

1. SPEECH AT ALL-INDIA STUDENTS CONFERENCE, BELGAUM

December 27, 1924

Mahatma Gandhi arrived at the *pandal* and was accorded a warm welcome. In compliance with the request of the president and the audience, the Mahatma spoke most feelingly for about 10 minutes. He exhorted the students to practise swadeshi and wear khaddar. He explained as to how the salvation of India was bound up with the spread of the spinning-wheel. He told the audience that he was not prepared to admit the plea of want of time. They could do the work provided they had the will to do it. Finally he declared that khaddar was not the symbol of hatred of anybody but that it was the symbol of love and self-dependence. The Mahatma was then garlanded amidst loud applause. The president thanked him for blessing the Conference after which the Mahatma left the *pandal*.

The Bombay Chronicle, 2-1-1924

2. SPEECH ON CONDOLENCE RESOLUTION, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

It was 11.20 a.m. when the President moved the following resolution:

The Congress records with sorrow the death of Mr. G. M. Bhurgari and tenders its respectful sympathy to the bereaved family.

Before putting the resolution to vote the President remarked¹:

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am ashamed to have to say that there was an omission when we passed the first resolution. A friend from Sind has brought it to my notice that in the resolution mourning the loss of our departed leaders a name was left out—that of Mr. Bhurgari.

I think you know it and will agree when I say that I could not have deliberately left out this name. But I am in such a pitiable state that I tend to forget things when I am engrossed in work. It was with great difficulty that I wrote down the names that I did—it was in the address I had prepared—and since I myself wrote the address I was not aware of the omission. I would have written Mr. Bhurgari's

¹ In Hindi

name most respectfully. In my heart also I had the greatest respect for him. I have committed an omission and I apologize for this to his relatives. The fact is I had a great regard for him. He was a Sindi Mussalman and he loved Hindus. When I go to Sind people there say that Mr. Bhurgari was a true son of India. Why should we not mourn his loss? I request you, brothers and sisters, to rise from your seats and stand respectfully for one minute. Let no one keep sitting; all must stand up. . . .

Now all of you should maintain silence. Do not talk. We have to finish our programme, if possible by 5 o'clock. In this I seek the help of all the delegates. Concerning the first resolution that will be moved today, no discussion is necessary and so no lengthy explanation is called for. Therefore I shall simply read it out. I also want to say that no copies have been distributed amongst you of the resolutions that will be moved today. The Reception Committee was not able to do this; there is no press in Belgaum so that all the resolutions that the Reception Committee wanted to print could be printed. The Subjects Committee can continue its sittings for two or three days and the resolutions that it drafts can be printed. But there is no resolution which makes it necessary to distribute its copies amongst you. You will forgive me as well as the Reception Committee for this, and pass the resolutions as they are read out to you.¹

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, p. 74

3. RESOLUTION ON SAROJINI NAIDU'S SERVICES, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

The President next moved the following resolution:

The Congress places on record its appreciation of the great services rendered to the cause of the Indians overseas by Shrimati Sarojini Naidu who by her energy and devotion endeared herself to the Indian settlers and by her persuasive eloquence gained a sympathetic hearing from the Europeans there.

The Congress also notes with gratitude the services rendered to the cause of the settlers of Kenya by Mr. Vaze of the Servants of India

¹ The resolution was carried *nem. con.*, all standing for a while in silence.

Society and Pandit Benarsidas Chaturvedi.

The Hindi and Kanarese renderings of the above resolution were then read by Pandit Sunder Lal and Sjt. K. Mudvedkar respectively.

The resolution was carried unanimously all standing except Shrimati Sarojini Devi.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924 , p. 75

4. SPEECH ON RESOLUTION ON KOHAT AND GULBURGA RIOTS, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You have heard many speeches concerning this resolutions¹. I have received intimations that some more friends are anxious to take part in the discussion. But I have told them to excuse me I do not feel anything more needs to be known about the resolution.

A friend refers to the Board mentioned in the resolution and wants to know the names of the personnel. There are two things mentioned. If the Board appointed by the Unity Conference does not do its work, it can be replaced by another Board. I forget all the names that comprise the Board of the Unity Committee; you will see them in the newspapers. I am there, Shaukat Ali is there and some other Muslim brethren. I do not want to leave it either. I think the Board that has been appointed will collect testimony in regard to the happenings at Kohat. Only when it arrives in Rawalpindi can it be known as to what it is possible to do and what it is not. Whatever can be done will of course be done. Those of you who support the resolution may duly raise their hands.²

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, p. 94

¹ The resolution moved by Motilal Nehru deplored the riots, the exodus of Hindus from Kohat and the failure of the local authority to give them protection. It also advised the people not to accept the finding of the Government of India but to suspend judgment till the Board appointed by the Unity Conference or some other representative body had enquired into the event and come to decision. The resolution expressed sympathy for the sufferers in Gulburga riots.

² The resolution was carried.

5. SPEECH ON RESOLUTION ON UNTOUCHABILITY, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

I call upon Mr. Bhopatkar to move the resolution on untouchability .

Before doing so, let me inform you that some Tamil friends have written to me asking that the resolutions might also be translated into Tamil. I am extremely sorry that I cannot possibly do that. There are 21 provinces to deal with and if we are to render each resolution into so many languages, it would really be not possible to get on. Up to now we have been adopting three languages: One is Hindi which everyone is expected to know ; the second is English; and the third is the vernacular of the province. We have not been able to reach that common medium, Hindustani, through which we can know each other, because we have always the South to obstruct the way. That is why we are using the vernacular of this province as well as English. But I would suggest for such cases that those who know English or Hindustani in the said province should take the trouble of explaining the resolutions passed here to their friends who do not know any of the languages here spoken.. . .¹

BROTHERS,

I am sorry to say that Panditji is not here at the moment. I had been asked—and I requested him to say something. He said, he did not want to say anything. Then again I was told that he would say a few words. But at this time he is not here.

Before I put this resolution to vote I must answer note that I have received. A friend asks if the resolution on removal of untouchability implies inter-dining and inter-marriage with the untouchables. There is nothing in the resolution suggesting this, but if this friend wants to know what I myself feel in the matter I will say that I have expressed my views in *Navajivan* and *Young India* —namely, that we should behave with those we consider untouchable as we behave with other castes.

¹ After some speakers had supported the resolution, the President called upon Madan Mohan Malaviya to speak. As he was absent, the President put the resolution to vote speaking in Hindi.

There was one hand raised against the resolution. The President declared it carried.

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 95 & 98

6. *SPEECH AT CONGRESS SESSION BELGAUM*¹

December 27, 1924

BROTHERS,

Before I move the next resolution I have an atonement to make. When the resolution on removal of untouchability was being moved, I had it in mind to present an untouchable brother before you. I had received a note saying an untouchable brother who was not a delegate wanted to say a few words. I had felt that even though he was not a delegate it would be good to permit him to speak as he was an untouchable. And so I had wanted to call him. But I forgot. The only way I now can atone for it is to apologize to him. Anyway, it is good that I remembered in time.

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 104-5

7. *SPEECH ON ANNIE BESANT'S STATEMENT, BELGAUM CONGRESS*

December 27, 1924

Now, before I proceed to the other resolutions I have to announce to you that Dr. Besant feels that she must make a statement before this House in connection with the resolution² we passed yesterday. I do not wish to anticipate what the illustrious lady has got to say. But I think I voice the feelings of this House when I tender my congratulations to her for gracing this *pandal* with her presence. Whether she and her devoted followers are able to remain in the Congress or not, I may hope that we will always have her sympathy and moral support with us. I now request Dr. Besant to make her statement

¹ Before permitting a *Panchama* boy to speak for two minutes

²*Vide* "Resolution on Calcutta Agreement and Spinning Franchise, Belgaum Congress, 26-12-1924.

FRIENDS,

You have heard the statement that Dr. Besant has made. You will not expect me to make any remarks upon that statement. Dr. Besant has not made the statement, as I know, in order that she may have reply just now. She has made that statement from a sense of duty so that her silence might not be construed into meaning that we had her assent to the resolution that we passed yesterday. But I hope I may give her the assurance of this Congress that all that she has said will command our respectful attention and that no stone will be left unturned by this Congress or Congressmen and Congresswomen to open the door wide, as wide as is humanly possible, for the entrance of every party that has the interest of India at heart and every party whose goal is swaraj for India. With these words I close this incident, repeating my request to Dr. Besant that whether she and other parties are able to join the Congress or not, the Congress will always expect her and every party's sympathy and support in anything and everything that may commend itself to their attention.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 105 & 107-8

8. RESOLUTIONS MOVED FROM THE CHAIR, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

The President next moved the following resolutions one by one and put each to vote and declared each carried. The resolutions were read by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in English, by Sjt. Mudvedkar in Kanarese, and by Pandit Sundar Lal in Hindi.

RESOLUTION X: NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The Congress is strongly of opinion that the hope of the future of the country lies in its youth and therefore trusts that the Provincial Committees will strive more vigorously than they have done to keep alive all national educational institutions. But whilst the Congress is of opinion that existing national educational institutions should be maintained and new ones opened, the Congress does not regard any such institution to be national which does not employ some Indian language as the medium of instruction, and which does not actively encourage Hindu-Muslim unity, education among untouchables and removal of untouchability; which does not make hand-spinning,

carding and training in physical culture and self-defence obligatory; and in which teachers and students over the age of 12 years do not spin for at least half an hour per working day and in which students and teachers do not habitually wear khaddar.

RESOLUTION XI: PAID NATIONAL SERVICE

Whereas it has been discovered that many otherwise deserving men are unobtainable for national service because of the reluctance to accept remuneration for service, the Congress places on record its opinion that there is not only nothing derogatory to one's dignity in accepting remuneration for national service, but the Congress hopes that patriotic young men and women will regard it as an honour to accept maintenance for service faithfully rendered and that those needing or those willing to service will prefer national to any other service.

RESOLUTION XII: CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION

In Article XI "Rs. 10" to be altered to "Re. 1".

In Article XXIII, add, after the first sentence ending with the word "Congress":

"The treasurers shall be in charge of the funds of the Congress and shall keep proper accounts of them. The general secretaries shall be in charge of the office of the All-India Congress Committee and shall be responsible for the publication of the report of the proceedings of the preceding session of the Congress and of any special session held in the course of the year, in co-operation with the Reception Committee. Such report shall be published as soon as possible and not later than four months after the session, and shall be offered for sale."

Add at the end of article XXIII: "and published along with the next Congress report."

RESOLUTION XIII: DRINK AND OPIUM TRAFFIC

The Congress notes with satisfaction that notwithstanding the set back suffered by the campaign against the use of intoxicating drinks and drugs initiated in 1921, Congress workers in several parts of the country have continued it with vigour and determination. The Congress hopes that the peaceful endeavours of workers to wean those who are addicted to the drink or the opium habit from the curse will receive further and greater strength and encouragement than hitherto.

The Congress is of opinion that the policy of the Government of India in using the drink and drug habit of the people as a source of revenue is detrimental to the moral welfare of the people of India and would therefore welcome its abolition.

The Congress is further of opinion that the regulation by the Government of India of the opium traffic is detrimental not only to the moral welfare of India but of the whole world, and that the cultivation of opium in India which is out of all proportion to medical and scientific requirements should be restricted to such requirements.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 115-6 & 118

9. SPEECH ON RESOLUTION ON OFFICE-BEARERS,¹ BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

There are now only two things remaining—things that we always have to do, namely, the election of general secretaries and a treasurer and deciding on the venue for the next Congress. It will be desirable to leave this to the All-India Congress Committee, as was done last year. The treasurer is the same. The general secretaries will be: first, Pandit Jawaharlal; second, Qureshi; and third, Mr. Bharucha. Previously Dr. Kitchlew was there and Babu Rajendra Prasad was approached. Babu Rajendra Prasad has to attend to many kinds of activities and he cannot give all his time to our work. So the question of two new secretaries has come up. There was a great deal of discussion in the Subjects Committee on the matter yesterday and I had talks with the delegates. It was decided in the end that since I shall be the President of the Congress for this year and the next year, secretaries should be appointed from among the people who can help me in my work. A number of Swarajists and No-changers are there. How would it be to take them into the Working Committee? I also liked the idea—and I am willing to take into the Working Committee not one but all of them, but on one condition, namely, that they understand it clearly that there is only one national programme, that removal of untouchability, charkha, prohibition form one single programme. I had said that if there be any Swarajist as staunchly believing in khadi as I do I

¹ The resolution was later put to vote and carried.

should like to take him, for through him I should reform all the Swarajists. The moment they come and work with me we become united, that is if we wish to unite.

Thus the discussion went on. No one came in view.

