side with the charkha. I fear he knows only a few villages of the Punjab. If he knew the life of all India, as I claim to do, he would not write of electricity with the assurance he does. In the present state of India, anything like a universal introduction of electric power in our villages is an utterly impracticable proposition. That time may come. But it will not before the charkha occupies an abiding place in every home. I am anxious, therefore, to avoid fogging the public by raising side or false issue and false hopes. Even if the charkha means no more than what the Sardarji says or implies, we must concentrate upon it and it alone till we have made it a success. And when through it we have made the lives of the villagers livable and have provided them with honourable and profitable work during the slack season, all the things that should be added to make them happier will follow as a matter of course. Let me assure the Sardarji that I am not against machinery as such. The charkha itself, for that matter, is machinery. But I am a deter-mined foe of all machinery that is designed for exploitation of people.

The Sardarji need not entertain any fear of Englishmen being excluded from the circle of unity. For it includes everyone who chooses to call himself an Indian, whether by birth or adoption. It includes all denominations and all races. Nor is the combination intended to be hostile to any nation or individuals, not even a Dyer. For it seeks to convert, not to destroy.

Young India, 25-6-1925

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

LETTER FROM JOGENDRA SINGH

I feel diffident in writing to you about matters which have been engaging your mind and heart night and day all these years. Indeed, I confess I have hardly any claim to hazard an opinion except that I have been in close touch with life and few people in the political world know the villages, as I do, which make real India. A voice from the villages may be of some use to you in reaching realities.

I had the pleasure of meeting you, in Lahore, many years ago, with Mr. Padshah. We discussed the economics of charkha and power-driven machines. I disagreed with your view. I still feel that human nature in itself is not capable of working above and beyond the surrounding environment and the environment now embraces the whole world; none the less, I admit that if human nature could find illumination for a while, simple living and high thinking point the surest road to happiness. I also see that if men learn to co-operate against things which they dislike and accept self-suffering, they can enforce their will wielding compelling powers without incurring the risk of devastations which follow wars and revolutions.

God entrusted you with a message, a message of freedom based on goodwill, ensuring peace; saving civilization from committing *hara-kiri* by exploiting forces of nature without cultivating necessary discipline and moral restraint which from time immemorial has been held essential in the East. Give your message and time will carry it to the hearts of men. The love of your motherland calls you to apply your principles to the pressing problems of the day; you have been even persuaded to permit others to test a policy of pacts and compromises which appeal to the politicians more than the uncompromising pursuit of truth. They have been at it for a long while seeking to weld the people together by an agreed distribution of loaves and fishes and hoping to secure swaraj by constant obstruction in the Legislatures. Failure has been pursuing these efforts from the start. I wonder if the leaders are disenchanted. In any case pursue your own path, it is your dharma. You and they cannot walk the same road for long. The great work before you is to confine yourself to the essentials; prove that non-co-operation is co-operation in essence and stronger than the might of armies, that non-co-operation is co-operation of righteous men to overcome the unrighteous in a spirit of tolerance and goodwill, accepting self-suffering to awaken an understanding in the opponents. India needs it, but more than India Europe needs it, and indeed the whole world needs it. This alone can give the League of Nations strength to enforce its will. This alone can confer power on unarmed nations to assert their manhood and to keep their places in the sun. This

alone can dispel darkness which drives nations into wars, in search of supremacy at the sacrifice of protection and peace. The new world waits for this new message; proclaim it with all the power that God has given you.

The problem of food is as important as the problem of peace. When you placed charkha on the banner of your flag you raised the symbol of economic independence of nations great and small. Happiness is not to be found in wild pursuit of pleasure and possessions and unlimited production. These feed the flames of desire. Let each householder produce what he needs and then what he cannot produce let him procure from his neighbour in and outside the bounds of his own land. Let trade be an exchange of things, not wild exploitation by one nation of the other; an organized competition which must fail unless saved by a large-hearted readjustment of economic relations of the world. Let charkha be as a symbol for practical purposes; we must modernize the village bringing electric power to its service, to weave cloth, to pump water, to press oil and to do a thousand other services which some of our congested villages need to secure enough food and clothing. You cannot be altogether unaware that no country can entirely escape the influence of the new age; an age of magic and machinery, ruled by new inventions and human nature. You can place new inventions in the hands of the village worker in his own home, you can transfuse a divine sense of service to elevate human nature. You can inculcate ethics of work, love and labour by reviving the system of *kathas*, to keep alive ideals and traditions which have saved India through centuries of unfavouring circumstances.

The great problem you have set your hand to is to bring harmony between Hindus and Mussalmans. I am sure you will not exclude Englishmen from this great concord of hearts and minds. I fear you have been exploring the possibilities of pacts and political arrangement against your better reason and agreed to let your friends try the methods with which they are familiar. They have failed and you can now turn round and tell them to let you go your own way. You may not be followed today but truth shall conquer. Light up the flame of understanding by your example transfiguring unity by living it. No one can do more. Hindus and Mussalmans who have their eye on the main chance repeat the creed without conviction. They will never find unity. They want places of power. Leave them in the old familiar caves, dark with the darkness of ages. Turn to the villages, unity exists there already. Factors which work discords can be examined and removed—fetishes which have usurped the sanction of religion. Remove untouchability between Hindus and Mussalmans in the matter of food, give freedom to the Mussalmans to sacrifice cows if they so desire, open the Hindu temples to the Mussalmans to desecrate if they dare. When doors are flung open to them as friends allow them to carry their processions wherever they like and to cut the *peepul* trees. Let the Hindus not only tolerate but join these processions and let the Mussalmans also do the same—allow the Hindus to

blow their conches and unfurl their flag remembering in the words of Iqbal : “They are both companions on the long road and the night has overtaken them both.”

Do this and rest will follow. This work has to be done in the villages, in the temples and the mosques and in the towns, wherever men of greater goodwill can be found. Let the order go forth that “We shall fight no more over these things and that Hindus shall open their temples and the Mussalmans their mosques and partake freely in each other’s festivals.”

The political problem is certainly important but more important is the serving of the needs of the people. There is a ploughing season and a sowing season and a harvesting season. A bad agriculturist ploughs his land badly, sows his seed and weeps when he turns to gather a harvest. A good agriculturist ploughs patiently and ploughs again and again and secures a rich harvest. We are still in the ploughing season. We need better education, more food, better houses and a larger coming together of races and creeds. The true worker never hurries. Modern methods made fully subservient to man and kept under control can add greatly to the production of the soil and the making of a better man morally and physically. Do something towards this. Make electric power the servant of man in the hearth and home and the fields outside, helping every man to attain his manhood. Preach your doctrine of love and self-determination and freedom. Man is the master of his own destiny and in his realization all immediate problems will find an easy solution. I have made suggestions not that I know more but only because it may help you to know what people need. Politics often have a trick of wrapping truth in a veil of mystery and giving to what is temporary and unimportant preference over the permanent and deeply important.

Young India, 25-6-1925