The two persons suggested are not necessarily No-changers. I know a little bit about them which I should like to tell you. I know Shwaib Qureshi. He is an orthodox Muslim. But I have not taken him because of that. I want to take full-time work from secretaries. I therefore told Maulana Shaukat Ali that if Shwaib Sahib would be willing to give me all his time I would like to have him. He agreed. He is the kind of man who, once he makes a promise, carries out that promise. He has a love for khadi, this also I know.

Bharucha is a crank. I am a crank too. So we shall get on splendidly. I shall have to learn from him to carry bundles of khadi on my shoulder and go hawking. He has become a specialist in this. It is his wish to see khadi reach every part of the country. Not one but hundreds of Bharuchas are required thus to sell khadi. Bharucha went to Lala Harkishen Lal, he went to others, and gave them khadi. Even if people swear at him, he does not mind it. The secretaries we need today should be such that they will sell khadi even if they are abused. They should be able to put up with any kind of insult for the sake of khadi. I have therefore selected these two. But though I have done my selection the final say is yours. The Subjects Committee has of course agreed. But the constitution of the Congress requires that you express your opinion. Those of you who accept these names should come out with their opinion. About the treasurer nothing needs to be said. You say if you like the man.

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 116-7

10. SPEECH ANNOUNCING RESULTS OF SPINNING COMPETITION, BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

Now there is something I am going to say to you. There is something to be announced. You know there has been a spinning competition. Some friends gave gold medals to be awarded, some silver medals. In all, eleven such medals have been awarded. I am going to explain to you who gave these eleven medals and to whom

they have been awarded. Mr. Satyanarayan Sinha from Bihar has been awarded a first-class medal. Six medals were given by Gangaji who is from Sydney. Mr. Satyanarayan Sinha spun 765 yards of yarn in an hour. It is a matter of great credit.

The second medal went to Andhra. Koru Kandhawekamba got it. The third also went to an Andhra man, Mr. Srinivasachari. The fourth went to Madhu Gulabi Amba of Tamilnad and the sixth¹ to Minakshi Sundaram. The seventh to Mrs. Taramati Arunnisa, the eighth to Ramakrishna Sastri, the ninth to Ramdev Thakur, the tenth to Subhan Ali and the eleventh to Lakshmibai Anta of Andhra.

I am sorry to see that only one Muslim brother has secured a medal. There was a time when Muslim women spun the finest yarn. But we also notice that out of eleven medals, four have gone to our sisters and the rest to our brothers. A friend writes to say that he wants to shake hands with the untouchable brother who spoke here. He is a delegate from Delhi. He may have the meeting he desires. The students meeting still be at 8 o'clock and the All-India Congress Committee will meet at 11 o'clock. It has been suggested that among the departed leaders Maulana Sir Sahib should also be mentioned. I asked Maulana Mahomed Ali. It seems he did not die so recently. He died on the eve of the Cocanada Congress—just a day earlier. It is the duty of all present to mourn for him. And now we are through.

[From Hindi]

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, p. 118

11. CONCLUDING SPEECH AT BELGAUM CONGRESS

December 27, 1924

In bringing the proceedings of the session to a close, the President delivered a most impassioned address, first in Hindi and then in English . . .

BROTHERS,

I now wish to tell you that whatever gratitude I may feel for you will be wholly inadequate. I do not think any president can expect a greater amount of love than you have shown me. You willingly did all the work that I wanted you to do for me. When I bid you observe silence, you observed silence. You listened to any speech I wanted to

¹ The fifth name is missing in the source.

make. You wanted me to deliver a written oration. When I wanted to be excused, you did not press. And just as you expressed your opinions here quietly, without being noisy, in the Subjects Committee also there was no disturbance. In fact there might have been disturbance when the bomb of the charkha was dropped in your midst, but you raised no objection and in the Subjects Committee also behaved with perfect decorum. I feel this kindness of my brethren to me must be the result of some good deed I may have done in an earlier life. It is my wish that the kindness you have shown towards me, you should show towards India, for if I wish to live it is only for India and if I wish to die, it is also only for India. Not a leaf stirs without God's will. But every man has a right to ask of God just as a child asks of his father what he wants. I have seen that He even grants what I ask Him. What God has willed cannot be otherwise.

I therefore appeal to you, brothers, to gird up your loins for the service of India and stick to the pledge you have taken. I know I took the chair here as President and all of you gave me your love. I desire, naturally, that everyone should praise me, but it does not lead to any achievement. The achievement will come when all of you act as you have pledged. I do not believe that all these tasks are beyond our strength—the third task or the fourth or fifth—none of them.

Listening to the speech of Bhopatkar gave me a pleasant surprise. He demanded if we wanted the destruction of Hinduism that we treat men as untouchables. I was very pleased. And three shastris have just told you that there is no sanction in Hinduism for untouchability as it is practised. Is it the same thing as when we say that Hindus and Muslims should not treat one another as enemies but as brothers? Did you not hear what Shaukat Ali said? What did Lajpat Rai say? Zafar Ali Khan raised an objection. I do not see anything to object to, but he is not an enemy of India. You should treat no one as enemy. The urge in your heart should be to make a brother of an enemy.

Lalaji has invoked a principle, namely, that the question is of the human species as a whole. It is not confined to any particular religion. He said if a Hindu became mad, should not a Mussalman swear at him? If Mussalmans abused Ramachandra and Krishna should not Hindus abuse the Prophet? If you cannot decide this matter by forgiving, go to a court or a panchayat. I am a non-co-operator, but if a Mussalman abuses Lord Krishna I will say, "Go to a court, but do not fight. There is nothing in this to fight over." It does not require

much time to accept this principle. There should be a fever in us for swaraj, our hearts should burn for it. When Bhopatkar was speaking I thought of Lokamanya. He was the genius of swaraj. A remarkable thing I heard about him is that when his wife lay dying he was busy in his work for swaraj. If such volcanoes are created in our hearts we can do the third thing, the fourth thing and everything else. That you should wear khadi when you come to Congress is nothing big. That we should give up wearing foreign-cloth is nothing big. Today I do not talk about burning foreign-cloth. I am today not the man who in 1921 had caused foreign cloth to be burnt. But we have left peaceful ways. If even today we can bring about complete peace I can again take up what we did in 1921. Under the pretext of burning foreign-cloth we heaped stones to throw at people.

I know we cannot simultaneously do both: invoke truth and practise untruth. If we invoke truth we must not practise untruth, or our bodies will burn up. It burns my heart certainly. I cannot bear it if someone falsely swears by God or takes false pledges. Abuse me by all means, beat me, kick me with shoes, spit at me, I give you my word that I shall not get angry. But take a pledge and not act on it and anger will burn away my whole body. I should wish to die if a woman who is unchaste should parade her chastity in front of me. I should wish to die, again, if a man who is impure should parade his purity in front of me. I should not wish to witness it. If you want that the love you have shown me, the kindness you have done me in placing the mantle of responsibility on me, should continue, you should understand this well; keep me in this position if you want to. But it will be even better if the Swarajists and No-changers should walk in unison, As Dr. Besant said, one single stick, by itself, easily breaks, but in a bundle it is very strong.

Let us not think that the Swarajists are bad people. To a pure heart all hearts are pure. What are the qualities of the soul? The soul is like marble. Shankaracharya has said that blemishes are not native to it. Blemishes are *maya*¹. If your heart acquires strength, you will be able to remove blemishes from others without thinking evil of them. If treachery is the reward of trust, will the man who trusts come to harm? Only the one who commits treachery will come to harm. If I say to Jawaharlal that he is more than a son to me and if I say it only to take some work from him, it is deception. Who am I to venerate

¹ Cosmic illusion

Jawaharlal? The world will venerate him, shower flowers on him.

Today I have to say—not to the one alone or the other alone but to both: During this one year work so hard that our strength should be increased and we should be able to feel that swaraj is at last within our reach.

Addressing next in English the President said

I have just poured out my heart to you in my Hindi speech. It is impossible for me to reproduce what I have said in Hindi. One thing however I want to say. I do not think that any chairman, any president, could possibly claim greater courtesy, greater attention and greater affection than you the delegates have extended to me. I assure you that it has been the greatest delight to me to preside over your deliberations here in the Congress and in the Subjects Committee. Every one of you have readily responded to every call that I have made upon you. I know that I have put a heavy strain upon you. I have not walked you. I know I have run you. But what can I do? You are impatient and I am impatient. We want to march towards swaraj and our march for swaraj has got to be, not at a snail's pace, but a double quick march; and if we do want to work and march forward, I cannot afford to waste a single minute of your time and my time. Therefore, I have put on speed to the best of my ability and it has been a wonder to me—it has given to me the greatest satisfaction that you have so readily responded to me, so nobly! And you have not done this thing charity but with a magnificent generosity. No one could have possibly claimed more, asked for more, and got more. You have given me all that I could possibly ask of you.

But what I now want to ask you for, is something more, something better, something richer, and that is this: Transfer all this noble affection, all this generosity that you have shown to me to the thing that you and I hold dear, to the thing that alone binds you and me together and that is swaraj. If we want swaraj, we must know the conditions of swaraj. You have endorsed the conditions in the resolutions. Every one of you known those conditions. Do not leave these conditions here. Take them away with you and fulfil them to the letter and to the spirit and insist upon others to fulfil those conditions, not by force but by love. Exert all the influence and all the pressure which love can exert, upon everyone that surrounds you and upon your neighbours. Go throughout your district and spread this message of khaddar, spread this message of Hindu-Muslim unity and spread this

message against¹ untouchability. Go hand in hand with the youngsters of the country and make them the real soldiers of swaraj.

But you will not do it if the Swarajists and No-changers still bear malice against each other, if they still have jealousies against one another. It will be possible only if you bury hatred, leave all the jealousies and anger, all those bad influences here. I ask you to bury the hatchet. Bury the jealousies underground and cremate them wherever you like. But take away the sacred resolution that you have passed and say, "Let the heavens fall, but the bond that binds us today, the tie that has bound the Swarajists and the No-changers, shall never snap." My work is finished.

Scarcely had the President got down the rostrum when he was reminded of the duty of the Congress to thank the Reception Committee, and he re-entered the rostrum and said:

I would not have forgiven myself if I had not tendered my thanks to the noble volunteers trained by Dr. Hardikar and to the members of the Reception Committee. But in the mad passion for swaraj I forgot all about the volunteers and the members of the Reception Committee.

I know that they have not served in order to receive thanks. The noble service that they have rendered is its own reward. But it was due from me and I would have been guilty of a breach of duty to you if I had not returned thanks to all of you. May God bless all the volunteers and the members of the Reception Committee.

Report of the Thirty-ninth Indian National Congress, 1924, pp. 119-22

12. SPEECH AT UNTOUCHABILITY CONFERENCE, BELGAUM

[December 27, 1924]

The following is a free rendering of Mr. Gandhi's speech at the Untouchability Conference held at Belgaum during the Congress week:

FRIENDS,

It was hardly necessary to ask me to express my views on the subject of untouchability. I have declared times without number from various public platforms that it is the prayer of my heart that if I

¹ The source has "of".

should fail to obtain *moksha* in this very birth I might be born a *Bhangi* in my next. I believe in *varnashrama* both according to birth and to karma. But I do not regard *Bhangis* as in any sense a low order. On the contrary I know many *Bhangis* who are worthy of reverence. On the other hand there are Brahmins going about whom it would be very difficult to regard with any reverence. Holding these views, therefore, if there is a rebirth in store for me, I wish to be born a pariah in the midst of pariahs, because thereby I would be able to render more effective service to them and also be in a better position to plead with other communities on their behalf.

But just as I do not want the so-called touchables to despise the untouchables, so also I do not want the latter to entertain any feeling of hatred and ill-will towards the former. I do not want them to wrest their rights by violence as is done in the West. The trend of world opinion is against such violence. I can clearly see a time coming in the world when it will be impossible to secure rights by arbitrament of force, so I tell my untouchable brethren today as I tell the Government, that if they resort to force for the attainment of their purpose, they shall certainly fail.

I want to uplift Hinduism. I regard the untouchables as an integral part of the Hindu community. I am pained when I see a single *Bhangi* driven out of the fold of Hinduism. But do not believe that all class distinctions can be obliterated. I believe in the doctrine of equality as taught by Lord Krishna in the *Gita*. The *Gita* teaches us that members of all the four castes should be treated on an equal basis. It does not prescribe the same dharma for the Brahmin as for the *Bhangi*. But it insists that the latter shall be entitled to the same measure of consideration and esteem as the former with all his superior learning. It is therefore our duty to see that the untouchables do not feel that they are despised or looked down upon. Let them not be offered leavings from our plates for their subsistence. How can I accord differential treatment to any person, be he Brahmin or *Bhangi*, who worships the same God and keeps his body and soul pure and clean? I for one would regard myself as having sinned if I gave to a *Bhangi* unclean food from the leavings from the kitchen or failed to render him personal assistance when he was in need.

Let me make my position absolutely clear. While I do hold that the institution of untouchability as it stands today has no sanction in Hinduism, Hinduism does recognize "untouchability" in a limited

sense and under certain circumstances. For instance, every time that my mother handled unclean things she became untouchable for the time being and had to cleanse herself by bathing. As a *Vaishnava* I refuse to believe that anyone can be regarded untouchable by reason of his or her birth, and such untouchability as is recognized by religion is by its very nature transitory, easily removable and referable to the deed not the doer. Not only that. Just as we revere our mother for the sanitary service that she renders us when we are infants, and the greater her service the greater is our reverence for her, similarly the *Bhangis* are entitled to our highest reverence for the sanitary service they perform for society.

Now another point. I do not regard inter-dining and inter-marriage as essential to the removal of untouchability. I believe in *varnashrama* dharma. But I eat with *Bhangis*. I do not know whether I am a sannyasi, for it seriously doubts whether in this *Kaliyuga* it is at all possible for anyone to fulfil the conditions prescribed for a sannyasi. But I am moving deliberately in the direction of *sannyasa*. It is, therefore, not only not necessary for me to observe these restrictions but their observance may be even harmful for me. As regards the question of inter-marriage, it does not arise in cases like mine. Sufficient for me to say that my scheme does not include inter-marriage. Let me tell you that in my own clan all the members do not inter-dine. In certain cases among our *Vaishnava* families they do not use each other's utensils or even cook food on fire fetched from others' kitchens. You may call this practice superstitious, but I do not regard it as such. It certainly does no harm to Hinduism. In my Ashram, Dudhabhai, one of the untouchable inmates, dines with the rest without any distinction. But I do not recommend anybody outside the Ashram to follow this example. Again, you know the esteem in which I hold Malaviyaji. I would wash his feet. But he would not take food touched by me. Am I to resent it as a mark of contempt? Certainly not, because I know that no contempt is meant.

The religion to which I belong prescribes for our observance *maryada*¹ *dharma*. The *rishis* of old carried on exhaustive researches through meditation, and as a result of the researches they discovered some great truths, such as have no parallel perhaps in any other religion. One of these was that they regarded certain kinds of foods as injurious for the spiritual well-being of man. So they interdicted their

¹ Bounds or limits.

use. Now suppose someone had to travel abroad and live among strange people with different customs and standards as regard their diet. Knowing as they did how compelling sometimes the force of social customs of the people among whom men lived was, they promulgated *maryada dharma* to help one in such emergencies. Though, however, I believe in *maryada dharma*, I do not regard it as an essential part of Hinduism. I can even conceive a time when these restrictions might be abolished with impunity. But the reform contemplated in the untouchability movement does not obliterate the restriction as to inter-dining and inter-marriage. I cannot recommend wholesale abolition of these restrictions to the public, even at the risk of being charged with hypocrisy and inconsistency. For instance, I let my son dine freely in Mussalman households because I believe he can take sufficient care as to what to take and what not to take. I myself have no scruples in taking my food in Mussalman households because I have my own strict rules about my diet. Let me tell you of an incident that happened at Aligarh. Swami Satyadev and I were Khawaja Sahib's guests. Swami Satyadev did not share my views. We argued about them. I told him that holding the views I did, it would be as wrong of me to refuse to partake of the food offered by a Mussalman as it would be on his part to transgress his *maryada*. So Swami Satyadev was provided with separate cooking arrangements. Similarly when I was Bari Sahib's guest he provided us with a Brahmin cook with strict instructions to obtain all the rations for us fresh from the bazaar. When asked why he put himself to such inconvenience he explained that he did so because he wanted to avoid the slightest possibility of suspicion on the part of the public that he entertained any secret designs of proselytization against me or my companions. That single incident raised Bari Sahib in my esteem. He sometimes commits mistakes, but he is as simple and innocent as a child. And although sometimes people complain of him to me bitterly, my first impression of him still remains.

I have dwelt on this point at such great length, because I want to be absolutely plain with you (untouchables). I do not want to employ diplomacy in my dealings with you or for that matter with anyone. I do not want to keep you under any false illusion or win your support by holding out temptations. I want to remove untouchability because its removal is essential for swaraj and I want swaraj. But I would not exploit you for gaining any political ends of mine. The issue with me is bigger even than swaraj. I am anxious to see an end put to

untouchability because for me it is an expiation and a penance. It is not the untouchables whose *shuddhi* I effect—the thing would be absurd—but my own and that of the Hindu religion. Hinduism has committed a great sin in giving sanction to this evil and I am anxious— if such a thing as vicarious penance is possible—to purify it of that sin by expiating for it in my own person.

That being so, it follows that the only means open to me for my purpose are those of ahimsa and truth. I have adopted an untouchable child as my own. I confess I have not been able to convert my wife completely to my view. She cannot bring herself to love her as I do. But I cannot convert my wife by anger; I can do so only by love. If any of my people have done you any wrong, I ask your forgiveness for it. Some members of the untouchable class said when I was at Poona that they would resort to force if the Hindus did not alter their attitude towards them. Can untouchability be removed by force? Can the amelioration of the untouchables come through these methods? The only way by which you and I can wean orthodox Hindus from their bigotry is by patient argument and correct conduct. So long as they are not converted, I can only ask you to put up with your lot with patience. I am willing to stand by you and share your sufferings with you. You must have the right of worship in any temple in which members of other castes are admitted. You must have admission to schools along with the children of other castes without any distinction. You must be eligible to the highest office in the land not excluding even that of the Viceroy's. That is my definition of the removal of untouchability.

But I can help you in this only by following the way indicated by my religion and not by following Western methods. For that way I cannot save Hinduism. Yours is a sacred cause. Can one serve a sacred cause by adopting Satan's methods? I pray you, therefore, to dismiss from your mind the idea of ameliorating your condition by brute force. The *Gita* tells us that by sincerely meditating on the Lord in one's heart, one can attain *moksha*. Meditation is waiting on God. If waiting on God brings the highest bliss of salvation, how much quicker must it bring removal of untouchability? Waiting on God means increasing purity. Let us by prayer purify ourselves and we shall not only remove untouchability but shall also hasten the advent of swaraj.

Young India, 22-1-1925

13. PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT COW-PROTECTION CONFERENCE, BELGAUM

[December 28, 1924]

The following is the substance of Mr. Gandhi's presidential speech at the Cow-Protection Conference held during the congress week at Belgaum:

I hold the question of cow-protection to be not less momentous but in certain respects even of far greater moment than that of swaraj. I would even go so far as to say that just as so long as Hindu-Muslim unity is not effected, Hinduism not purged of the taint of untouchability and the wearing of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar does not become universal, swaraj would be impossible of attainment; even so, the term "swaraj" would be devoid of all meaning so long as we have not found out a way of saving the cow, for that is the touchstone on which Hinduism must be tested and proved before there can be any real swaraj in India. I claim to be a *sanatani* Hindu. People may laugh and say that to call myself a *sanatani* Hindu when I eat and drink from the hands of Mussalmans and Christians, keep an untouchable girl in my house as my daughter and do not even hesitate to quote the Bible, is nothing short of doing violence to language. But I would still adhere to my claim, for I have faith in me which tells me that a day would come—may be most probably after I am dead and no longer present in this world in the flesh to bear witness—when my critics would recognize their error and admit the justness of my claim. Pretty long while ago, I once wrote in *Young India* an article on Hinduism,¹ which I consider to be one of my most thoughtful writings on the subject. The definition of Hinduism which I gave in it is probably the clearest that I have ever given. After defining a Hindu as one who believed in the Vedas and Upanishads, recited the *Gayatri* and subscribed to the doctrine of rebirth and transmigration, etc., I added that so far as the popular notion of Hinduism was concerned, its distinguishing feature was belief in cow-protection and reverence for the cow. I do not grant to be told as to what Hindus ten thousand years ago did. I know there are scholars who tell us that cow-sacrifice is mentioned in the Vedas. I remember when I was a high school student we read a sentence in our Sanskrit text-book to the effect that the Brahmins of old used to eat beef. That exercised my mind greatly and I used to wonder and ask myself whether what was written could

¹ *Vide* "Hinduism", October 6, 1921.

be after all true. But as I grew up the conviction slowly forced itself upon me that even if the text on which these statements were based was actually part of the Vedas, the interpretation put upon it could not be correct. I had conceived of another way out of the difficulty. This was purely for personal satisfaction. "If the Vedic text under reference was incapable of bearing any other interpretation than the literal", I said to myself, "the Brahmins who there alleged to be eating beef had the power to bring the slaughtered animals back to life again." But that is neither here nor there. The speculation does not concern the general mass of the Hindus. I do not claim to be a Vedic scholar. I have read Sanskrit scriptures largely in translation. A layman like myself, therefore, can hardly have any *locus standi* in a controversy like this. But I have confidence in myself. Therefore I do not hesitate to freely express to others my opinions based on my inner experience. It may be that we may not be all able to agree as to the exact meaning and significance of cow-protection. For Hinduism does not rest on the authority of one book or one prophet; nor does it possess a common creed—like the *Kalma*¹ of Islam—acceptable to all. That renders a common definition of Hinduism a bit difficult, but therein lies its strength also. For, it is this special feature that has given to Hinduism its inclusive and assimilative character and made its gradual, silent evolution possible. Go to any Hindu child and he would tell you that cow-protection is the supreme duty of every Hindu and that anyone who does not believe in it hardly deserves the name of a Hindu.

But while I am a firm believer in the necessity and importance of cow-protection, I do not at all endorse the current methods adopted for that purpose. Some of the practices followed in the name of cow-protection cause me extreme anguish. My heart aches within me. Several year ago I wrote in *Hind Swaraj* that our cow-protection societies were in fact so many cow-killing societies.² Since then and after my return to India in 1915, that conviction of mine has grown stronger and firmer every day. Holding the views that I do, therefore, I have naturally fit a great hesitation in accepting the Presidentship of this Conference. Would it be proper for me to preside over this

¹ The creed of Islam as expressed in the verse from The Koran: "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His apostle."

² *Vide* "Hind Swaraj - Chapter X : The Condition of India (Continued) : The Hindus and the Mahomedans", November 22, 1909.

Conference under these circumstances? Would I at all succeed in convincing you of the soundness of my views—radically different as they are from the commonly accepted notions on this subject? These were the questions that filled my mind. But Mr. Gangadharrao Deshpande wired to me that I might preside over the Conference on my terms, that Sjt. Chikodi was familiar with my views on the matter and was at one with me to a very large extent. So much by way of personal explanation.

Once, while in Champaran, I was asked to expound my views regarding cow-protection. I told my Champaran friends then that if anybody was really anxious to save the cow, he ought once for all to disabuse his mind of the notion that he had to make the Christians and Mussalmans to desist from cow-killing. Unfortunately today we seem to believe that the problem of cow-protection consists merely in preventing non-Hindus, especially Mussalmans from beef-eating and cow-killing. That seems to me to be absurd. Let no one, however, conclude from this that I am indifferent when a non-Hindu kills a cow or that I can bear the practice of cow-killing. On the contrary, no one probably experiences a greater agony of the soul when a cow is killed. But what am I to do? Am I to fulfil my dharma myself or am I to get it fulfilled by proxy? Of what avail would be my preaching *brahmacharya* to others if I am at the same time steeped in vice myself? How can I ask Mussalmans to desist from eating beef when I eat it myself? But supposing even that I myself do not kill the cow, is it any part of my duty to make the Mussalman, against his will, to do likewise? Mussalmans claim that Islam permits them to kill the cow. To make a Mussalman, therefore, to abstain from cow-killing under compulsion would amount in my opinion to converting him to Hinduism by force. Even in India under swaraj, in my opinion, it would be for a Hindu majority unwise and improper to coerce by legislation a Mussalman minority into submission to statutory prohibition of cow-slaughter. When I pledge myself to save the cow, I do not mean merely the Indian cow, but the cow all the world over. My religion teaches me that I should by my personal conduct instill into the minds of those who might hold different views, the conviction that cow-killing is a sin and that therefore it ought to be abandoned. My ambition is no less than to see the principle of cow-protection established throughout the world. But that requires that I should set my own house thoroughly in order first.

Let alone other provinces. Would you believe me if I told you that the Hindus of Gujarat practice cow-killing? You will wonder but let me tell you that in Gujarat the bullocks employed for drawing carts are goaded with spiked rods till blood oozes from their bruised backs. You may say that this is not cow-killing but bullock-killing. But I see no difference between the two, the killing of the cow and killing her male progeny. Again you may say that this practice may be abominable and worthy of condemnation but it hardly amounts to killing. But here, again, I beg to differ. If the bullock in question had a tongue to speak and were asked which fate he prepared—instantaneous death under the butcher's knife or the long-drawn agony to which he is subjected, he would undoubtedly prefer the former. At Calcutta a Sindhi gentleman used to meet me often. He used always to tell me stories about the cruelty that was practised by milk-men on cows in Calcutta. He asked me to see for myself the process of milking the cows as carried on in the dairies. The practice of blowing is loathsome. The people who do this are Hindus. Again, nowhere in the world is the condition of cattle so poor as in India. Nowhere in the world would you find such skeletons of cows and bullocks as you do in our cow-worshipping India. Nowhere are bullocks worked so beyond their capacity as here. I contend that so long as these things continue, we have no right to ask anybody to stop cow-killing. In *Bhagavata*, in one place the illustrious author describes the various things which have been the cause of India's downfall. One of the causes mentioned is that we have given up cow-protection. Today I want to bring home to you if I can the close relation which exists between the present poverty-stricken condition of India and our failure to protect the cow. We, who live in cities, probably can have no idea of the extent of the poverty of our poor folk. Millions upon millions cannot afford to have two full meals per day. Some live on rotten rice only. There are others for whom salt and chillies are the only table luxuries. Is it not a just nemesis for our belying of our religion?

Then in India we have the system of *pinjrapoles*¹. The way in which most of these are managed is far from satisfactory. And yet, I am sorry to observe that the people who are mostly responsible for them are Jains, who are out and out believers in ahimsa. Well organized, these *pinjrapoles* ought to be flourishing dairies supplying

¹ Shelters for crippled and aged cattle

pure good milk at a cheap rate to the poor. I am told however that even in a rich city like Ahmedabad there are cases of the wives of labourers feeding their babies on flour dissolved in water. There cannot be a sadder commentary on the way in which we protect the cow than that in a country which has such an extensive system of *pinjrapoles*, the poor should experience a famine of pure, good milk. That I hope will serve to explain to you how our failure to protect the cow at one end of the chain results in our skin and bone starvelings at the other.

If, therefore, I am asked how to save the cow, my first advice will be: "Dismiss from your minds the Mussalmans and Christians altogether and mind your duty first." I have been telling Maulana Shaukat Ali all along that I was helping him to save his cow, i.e., the Khilafat, because I hoped to save my cow thereby. I am prepared to place my life in the hands of the Mussalmans, to live merely on their sufferance. Why? Simply that I might be able to protect the cow. I hope to achieve the end not by entering into a bargain with the Mussalmans but by bringing about a change of heart in them. So long as this is not done I hold my soul in patience. For I have not a shadow of doubt in my mind that such a change of heart can be brought about only by our own correct conduct towards them and by our personal example.

Cow-slaughter and man-slaughter are in my opinion the two sides of the same coin. And the remedy for both is identical, i.e., that we develop the ahimsa principle and endeavour to win over our opponents by love. The test of love is *tapasya* and *tapasya* means suffering. I offered to share with the Mussalmans their suffering to the best of my capacity not merely because I wanted their co-operation for winning swaraj but also because I had in mind the object of saving the cow. The Koran, so far as I have been able to understand it, declares it to be a sin to take the life of any living being without cause. I want to develop the capacity to convince the Mussalmans that to kill the cow is practically to kill their fellow-countrymen and friends—the Hindus. The Koran says that there can be no heaven for one who sheds the blood of an innocent neighbour. Therefore I am anxious to establish the best neighbourly relations with the Mussalmans. I scrupulously avoid doing anything that might hurt their feelings. I even try to respect their prejudices. But I do this not in a spirit of bargain, I ask them for no reward. For that I look to God only. My *Gita* tells me that evil can never result from a good action. Therefore I

must help the Mussalmans from a pure sense of duty—without making any terms with them. For more cows are killed today for the sake of Englishmen in India than for the Mussalmans. I want to convert the former also. I would like to convince them that whilst they are in our midst their duty lies in getting rid of their Western culture to the extent that it comes in conflict with ours. You will thus see that even our self-interest requires us to observe ahimsa. By ahimsa we will be able to save the cow and also to win the friendship of the English. I want to purchase the friendship of all by sacrifice. But if I do not approach the English on bent knees, as I do the Mussalmans, that is because the former are intoxicated with power. The Mussalman is a fellow-sufferer in slavery. We can therefore speak to him as a friend and a comrade. The Englishman on the contrary is unable to appreciate our friendly advances. He would spurn them. He does not care for our friendship, he wants to patronize us. We want neither his insults nor his patronage. We therefore let him alone. Our Shastras have laid down that charity should be given only to a deserving person, that knowledge should be imparted only to one who is desirous of having it. So we content ourselves with non-co-operating with our rulers—not out of hatred but in a spirit of love. It was because love was the motive force behind non-co-operation that I advised suspension of civil disobedience when violence broke out in Bombay and Chauri Chaura. I wanted to make it clear to Englishmen that I wanted to win swaraj not by shedding their blood but by making them feel absolutely at ease as regards the safety of their persons. What profit would it be if I succeed in saving a few cows from death by using force against persons who do not regard cow-killing as sinful? Cow-protection then can only be secured by cultivating universal friendliness, i.e., ahimsa. Now you will understand why I regard the question of cow-protection as greater even than that of swaraj. The fact is that the capacity to achieve the former will suffice for the latter purpose as well.

So far I have confined myself to the grosser or material aspect of cow-protection, i.e., the aspect that refers to the animal cow only. In its finer or spiritual sense the term cow-protection means the protection of every living creature. Today the world does not fully realize the force and possibilities that lie hidden in ahimsa. The scriptures of Christians, Mussalmans and Hindus are all replete with the teaching of ahimsa. But we do not know its full import. The *rishis* of old performed terrible penances and austerities to discover the right

meaning of sacred texts. Today we have at least two interpretations of the *Gayatri*. Which one of them is correct, that of the *sanatanis* or that of the Arya Samajists? Who can say? But our *rishis* made the startling discovery (and every day I feel more and more convinced of its truth) that sacred texts and inspired writings yield their truth only in proportion as one has advanced in the practice of ahimsa and truth. The greater the realization of truth and ahimsa, the greater the illumination. These same *rishis* declared that cow-protection was the supreme duty of a Hindu and that its performance brought one *moksha*, i.e., salvation. Now I am not ready to believe that by merely protecting the animal cow, one can attain *moksha*. For *moksha* one must completely get rid of one's lower feelings like attachment, hatred, anger, jealousy, etc. It follows, therefore, that the meaning of cow-protection in terms of *moksha* must be much wider and far more comprehensive than is commonly supposed. The cow-protection which can bring one *moksha* must, from its very nature, include the protection of everything that feels. Therefore in my opinion, every little breach of the ahimsa principle, like causing hurt by harsh speech to anyone, man, woman or child, to cause pain to the weakest and the most insignificant creature on earth would be a breach of the principle of cow-protection, would be tantamount to the sin of beef-eating—differing from it in degree, if at all, rather than in kind. That being so, I hold that with all our passions let loose we cannot today claim to be following the principle of cow-protection.

At Lahore I met Lala Dhanpatrai, somewhat of a crank like myself. He told me that if I wanted to save the cow I should wean the Hindus from their false notions. He said, it was Hindus who sold cows to the Mussalman butcher and but for them the latter would have no cows to kill. The reason for this practice he told me was economical. The village commons that served as grazing grounds for the cattle had been enclosed by the Government and so people could not afford to keep cows. He suggested a way out of the difficulty. It was no longer necessary, he told me to sell cows that had ceased to give milk. He himself, he said, had tried the experiment of buying such cows. He then put them to the plough. After some time, if proper care was taken, they put on flesh and became fit to bear again. I cannot vouch for the truth of this statement. But I see no reason why this practice should not be generally adopted if the facts are as stated by Lala Dhanpatrai. Our Shastras certainly have nowhere said that under no circumstances should the cow not be used for draught purposes. If we

feed the cow properly, tend it carefully and then use her for drawing carts or working the ploughs always taking care not to tax her beyond her capacity, there can be nothing wrong in it. I therefore commend the suggestion for consideration and adoption if it is found to be workable. We may not look down upon a person if he tries to protect the cow in this manner.

Young India, 29-1-1925

14. SPEECH AT ALL-INDIA STATES CONFERENCE, BELGAUM¹

[December 30, 1924]

I am overwhelmed with the affection which is shown to me by all during the past few days. Today the president of your Conference in adjourning the address to give me an opportunity to speak a few words to you has given further proof of it. You may know that I was born in an Indian village. I know Kathiawar States. My relations with them are cordial. Though I say little I am always watching the activities in the Indian States. In my Presidential Address I have made a reference to the Indian States. The All Parties Conference that met recently in Bombay has appointed a committee to draft a scheme of swaraj and in my address I have outlined my ideas of the coming swaraj. I had to condense my ideas in the shortest space possible and so I could give very few sentences to the Indian States. There are some *vakil* friends of mine who have something to say about this reference of mine to the Indian States. They are saying that I have spoken about the status of Indian princes and chiefs and nothing about their obligations towards their subjects. But I need not remind these friends of mine that rights always carry with them corresponding obligations. In my scheme of Indian swaraj there is no idea of destroying the States. I wanted to bring out this view prominently before the public. If, however, subjects from Indian States migrated to British Indian territory owing to the oppression of any Indian Prince, the swaraj government will on no account hand over these people to the mercies of the Prince concerned. This guarantee to the subject and the guarantee to the Princes about their status postulate good government

¹ President over by N. C. Kelkar. As Gandhiji had to leave immediately, the president requested him to say a few words.

in the Indian States.

In geometry there are certain postulates. So also there are some in the political science. When the Princes are guaranteed their status it is presumed that they will also guarantee progressive and enlightened government to their subjects. I am shortly to preside over the Kathiawar States Conference at Bhavnagar and I have reserved all my detailed say about the Indian States for this occasion. I was invited to preside over this Conference long ago. But before my incarceration I had unfurled the banner of satyagraha and I thought that my acceptance of the presidentship of any of these conferences might jeopardize the position of the Chiefs. I did not wish to put them in an awkward position and thus to mar the harmonious relations which existed between them and me. You know that I am an out-and-out believer in non-violence. To embitter the sweet relations between Princes and their subjects would be contrary to my principles. But I need not assure you that I can never forget the people of these States and their legitimate claims. My desire is to maintain sweet reasonableness in my handling the question of Indian States and I do not wish to prejudice any party. My sole desire is that the status of Princes and the rights of their subjects should be respected. I earnestly wish to enlist the sympathies of the Princes in this propaganda of khadi and the Charkha. I have pinned my faith to the spinning-wheel. On it I believe the salvation of this country depends.

After the Mahatma left, Mr. Kelkar gave a summary of his speech in Marathi . .

The Bombay Chronicle, 2-1-1925

15. LETTER TO MADELEINE SLADE

ON THE TRAIN,
December 31, 1924

DEAR FRIEND,

I must apologize to you for not writing to you earlier. I have been continuously travelling. I thank you for £20 sent by you. The amount will be used for popularizing the spinning-wheel.

I am glad indeed that instead of obeying your first impulse you decided to fit yourself for the life here and to take time. If a year's

test still impels you to come, you will probably be right in coming to India.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

MISS MADELEINE SLADE
63, BEDFORD GARDENS
CAMPDEN HILL
LONDON, W. 8.

From the original: C. W. 5181. Courtesy: Mirabeehn

*16. SPEECH AT ALL-INDIA MUSLIM LEAGUE,
BOMBAY¹*

December 31, 1924

Mrs. Naidu has come from Africa and she has told you all about it. Whatever I was to say I said in the Congress. I do not know whether by asking the Government we can get help. I think as long as we have no strength, we will have to bear whatever is going on in Kenya. There was a time when satyagraha was going on in South Africa and the Government was also saying that the Indians had become disloyal. At the same time Lord Hardinge made a pronouncement in Madras and that did considerable good to Indians. The reason of this was that the people in South Africa were offering satyagraha. If you want to help them then you should first help yourselves.

I have painfully heard that Indians in East Africa have decided to go in Councils and have left the outside work. I do [not] know whether it is right or wrong for I cannot form a judgment from so long a distance.

The time for us now is to gather our strength and then Lord Reading, you will see, following the same course as Lord Hardinge. Hindu-Muslim unity is very necessary and at the same time to wear khaddar is also essential, but I do not know whether I should tell it here or not. I wish that all Government appointments should go to Mussalmans, Parsis and Christians because they are small in number; if there remains any, they should be filled by Hindus.

I have come to know about the khadi work in Bengal from a

¹ At its 16th annual session supporting the resolution condemning the Natal Boroughs Ordinance which deprived Indian of municipal franchise in Natal

co-worker, Mr. Roy (Satish Babu). There the work is chiefly carried on by Muslim women. They earn their living by charkha. So if you want to benefit them, wear khadi. If you want to help Egypt and as I also have told Maulana Mahomed Ali, the only course is to get swaraj first. Then and only then you can help in real sense Turkey, Egypt and Arabia. If Hindus and Muslims are united not by paper pacts and resolutions but by heart then and then only you can protect Islam in India and abroad and you please do these for one year and see the results yourselves.

The Bombay Chronicle, 1-1-1925

17. BELGAUM IMPRESSIONS [-I]

When there are too many impressions all clamouring for expression, the registrar's task becomes unenviable. Such is my position as I take up the pencil to register my impressions of Belgaum. I can but try.

Gangadharrao Deshpande and his band of workers rose to the highest height. His Vijayanagar was a triumph—not yet of swaraj—but certainly of organisation. Every detail was well thought out. Dr. Hardikar's volunteers were smart and attentive. The roads were broad and well kept. They could easily be broader for the convenience of the temporary shops and the easy movement of thousands of sight-seers. The lighting arrangement was perfect. The huge pavilion with a marble fountain in front of it seemed to invite all who would enter it. The capacity of the pavilion could not be less than seventeen thousand. The sanitary arrangements though quite good needed still more scientific treatment than what they had. The method of the disposal of used water was very primitive. I invite the Cawnpore people who are to have the honour of holding the Congress session of 1925 to study the most effective methods of camp sanitation now and not leave this very important part to the eleventh hour.

Whilst I am able to give ungrudging praise for the almost perfect organization that one could see in the Congress camp, I cannot help remarking that Gangadharrao could not escape the temptation of making the outside look lavish and in following the traditional custom of going in for extravagant luxuries for the "people at the top". Take the presidential "hut". I had bargained for a khaddar hut; but I was insulted with a khaddar palace. The floor space reserved for the

President was certainly quite necessary. The fence round the “palace” was an absolute necessity for my protection from embarrassingly admiring crowds. But I am sure that, had I been contractor, I would have given the same space and the same comfort to the President at half the expense. This however is only one instance of the many I can quote of lavish expenditure. The refreshments supplied to the members of the Subjects Committee and others were unnecessarily lavish. There was no sense of proportion observed as to the quantities served. I am finding fault with nobody. The extravagance came from a generous heart. It was all well meant. Forty years’ tradition cannot be undone in a day, especially if no one likely to gain a hearing will repeatedly criticize it. I know, when I suggested to Vallabhbhai in 1921 that he should make a beginning, he retorted by saying that whilst he would try to attain simplicity and avoid extravagance, he would not allow his pet Gujarat to be considered miserly. I could not persuade him that if he did not have a temporary fountain costing several thousand rupees he would not be considered miserly. I told him too that whatever he did was bound to be copied by his successors. Vallabhbhai would not take the odium of being considered miserly. I advise Cawnpore to lead the way. The miserliness of Cawnpore may be considered the extravagance of tomorrow. There were many things Vallabhbhai did discard. I did not hear any remarks about the disappearance of the things that were really not a felt want.

Let us remember that the Congress is intended to represent the poorest toilers who are the salt of India. Our scale must be so far as possible adjusted to theirs. We must therefore be progressively economical without being inefficient and stingy.

In my opinion the charges for accommodation and food are much too heavy. We may do worse than take a lesson from the book of Swami Shraddhanandji. I remember the sheds he built for his guests who came for the Gurukul anniversary in 1916. He built grass sheds for them at a cost (I think) of about Rs. 2,000. He invited contractors to open restaurants on the ground and made no charge for the accommodation. No one could complain of the arrangement. They knew what they were to expect. Nearly 40,000 people were thus accommodated on the Gurukul ground without the slightest difficulty and with practically no expense. And what is more each visitor received what he wanted and was at liberty to live cheaply or

extravagantly.

I do not say that the Swami's plan should be copied in its entirety. But I do suggest that better and cheaper plans are imperatively necessary. The reduction of the delegate's fees from Rs. 10 to 1 was universally acclaimed.¹ The reduction of lodging and dining charges would be I am sure still more appreciated.

The source of income should be a small entrance fee levied from every spectator. The Congress must be an annual fair where visitors may come and get instruction with amusement. The deliberative part should be an item round which the demonstrative programme should turn. It therefore should take place in decent time, as this year, and the appointments must be religiously observed.

I am not sure that the packing of all other conferences into one week serves any national purpose. In my opinion only those conferences should take place during the Congress week that aid and strengthen the Congress. The President and his "Cabinet" must not be expected to give their attention to anything but Congress work. I know that, if there had been no other call upon my time, I could have better attended to the charge entrusted to me. I had not a moment left to me for contemplation. I was unable to frame the necessary recommendations for making the franchise a success. The fact is that the organizers of various conferences do not take their tasks seriously. They hold them because it has become the fashion to do so. I would urge workers in various directions to avoid the annual dissipation of energy.

The exhibition of indigenous arts and industries is an institution that should grow from year to year. The musical concert was a treat that thousands must have enjoyed. The lantern lectures tracing the tragic history of the ruin of the greatest national industry and the possibilities of its revival were apposite, instructive and amusing. I tender my congratulations to Satish Babu upon the thoughtful and thorough manner in which he organized these lectures. The spinning competition² must also be a permanent feature. Its popularity is evinced by the number of competitors, the brilliance of results and the number of donors. This spinning movement is bringing out women from their seclusion as nothing else could have done. Of the 11 prize

¹ *Vide* "Resolutions Moved from the Chair, Belgaum Congress", 27-12-1924.

² *Vide* "Speech Announcing Results of Spinning Competition, Belgaum Congress", 27-12-1924.

winners, 4 belonged to the gentle sex. It has given them a dignity and self-confidence which no university degree could give them. They are realizing that their active assistance is just as indispensable as that of men and, what is more, such assistance can be as easily rendered by them as, if not more easily than, by men.

One thing I must not omit before I close these impressions. There were nearly seventy-five volunteers, mostly Brahmins, who were engaged in conservancy work in the Congress camp. The municipal *Bhangis* were indeed taken, but it was thought necessary to have the volunteers also. Kaka Kalelkar who was in charge of this corps tells me that this part of the work would not have been done as satisfactorily as it was, if the corps had not been formed. He tells me too that the volunteers worked most willingly. Not one of them shirked the work which ordinarily very few would be prepared to undertake. And yet it is the noblest of all from one point of view. Indeed sanitary work must be regarded as the foundation of all volunteer training.

Young India, 1-1-1925

18. HOW TO DO IT?

The Congress has taken a tremendous forward step or as some say committed a tremendous folly at the instance of a mad man. Congressmen, whether willing spinners or unwilling, have to justify the step taken by working the spinning franchise. That work which some were doing is now transferred to everyone who wishes to belong to the Congress. It is methodical labour that the Congress requires from every Congressman. If he is unwilling to do that labour, he has to hire it.

The task is obviously difficult. If it were easy, it would not be possible to expect the grand result one expects from its successful working. Even when it was a mere matter of collecting four annas per year, the task was found to be difficult. And today we have not, on the Congress register, in all the provinces fifty thousand such members. Now the Congress expects everyone to spin 2,000 yards per month or to get that quantity spun for him by another. Thus the workers have to keep in continuous touch with the spinners. Therein lies in my opinion the strength of the franchise. It gives the people political education of a high type.

The way to ensure success for every province is to fix the minimum of voters it expects to secure and not to rest till that number is secured. Now throughout India at the lowest computation there are at least five million wheels working. These spinners can all easily belong to the Congress. Those who are taking work from them can now invite them to devote half an hour of their time to the nation by spinning at the wheel for that time. This does not require new organizing. Cotton slivers, etc., are there. All that is necessary is for the organization to make a gift to the Congress of the slivers required to be supplied to the spinners for voluntary or franchise spinning. All that is required of spinners is to give the Congress free labour needed to spin 2,000 yards of yarn. Then there is the voluntary spinning by non-professional spinners. Those who are now spinning have to ask their friends and neighbour to do likewise and become Congress members. This can be best done by each worker founding spinning clubs of twenty. To be efficient these clubs must be small and compact. The first member must be a proficient carder and spinner. For on him, in the first instance, will fall the burden of collecting cotton, carding it, slivering it and distributing the slivers among the members of the club. The third class of work is to provide for the unwilling spinners. The honest unwilling spinner will naturally seek out a member of his own family to do the spinning for him. He then ensures the contribution of good and true hand-spun yarn. The next class of unwilling member will himself engage a professional spinner to spin for him. And the last class is that which will buy its yarn from the market and run the risk of having spurious yarn sold for genuine. For the sake of the common cause I would warn the Congressmen who are unwilling against the last method. Registration of membership for the last class is easy and, if many avail themselves of it, the practice will open the floodgates of fraud and may cause an injury to a cottage industry that is struggling to make headway against enormous odds. My hope is that there will be very few men and women who will be unwilling to spin for the sake of the Congress and the country. The word "unwilling" has found place in the franchise for the sake of meeting the difficulties of those who are old Congressmen and whom I would not like to leave the Congress, even if they were willing to do so. But I shall hope that unwillingness will not be encouraged. Mere production of hand-spun yarn will not make the idle and the starving work. It is the atmosphere of manual work, and that too consisting of hand-spinning, that is required to make the millions retake to the wheel. And that atmosphere can best be produced by all Congressmen regarding it as an honour for themselves personally to spin.

Young India, 1-1-1925

19. NOTES

TWO PROMISES

Here is one promise made by a Tamil delegate:

I promise to introduce ten thousand charkhas in the city of Madura before 30th April 1926.

Yours ever devoted,

L. K. TULSIRAM

The note containing the promise was passed to me by Sjt. Tulsiram at a meeting of the Tamil delegates. The introduction of ten thousand charkhas means, of course, as many members. If the city of Madura can give ten thousand members, how many should the whole of the Tamilnad?

Another promise still more important is made by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan. He has solemnly promised that he will have got twenty-five thousand Mussalman spinners as members by the end of my term of office. The Maulana will deserve the highest congratulations, if he succeeds. Not that twenty-five thousand Mussalman members from the Punjab is by any means a large number, if the thing catches. But, when so many are prognosticating a catastrophe, for the Maulana to make the solemn promise is in my opinion a wonderful thing. I have told the Maulana that, if he breaks the promise, I shall have to fast against him. He retorted by saying, he did not want me to commit suicide and that he would not have made the promise, if he had not meant it or its fulfilment was impossible. I invite such promises from every province. But no one need make them in a fit of enthusiasm. Mere promises mean nothing if there is not an unalterable resolution behind them. I know that during the War the authorities used to apportion work for each province, and the provinces had to supply the quota of men or money as the case might be. In that case the supply was fixed for them and default carried penalties of a kind with it. Should the provinces do less because they are called upon to fix their own quota and because breach of promise will carry no penalty with it?

A PRIZE

Sjt. Revashanker Jagjivan Jhaveri has at my request expressed his wish to give a prize of one thousand rupees to the writer of the best

essay on the message of the spinning-wheel and khaddar. The essay should trace the history of the destruction of the industry and discuss the possibility of its revival. Further terms will be announced in the next issue.

Young India, 1-1-1925

20. MEANING OF BOLSHEVISM

The following¹ has been received from Mr. M. N. Roy in reply to my article² on Bolshevism. I gladly publish it, but I cannot help saying that, if Mr. Roy's article is a correct representation of Bolshevism, it is a poor thing. I can no more tolerate the yoke of Bolshevism as described by Mr. Roy than of capitalism. I believe in conversion of mankind, not its destruction, and for a very obvious reason. We are all very imperfect and weak things and, if we are to destroy all whose ways we do not like, there will be not a man left alive. Mobocracy is autocracy multiplied million times. But I hope, I am almost sure, that real Bolshevism is much better than Mr. M. N. Roy's.

Young India, 1-1-1925

21. LETTER TO N. C. KELKAR

ON THE WAY TO SABARMATI,
January 2, 1925

DEAR MR. KELKAR,

It has always been my desire and policy never to write anything to wound the feelings of others. But during the current year when I am out for winning you over I would like to be still more cautious. I know that without wishing it, I may write things which may not please you, i.e., the party. Will you please therefore draw my attention to anything that may appear in *Young India* or *Navajivan* and that may not be quite the proper thing? I shall try to mend wherever it is possible for me.

Your sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 3115. Courtesy: Kashinath Kelkar

¹ *Vide* Appendix "M.N. Roy on Bolshevism", 1-1-1925

² *Vide* "Bolshevism or Discipline," 21-8-1924.

22. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, DOHAD

January 2, 1925

I do not want any Gujarati to take advantage of the freedom to unwilling persons given in the resolution on spinning. I see some divine purpose in my release from Yeravda Prison on account of my illness. Providence, it seems, has set me free that I might move through the length and breadth of the country speaking about *Annapoorna*¹, the spinning-wheel, and taking it everywhere. If India would still not respond to the call of spinning, her privations would multiply. It will be no pleasure to me to find Dohad converted into Bombay and half a dozen of its people become millionaires. Everyone has the right to earn food and clothing. But no one has a right to accumulate wealth and be rich. I would not have a handful of you become money-lenders. I would, however, wish that khadi should be sold as easily as ghee and made current everywhere like coins and postal stamps. For those who cannot themselves spin there is a provision to get others to do it for them and thus become eligible for membership. But I would urge that no one from Gujarat may take advantage of this provision. Sukhdev tells me he has discontinued spinning. I did not know it. He might be otherwise busy but his discontinuation of spinning is intolerable. It would be a miserable plight if our workers themselves do not spin. It is not as if Sukhdev does not approve of spinning, it is only his laziness. I won't have this excuse from any Gujarati.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 11-1-1925

23. SPEECH AT ANTYAJA ASHRAM, GODHRA

January 2, 1925

You have heard a number of dialogues and *bhajans*. Who would say that these dialogues were by *Antyaj*a children or that it was they who sang the *bhajan*s in devotion to God? Who would have expected this outcome of the conference? While discussing the resolution about the outcastes, I had suggested that all people should visit their colony. I had taken it that delegates of the conference belonged to Godhra.

¹ The giver of plentiful food

But I had forgotten that most of them who had come were not the residents of Godhra. However, most of them were from Gujarat. We opened an *Antyaja* school out of the money we collected at that time. The people of Godhra did not welcome it. What is more, they showed their dislike of it. *Antyaja* brothers also reciprocated these sentiments. It was difficult to get *Antyaja* boys for the *Antyaja* school. There was a time when I was seriously inclined to consider closing down the school. But then we put it off.

Mama¹ belongs to Maharashtra but he knows Gujarati. I had seen in the Ashram that he loves working among the *Antyajas*. I advised him to plant himself firmly in Godhra. Subsequently I went to jail and Vallabhbhai took upon himself the heavy burden of administration. It was then that the house was built. I do not like it. It is not that it is incomplete but it does us no credit. It does not want in elegance but it should be such as to do us credit. Mama is not an architect but his heart is filled with love and piety. He was drawn by his love towards *Antyajas* and spent Rs. 20,000. Vallabhbhai could not collect that amount. But fortunately Parsi Rustomjee had given money for work of this kind. Some of it was appropriated for the house which has been built. But that ought to be suitable for us, the *Antyaja*, the poor. We are all poor people and the *Antyajas* are poorer still. They are a flock without a pastor. In forsaking them Hindus have sinned. You should all take up the attitude that an impressive house has been built but you would not grudge it [to them]. If it were the hostel for *Vanik*² students you might do that. I agree that there should be no structure which does not reflect the state of the Indian people. There are more elegant buildings used for the children of other communities. But the thought should never enter your mind that the *Antyajas* have no right to such buildings, even though we may try to convert them also. Here I am merely debating the issue. But it would be a good thing if some wealthy man of Godhra took it over. We should then go to another place more suitable for the poor. But in the meantime Mama should put up with it.

Today I had been to three places in the *Antyaja* colony. There it was animals that I saw, not human beings. Talking to them one finds them different from us, but they also recognize love. If we are not responsible for their pitiful condition, who else is? To me the cause of

¹ Vithal Lakshman Phadke

² Business community

swaraj is small besides that of serving these people. It was not because I thought it would hasten swaraj that I started working for these people. There was no talk of swaraj then; thirty years ago, when I was in South Africa, I had expressed my views on service to the *Antyajias*. Today we are not conserving the Hindu dharma, but destroying it. I wish that you should take up this service in order to save it from destruction. You who have come here, had better realize that you are not polluted but have been sanctified. I say without hesitation that those places where there is *Antyaja* service, where there is an *Antyaja* school or an *Antyaja* ashram, that is a place of pilgrimage, because holy places are those where we wash off our sins and make ready to swim to the other shore. Why are one's parents holiness incarnate? Why are one's gurus holiness incarnate? If we serve people with all our heart, we become purified. Do not imagine that you have been polluted and that you should bathe. If you had not known that those who treated you to the dialogues were *Antyaja* boys, would you have believed it? If we exert ourselves to the utmost over these children, they may surpass us. Don't suppose that the children of *Bhangis* can't have good thoughts. Let me tell you from experience that they will have them, if we also help. I appeal to you that those of you who have come here should not consider this as their last visit. You should come here from time to time to serve.

The existence of this association for serving *Antyajias* is due to Indulal¹. He has done solid service. He was thinking about it even while in jail. We should forgive him if in a flush of enthusiasm he has done something which we may not like. His exile over, Amritlal² has come here. Now he has become the high priest of *Dheds*, *Bhangis* and *Bhils*. When Indulal was considering leaving the *Antyaja Seva Mandal*, I thought of entrusting it to the *Vidyapith*. Amritlal said, we should not let it go. He took the burden upon himself. But how much burden can a single person carry? You should also help him. There is a great deal of work for the *Antyaja Seva Mandal* to do. The *Antyaja* map of Gujarat is being drawn. I do not know that Godhra has contributed a single paisa. If the Lord indeed dwells within you, then send the money to Amritlal or Mama. And let your mind go with the money.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 12-4

¹ Indulal Yagnik; an active political worker from whom Gandhiji took over *Navajivan*.

² A. V. Thakkar

24. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, GODHRA

January 2, 1925

It is not religion but rather its very opposite to regard the outcastes as untouchables by birth. I am convinced that those who do not regard me a *sanatani* are ignorant. You will say there are pandits who defend untouchability. But the words of Akha¹ that “learning without thinking is futile” apply to them. There is a kind of untouchability in Hinduism, namely, that of keeping away from the impure, that is, from wicked, fraudulent, lustful or unchaste persons. Look upon them as untouchables and run away from them; but would you run away from the person who serves you, who removes your filth, who tans your leather and forges your farming tools and regard him as an untouchable? This is hypocrisy, not Hinduism. I would ask you to shun them if Hinduism did indeed teach that they were untouchables. This idea that Hinduism teaches untouchability is only an illusion. If you were compassionate, the ignorance among *Bhangis* would make you weep and you would be awakened to your own responsibilities. If you abandon me, drive me away cruelly and, as a result, I turn mad, is it my fault or yours? In like manner, is it through their fault or yours that the poor *Bhangis* and *Dheds* are penniless and destitute, their ignorance is abysmal and they are given to addictions? The fault is certainly yours and I wish you to remove it and purify yourselves.

I see a great purpose in God saving me from a serious illness in Yeravada Prison and releasing me for your service. The purpose is that I should come to you and give you self-confidence, put before you the fruit of profound meditation in prison, namely, the key to swaraj lies in fulfilling three conditions alone—in the spinning-wheel, in Hindu-Muslim unity and in the removal of untouchability. The reason that I have mentioned the spinning-wheel first is that amongst these three, we are sceptical about it alone and, secondly because it is the spinning-wheel alone which demands from us honest daily work. If I wish to work half an hour a day for Hindu-Muslim unity or removal of untouchability, I would be hard put to it to imagine what to do. But the plying of the spinning-wheel for half an hour is concrete work. It is an inanimate object, but there is an irresistible power behind it. I ask everyone to get ready to activate it. You find

¹ Akha Bhagat, Gujarati poet of the 17th century

khadi coarse. If you say that khadi irritates your skin, it would amount to saying that this country irritates you. And, how can he, whom his country irritates, win swaraj? Tilak Maharaj used to say that he was pained when he heard anyone talk of going abroad for a change of climate. Since God ordained my birth here, would He not have provided that I should keep healthy in this climate? Although it is bitterly cold in England, do the English run away from their country? They light fires in their homes, put on woollen clothes, and take all precautions. What do the multimillionaires do here? They think of a change of climate. I tell you that this is a grave error on their part. In like manner, our patriotism consists in wearing indigenous khadi, whether it is expensive or cheap, good or bad, coarse or fine; otherwise it is meaningless to speak of one's motherland. Would any mother abandon her own ugly child and take into her lap another's comely child? I hope that you would have the same God-given love and affection for India, for the grain that is grown here and for khadi. If every man in Godhra produced khadi worth five rupees, how much money would a population of 25,000 save? If that amount is saved, the people of Godhra would become to that extent prosperous. You will become stronger and your patriotism will shine forth. The spinning-wheel alone is a thing which enables all—men, women and children, the rich and the poor—to contribute equally and which brings about great good. Remember the saying that drop by drop fills the lake and keep filling the lake of swaraj by contributing two thousand yards of yarn. Do you believe that you will win swaraj by Vamanrao's going to the Legislative Assembly and glaring at the Government? I would then ask you to go and talk of yarn and khadi even there. If, however, you cannot boycott foreign-cloth, swaraj will not be won even by Vallabhbhai or five thousand persons like Vamanrao entering the Legislative Assembly.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 11-1-1925

25. TO KATHIAWARIS

Circumstances take me to Kathiawar. I know and understand the affection of Kathiawaris. However, what I want is work. I find there is a difference between my method and that of the recently trained generation. It is ludicrous to make me the President despite this

difference. In spite of the fact that resolutions drafted by me have been adopted by the Congress, many persons have been telling me that no one will implement them. How am I to believe such a dreadful thing?

As I had nothing new to place before the Congress, so too, I shall have nothing new to say to Kathiawar. The truth is that I have already said what I have to say. Somehow I have to repeat the same things over again. My thoughts dwell only with the poor. I want swaraj for the *Bhangis*, for the labourers. I keep thinking of how to make them happy. When shall we get off their backs? While we ask for our rights, it is for me to speak of their rights and our duties.

How good it would be if I could explain my standpoint to the Kathiawaris? Is it something impossible? Man lives by hope. The same is true of me. Some day India must necessarily listen to what I have to say. Could not Kathiawar make a beginning?

The organizers have undertaken to prepare the atmosphere for me. They will certainly show me that the whole place is full of khadi. They will certainly have an exhibition of the arts and crafts of Kathiawar. What a beautiful exhibition was held in Belgaum! There is no dearth of art in Kathiawar. There is nothing lacking in its flora. What beautiful cattle there are in Kathiawar! Shall I have a glimpse of these? I do not wish to see the glorification of the West. I have seen enough of it there. On the contrary, I am trying to recall Indian things which have been neglected. It is these I wish to see.

Kathiawar is, of course, well-known for its courtesies. I would request the Reception Committee not to be carried away by an excess of it. While time is endless, the human body has its limitations. We have to achieve much with the help of this transient body; every moment has, therefore, to be properly utilized.

I hope that the organizers will see to it that each task is done punctually. If those resolutions which are to be considered by the Conference¹ have been already framed, we shall be able to give more thought to them. It would suggest that enough time be allotted to the Subjects Committee. I hope that while drafting the resolutions it will be borne in mind that we shall succeed if we lay greater stress on our duties.

Let me suggest one way of saving time. Welcome should come from the heart. You will, therefore, realize that there will be no need

¹ Kathiawar Political Conference

for any outward sings of welcome. To spend time in processions, etc., is as good as stealing it from the real task to be accomplished. it should not be forgotten that in the course of two days, a programme has to be chalked out for serving twenty-six lakhs of people. In order to satisfy thousands of men and women who will assemble, some showy items will no doubt be necessary. We have already seen in Belgaum that there is nothing like holding an exhibition in order to meet this need.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 4-1-1925

26. WILLING AND UNWILLING

The Congress session has concluded without a hitch. There was a solitary item on the agenda, it may be said, namely, adoption of spinning as an essential duty of every Indian. if this has been resolved in all sincerity, this session of the Congress may come to be historic. But historians might condemn it if we have taken this step without an honest intention of fulfilling it.

I have no reason to believe that we might have agreed to the step without honest faith or with mental reservations. The resolution, which has now been adopted, itself speaks of two groups—the “willing” and the “unwilling”. The latter accept the necessity of spinning as such, though not on their own part. This group, too, have agreed to send 24, 000 yards of yarn a year, but it is now the duty of the willing to persuade the unwilling. If those who are willing go on spinning regularly, the unwilling will also realize the duty of spinning themselves.

Let us hope there is no unwilling group in Gujarat. Let us not bother about the small number of the willing. Let us only mind our own work. If one wishes to become a member of the Congress without spinning oneself, one has every right to do so.

But in Gujarat we have not come across any persons who are reluctant to spin themselves. Initially the number of spinners may be small. But if we have active workers, I am convinced that with their help we shall be able to achieve much.

Gujarat can if it so desires give a lead in this matter. Gujarat has all the resources. Only the people must have the will. And it is the task of the workers to create that will. This will test our capacity to

organize, our patriotism, our strength of character and other qualities.

Spread of spinning is spread of khadi and khadi propagation means complete boycott of foreign-cloth. Thus we should put in much more effort for the propagation of khadi than we have done so far. And the spread of khadi means the spread of Gujarat khadi. Having produced its own cloth if Gujarat itself does not consume the same, it will never witness the miracle of khadi. All the other crafts will follow in the wake of khadi and Gujarat's economy will get a fillip.

Gujarat may not suffer from scarcity but it lacks vigour. Gujarat's children do not get milk. In case of a famine the people of Gujarat go begging. This seldom happens anywhere except in India. It is only when Gujarat completely boycotts foreign-cloth that we shall be saved from this plight.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 4-1-1925

27. LETTER TO REHANA TYABJI

January 5, 1925

MY DEAR REHANA,

I am glad you are coming. Do you know that a friend of my father got cured of his malady by constant attendance on God? May you not do likewise? You can be well, if you will be well.

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 9599

28. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

Posh Sud 11, 1981 [January 5, 1925]

BHAISHRI FULCHAND,

I shall take up another programme only after I reach Bhavnagar and feel like doing so. Do not bind me from today. I am very tired and I have yet to attend many functions.

Blessings from

BAPU

BHAISHRI FULCHAND KASTURCHAND
KELAVANI MANDAL KARYALAYA
WADHWAN CITY

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2824. Courtesy: Sharadabehn Shah

29. LETTER TO AVANTIKABAI GOKHALE

Posh Sud 11, 1981 [January 5, 1925]

DEAR SISTER,

I was deeply pained to hear from Chi. Chhaganlal about your financial condition. Why did you not tell me about it till now? What has happened cannot be undone. Both of you can come and stay here whenever you wish to. Regard this as your home. Dr. Mehta's bungalows, is at present vacant; you can occupy a part of it. We shall think about building a new house later on. I had already made this suggestion for the sake of your health. Here, too, you will be able to do public work. Make up your mind soon. Do not harbour the false idea that you cannot come here.

Write to me about your health. Send your reply to Bhavanagar. I intend to stay there from the 8th to 13th. Write to me at Sir Prabhashanker Pattani's address.

Vandemataram from

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4838. Courtesy: Bombay State Committee for C.W.M.G.

30. LETTER TO KAPIL THAKKAR

ASHRAM,

SABARMATI,

Posh¹ Sud 11, 1981 [January 5, 1925]²

BHAISHRI KAPIL

I have your letter. I am sorry I shall not be able to go to Botad this time as I have no time.

Vandemataram from

MOHANDAS GANDHI

BHAISHRI KAPIL THAKKAR

BHAVANAGAR

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2896. Courtesy: Kapil Thakkar

¹ The source has *Magsar*.

² From the postmark

31. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

Posh Sud 11, 1981 [January 5, 1925]

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I think it is only fair for me to inform you that Lakshmi, an untouchable girl, will be with me. If my presence may be considered objectionable at any place on that account, please give me a hint and I shall understand and will, of my own accord, insist on not visiting that place so that nobody is put in an awkward situation. I leave all this to you.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3188. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

32. LETTER TO LAKSHMINIWAS BIRLA

Posh Sud 11, 1981 [January 5, 1925]

CHI. LAKSHMINIWAS,

I was very glad to have your letter.

It is quite true that all should ply the charkha. Like the cycle of the universe, the charkha may never be still in any Indian home. The charkha, I think, is all the more necessary for the rich. I do hope you will all ply the charkha and send the yarn to me.

Blessings from your well-wisher
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6101. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

33. TELEGRAM TO PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

SABARMATI,
January 7, 1925

TO
SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI
BHAVNAGAR

BEFORE RECEIVING YOUR WIRE I REPLIED RECEPTION
COMMITTEE I WOULD BE IN THEIR HANDS DURING
CONFERENCE. FEEL IT IS BOTH PROPER AND NECESSARY
I SHOULD BE THEIR GUEST. I MUST AVOID SETTING

EMBARRASSING PRECEDENT FOR SUCCESSORS, DEVCHANDBHAI¹
AGREES AND PROPERLY INSISTS MY BEING GUEST
RECEPTION COMMITTEE. PRAY THEREFORE EXCUSE TILL
NINTH.

GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 5875

34. THE WORKING COMMITTEE

The selection of the Working Committee was ultimately left by the A.I.C.C. to Deshbandhu Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru and me. I have been charged with having yielded everything to the Swarajists. If I have done so, I pride myself on the fact. Full surrender must be full. The fact however is that no pressure whatsoever was put upon me to withdraw a single No-changer's name. I deliberately withdrew C. Rajagopalachari's, Vallabhbhai's and Shankerlal Banker's names. It was a matter of honour to have Sarojini Devi and Sardar Mangal Singh on the Committee. Mr. Kelkar was anxious to retire in favour of Mr. Aney. I would not listen to it. And I was anxious to have Mr. Aney as soon as his name was mentioned. Let the reader rest assured that the whole selection was made in a spirit of perfect comradeship. Assume honesty (and it must be assumed) on the part of both the groups and the task of either is difficult enough. Although the degree of faith and therefore the emphasis is different, both have to strive to find a common method of working the common programme. In a Working Committee with a decided majority of No-changers strong resolutions can no doubt be carried for khaddar work but they cannot carry much weight with those who have only reluctantly accepted the khaddar franchise. Whereas resolutions of a working Committee in which the predominant voice is that of the Swarajists, though they may be mild are sure to carry far greater weight with the Swarajists. And my business is to carry the latter with me whole-heartedly. I want to act upon them and I want them to act upon me. Nothing, therefore, can be better than that the Swarajist leaders and among them the ablest and most uncompromising opponents of the spinning franchise and I should be thrown together in an atmosphere in which we must pull together. I do not need that kind of contact with the enthusiasts. They are expected to work away with all the strength that conviction must

¹ Devchand Parekh; barrister; social worker of Kathiawar

give them. They do not need resolutions or instructions as spur to action. If, therefore, we mean in the course of the year to achieve an unbreakable unity between the two wings, the selection of the Working Committee is, I hold, ideal. Anyway, it must produce an atmosphere the most favourable for the purpose.

I shall leave no stone unturned to achieve the end. Hence I propose during the year to carry no motion or proposal that might be of a party character. Neither the spinning-wheel nor the boycott of foreign-cloth can be expeditiously worked in the teeth of opposition from within the Congress ranks indeed we must strive to gain the support of non-Congressmen for the national constructive programme. They may not like spinning or wearing khaddar as part of the franchise, but I have not met many Liberals who have any objection to hand-spinning as a cottage industry or to the use of khaddar as such and apart from the franchise. It may be constitutionally impossible for all parties to accept the existing Congress creed or the new franchise, and therefore to become Congressmen. But I hope that the existence of the creed or the new franchise will not be a bar against joint work wherever it is possible.

Young India, 8-1-1925

35. BELGAUM IMPRESSIONS [-II]

NAMDHARIS

I had a hard time of it meeting all and sundry and trying to give them satisfaction. The Namdhari Sikhs brought me a bundle of papers and expected me to attend to their grievance against the Akalis. Their patience and courtesy disarmed all unwillingness on my part. But my inability to attend to their cause was much greater than my unwillingness. Time would not wait even for their courtesy. They were themselves able to see that I was perfectly helpless. The only comfort I was able to give them was that when I next visited Lahore, I would certainly go through their papers and see to it that the Congress did them no injustice. I told them that although I was partial to the cause of the brave Akalis, I would be no party to any injustice or oppression being committed by them. Sardar Mangal Singh re-echoed my sentiment and said that he was always ready to show that the Akalis wanted nothing but reform of the gurdwaras on a strictly moral basis.

PLEA FOR BUDDHISTS

Mr. Pereira of Ceylon wanted me to interest the Congress in the Buddha Gaya Temple. The reader will remember that a movement has been in progress for some years for the restoration to Buddhists of the great and historic temple at Buddha Gaya. But it seems to have made no tangible headway. At the Cocanada Congress Babu Rajendra Prasad was appointed to inquire into the matter and report. He had not been able to do so up to the time of the meeting. A Buddhist deputation came from Ceylon to Belgaum during the Congress week to plead the Buddhist cause personally before the Congress. Mr. Pereira had seen several leaders and then saw me. He really did not need to plead his cause before me. I was already a convert. But here again what was I to do? I had no time for anything else beyond what I had already undertaken. But Mr. Pereira was irresistible. I told him that I believed in his cause as much as he did, but the Congress might not be able to help him much. He was persistent and took away from me the promise that I should at least let him address the Subjects Committee and let him take the chance of being rejected. Mr. Pereira had confidence in himself. His pleasing manners and his brief but eloquent speech made an impression upon the Committee which decided to consider the question there and then. But alas! Upon discussion the Committee discovered that it could not materially assist Mr. Pereira; it had not the report of its own deputy; it had exhaustively discussed the subject at the previous session and owing to sharp differences was obliged to drop it. The only thing, therefore, the Committee was able to do was to ask Rajendra Babu to hasten his inquiry and let the Working Committee have his report on or before the end of the present month. There is no doubt that the possession of the temple should vest in the Buddhists. There may be legal difficulties. They must be overcome. If the report is true that animal sacrifice is offered in the temple, it is a sacrilege. It is equally a sacrilege if the worship is offered, as it is alleged, in a way calculated to wound the susceptibilities of Buddhists. We should take pride in helping the restoration of the temple to the rightful trustees. I hope Rajendra Babu will secure all the literature on the subject and produce a report which can serve as a guide for all who wish to advance the cause of the Buddhist claimants. Let me hope also that Mr. Pereira has remained in India and is assisting Rajendra Babu.

TEACHERS IN CONFERENCE

The national teachers met in informal conference and came to definite conclusions. The debate was interesting. It centred round the charkha. Learned pandits attended the conference. I hope that the teachers will carry out to the letter and in the spirit the resolutions addressed to themselves. It has been the bane of the national life to pass resolutions and never to enforce them. The teachers should be the last persons in the world to make vain promises. They have in their hands the moulding of the youth of the country. Let them know that the students are sure to copy their bad example of breach of their own word in preference to their lofty sermons on the sacredness of resolutions and promises. This year is a year of trial and test for the nation. The Congress has staked its all practically on a single issue, i.e., the production and sale of khaddar and the boycott of foreign-cloth. The national schools to be national have to assist this national work by the teachers and boys and girls learning the various processes incidental to the production of khaddar, by wearing it themselves and by spinning as much yarn as they can. Their other studies need not be neglected but they dare not omit the things that are required for the vital needs of the nation. The teachers have by an overwhelming majority accepted the position. I hope they will make it good by acting up to their promise.

STUDENTS

The students too met in conference. These were not merely of the national schools and colleges but they were principally from Government schools. Mr. Reddy, the President, had a scheme for utilizing the vacation and other leisure hours of students. His scheme was to commit the students (he would include the *vakils* also) to giving the nation at least 28 evenings every year, each volunteer to take up four villages in his neighbourhood as his field of work. Mr. Reddy proposed a course of lectures on a variety of subjects. For the time being I would occupy the leisure hours of these volunteers for the spread of khaddar. But this service is not the only way the students and practising *vakils* can help. Surely the least they can do is to use khaddar themselves and spin half an hour per day. The *vakils* and students over 21 years should become members of the Congress and those who are under age should send their yarn as donation either to their own committee or to the A.I.K.B.

Young India, 8-1-1925

36. NOTES

FOR PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE

I hope that provincial Congress committees will lose no time in organizing the new franchise. I know that some Congressmen are waiting for instructions from the Working Committee as to the method of work before commencing enrolment. Such waiting is, however, wholly unnecessary. It is not the Working Committee that has to organize the work under the new franchise. The burden rests with every province, and the sooner they commence the better it is for the purpose for which the new franchise has been introduced. Congressmen should remember that at the end of February the existing list of members falls into desuetude. If provincial committees wait till then for enrolment, they will find that they have not even a quorum to go on with. Membership should, therefore, be actively canvassed from now. I had hoped to publish some valuable information supplied to me by Sjt. Satish Chandra Das Gupta as to the method of organization. I have also before me two illuminating volumes on khaddar work written by Satish Babu and published by Khadi Pratisthan. The first volume deals with the manner of organizing spinning and weaving and the second volume collects all the available information about cotton. The volumes are seasonable. I hope to condense some of the information made available to the public by their industrious author. Those who can afford to buy the volumes should possess them. They should write to the Khadi Pratisthan, 15, College Square, Calcutta, for them. The price of the first volume is two rupees and that of the second is one rupee.

TO SPINNERS

Several spinners, who have been sending their yarn either to the A.I.K.B. or to me, inquire what they are to do now. They are to send in their yarn as usual for the month of December. All that the adults may spin from the beginning of the year should naturally be retained and sent in to the respective provincial committees as their monthly subscription for membership. Hitherto spinners have sent in what they have spun and many have sent in even less than 2,000 yards. Now they are bound, to be entitled to a living membership, to send not less than 2,000 yards per month. They may send more if they choose. They should take care to have a receipt for the exact quantity sent. They will get credit for the balance over 2,000 yards for the next

month's quota. Minors may send yarn to the provincial Congress committees as donations. They cannot claim membership. There are however many such who, I am told, would send their yarn only to me. I would advise them to send their yarn to their respective committees; but if they will not do so, I would be glad as usual to receive their yarn and turn it to good account.

PRIZE ESSAY

The terms of the prize essay on the message of the spinning-wheel and khaddar are:

1. The essay should be in English in four parts: the first part to contain the history of hand-spinning and the khaddar (meaning hand-spun, including the celebrated *shubnum*¹ of Dacca), trade of India before the British advent; the second part should trace the history of the ruin of hand-spinning and the khaddar trade; the third part should be an examination of the possibilities of hand-spinning and khaddar and a comparison between the Indian mill industry and hand-spinning and hand-weaving; the fourth part should examine the possibilities of achieving boycott of foreign-cloth through the spinning-wheel. The essay should be supported by authoritative statistics and should have an appendix containing a list of all the reference books and authorities used by the author in support of his argument.

2. The essay may be as brief as the competitors wish to make it, consistently with the giving of a full record of facts and figures.

3. The essay should be sent to the office of *Young India* by registered book post with the author's name on a separate sheet and should reach the office of *Young India* not later than 15th March next. The judges will be Messrs Shankerlal Banker, Maganlal K. Gandhi and myself. The result will be announced not later than 31st March 1925. The judges will reserve to themselves the right of rejecting all the essays if they fall below a certain standard. The prize will be paid to the winner on the announcement thereof. The right of publication will vest in the All-India Khadi Board in accordance with the donor's wishes.

I hope that those scholars who are interested in the great spinning movement and who have studied the subject will consider it worth their while to enter into the competition.

¹ Literally dew; here a name for the fine muslin formerly woven in Dacca

POVERTY A CAUSE

A Bengali friend writing about unity says:

In Bengal, perhaps in other provinces also, the economic distress of the educated middle-classes hinders the growth of public spirit and patriotism. The young men crowd the meetings and applaud the speeches. When they go out of schools and colleges, they begin to feel the struggle for existence. It damps their youthful vigour and enthusiasm and they cease to take any practical interest in national work.

The evil, as the writer rightly judges, is more or less common to all the provinces. The remedy is clear. No Government can find employment for the increasing number of students year after year. The only way to solve the puzzle is to revise the common idea about education, that it is a means of finding a career in life. Education should be taken for our mental and moral development. Secondly, the army of unemployed young men should realize the dignity of labour and qualify themselves for taking up the organisation of the charkha industry. It can take in an unlimited number of young men if they were willing to take the necessary training and to go to the villages and to be satisfied with a modest income.

Young India, 8-1-1925

37. *SPEECH AT SUBJECTS COMMITTEE MEETING, BHAVNAGAR*

January 8, 1925

Today the spinning-wheel is the only way to the people's hearts. Evil reigns everywhere, and dharma can be re-established only through the spinning-wheel. We are at present hanging in mid-air like Trishanku¹, and the wheel is the only device to take us out of this dreadful situation. We can hope to influence the masses only through the wheel and through it alone will the Government learn a sense of duty. A gentleman asks if even men with moustaches should sit at the wheel. I should like to remind him that in the present circumstances, we should be ashamed of our moustaches. Is it men or women that operate the Lancashire machines and thereby run the Empire? It is again only men who write books on this subject. Women may cook in the kitchen at home, but in the case of community feasts they must

¹ The mythological king whom the sage Vishwamitra lifted up to the heavens, but whom the gods refused admission

give over cooking to moustached men. Some Brahamins and others plead their superior caste. I do agree that the caste system stands for division of functions. But function means the primary or chief function, whereas all the other functions can as well be common to all, in fact they ought to be so today. Shri Satish Chandra Das Gupta has evolved a Shastra for the wheel. I have a charming letter from a revenue officer at Palitana, which says: "I spin regularly but neither the Dewan nor the Thakore Sahib¹ objects to this. The more I spin, the more strength I acquire. Indeed I may carry a small wheel even while riding." Is it any wonder if such officers become popular among the subjects? How else would the people be crazy about you? When for the first time King George was posted to a man-of-war as a trainee, he used to partake of the same black coffee, black bread and cheese as the other sailors. There were no special arrangements for his board and lodging. He was also given the same outfit as the ratings. When you know this you will understand why the British people are crazy about King George. The prince and the people, the leader and the masses can be bound together by the thread from the wheel. I had been to Moti Marad. Though the village is quite far from a railway station I found that *malma*² had reached there. We came to know about the existence of seven lakh villages in our country only when we came under the British Empire. No power in the past ever penetrated any of these seven lakh villages, but now calico and *manjli*³ have done it.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 18-1-1925

38. *PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT KATHIAWAR POLITICAL CONFERENCE, BHAVANAGAR*

January 8, 1925

The following is an English translation⁴ of Mr. Gandhi's Presidential Address at the Third Kathiawar Political Conference held at Bhavnagar on the 8th instant:

¹ Ruler

² Mull

³ Mill-clods

⁴ For the Gujarati report *vide Navajivan* Supplement, 18-1-1925.

FRIENDS,

The Presidentship of the Kathiawar Political Conference had been offered to me before I went to jail but I had then refused to shoulder the responsibility attaching to that honourable position. As the reasons which then prompted my refusal do not exist any longer, I have accepted the honour now, though not without trepidation—trepidation because there is a wide divergence between my own views and the views held by many on political questions. Again the fact that I am President of the National Congress for the current year makes things rather awkward for me. That single burden is more than I can fairly discharge, and it would be almost too much for me during the year to undertake to guide the activities of this Conference in addition. If therefore presiding over your deliberations today implies any such responsibility, I may say that I am not at all in a position to do it justice. Moreover, it would be unfair if the views which I express as President here are imputed to the Congress simply because I happen to lead it also.

It is necessary, therefore, for me to make it clear at the outset that my views about the Indian States have nothing to do with the views of the members of the Congress. My views are personal to me. They do not bear the *imprimatur* of the Congress.

If I have been deemed worthy to be President of this Conference, I think it is because I am a native of Kathiawar and also because I enjoy close relations with the workers in this Conference. It is only an accident that I happen to lead the Congress at present.

It is necessary, therefore, for me to make it clear at the outset that my views about the Indian States have nothing to do with the views of the members of the Congress. My views are personal to me. They do not bear the *imprimatur* of the Congress.

If I have been deemed worthy to be President of this Conference, I think it is because I am a native of Kathiawar and also because I enjoy close relations with the workers in this Conference. It is only an accident that I happen to lead the Congress at present. and to me. I had not the privilege of knowing him intimately. It is no small thing that his assistance is no longer available to us. May God give to the families of both, the patience to bear their loss and may the knowledge that we share their grief lighten their sorrow.

THE CONGRESS AND INDIAN STATES

I have often declared that the Congress should generally adopt a policy of non-interference with regard to questions affecting Indian States. At a time when the people of British India are fighting for their own freedom, for them to interfere with the affairs of the Indian States would only be to betray impotence. Just as the Congress clearly cannot have any effective voice in the relations between Indian States and the British Government, even so will its interference be ineffective as to the relations between the Indian States and their subjects.

Still the people in British India as well as in the Indian States are one, for India is one. There is no difference, for example, between the needs and the manners and customs of Indians in Baroda and of Indians in Ahmedabad. The people of Bhavnagar are closely related with the people of Rajkot. Still, thanks to artificial conditions, the policy of Rajkot may be different from that of Bhavnagar. The existence of different policies in connection with one and the same people is a state of things which cannot last for any length of time. Consequently, even without any interference by the Congress, the unseen pressure of circumstances alone must lead to the unification of policies in spite of a multitude of separate jurisdictions. Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.

But I am firmly of opinion that so long as British India is not free, so long as the people of British India have not attained real power, that is to say, so long as British India has not the power of self-expression, in a word, so long as British India does not obtain swaraj, so long will India, British as well as Native, remain in a distracted condition. The existence of a third power depends upon a continuance of such distraction. We can put our house in order only when British India has attained swaraj.

THE STATUS OF INDIAN STATES UNDER SWARAJ

When swaraj is attained, what will things be like? There will be a relation of mutual aid and co-operation and destructive conflict will be a thing of the past. British India under swaraj will not wish for the destruction of the Indian States, but will be helpful to them. And the Indian States will adopt a corresponding attitude towards British India.

The present condition of Indian States is in my opinion somewhat pitiable. For the Princes have no independence. Real power

does not consist in the ability to inflict capital punishment upon the subjects, but in the will and the ability to protect the subjects against the world. Today Indian States do not have this ability, and consequently by disuse the will also is as good as gone. On the other hand their power to oppress the subjects appears to have increased. As there is anarchy in the Empire, there is anarchy in the States subordinate to the Empire. The anarchy in the States is not so much due to the Princes and the Chiefs as it is very largely to the present condition of India.

The present condition of India being opposed to the laws of Nature, that is of God, we find disorder and unrest all over the country. I definitely hold that all will be well if one of the component parts of India becomes self-governing.

WHO MUST BEGIN?

Who then must take the first step? It is obvious that British India must lead the way. The people there have a consciousness of their horrible condition and a desire to be free from it, and as knowledge follows in the wake of desire, so those people only who wish to be rid of their peril will find out and apply the means of deliverance. I have therefore often said that the liberation of British India spells the liberation of the States as well. When the auspicious day of the freedom of British India arrives, the relation of ruler and ruled in the Indian States will not cease but will be purified. Swaraj as conceived by me does not mean the end of kingship. Nor does it mean the end of capital. Accumulated capital means ruling power. I am for the establishment of right relations between capital and labour, etc. I do not wish for the supremacy of the one over the other. I do not think there is any natural antagonism between them. The rich and the poor will always be with us. But their mutual relations will be subject to Constant change. France is a republic, but there are all classes of men in France.

Let us not be deluded by catchwords. Every single corruption which we notice in India is equally present in the so-called highly civilized nations of the West if under a variety of names. It is distance that lends enchantment to the view; hence things Western become invested with a sort of glamour in our eyes. In fact there are perpetual differences even in the West between the rulers and the ruled. There, too, people seek for happiness and suffer misery in return.

ABOUT THE INDIAN STATES

Many Kathiawaris complain to me against the Princes and Chiefs of this beautiful country and take me to task for what they imagine to be my indifference. These impatient friends will perhaps not understand me when I say that I have not been indifferent, but have been seeking for and applying the remedies for the present disorders. I have staked my all in the movement for swaraj in the hope that swaraj is a certain cure for all our maladies. As darkness vanishes at sunrise, so when the sun of swaraj rises, the dark anarchy of rulers as well as of subjects will disappear in an instant.

VISITS TO EUROPE

The administration of Indian States is the subject of constant criticism from which this small province has not been free. There is one common complaint about the Princes and Chiefs. Their fondness for visits to Europe increases day by day. One can understand their going to Europe on business or for the acquisition of knowledge. But a visit to Europe in the search of mere pleasure would seem to be intolerable. When a Prince passes most of his time outside his State, there is chaos in his State. We have seen that in this age of democracy and dissemination of knowledge, no State or organization which is not popular or beneficial to the people can continue to exist. Indian States are not immune from the operation of this law. Their administration will always be compared with that of the British now, and of the swaraj government when swaraj has been established. King George cannot leave England without the consent of his ministers. And yet his responsibilities are not so great as those of Indian Princes. Indian Princes retain all power in their own hands. They make the appointments even to minor posts. Their permission is needed even for the construction of a bridge. In these circumstances their visits to Europe are very distasteful to their subjects.

The expenditure incurred on these visits is also intolerable. If the institution of kingship has a moral basis, Princes are not independent proprietors but only trustees of their subjects for revenue received from them. It can therefore be spent by them only as trust money. It may be said that this principle has been almost completely carried out in the English Constitution. In my humble opinion the lavish expenditure incurred by our Princes in Europe is absolutely indefensible.

Sometimes this expenditure in Europe is sought to be justified on the plea that Princes go there for the benefit of their health. This plea is perfectly ludicrous. No one need, in the search of health, leave a country where Himalaya, the king of mountain, exercises undisturbed sway, and which is watered by such mighty rivers as the Ganges, the Indus, and the Brahmaputra. A country where millions of men enjoy perfect health should be enough to supply the Princes, needs on that score.

IMITATION OF THE WEST

But perhaps the worst disadvantage of these excursions is the shallow imitation of the West by the Princes. We have much to learn and receive from the West, but there is also much in it which must be rejected. There is no reason to suppose that what suits the climate of Europe will equally suit all climates. Experience teaches us that different things suit different climates. The manners and customs of the West could be but ill-digested by the East, and *vice versa*. Among Western nations men and women dance together, it is said, with restraint and, as report goes, do not overstep the bounds of decency although they indulge in spirituous liquors during the intervals of their dances. I need scarcely say what would be the consequences if we were to imitate this custom. How shameful to us is the case of an Indian Prince which is being discussed in the newspapers just now in all its hideous detail?

UNCHECKED EXPENDITURE

Another complaint is made in connection with the unchecked expenditure of Princes and Chiefs. Much of this is difficult to defend. Princes may have the right to spend money on luxuries and pleasure within limit. But I take it that even they do not wish for unrestricted liberty in this matter.

REVENUE SYSTEM

The revenue system in the States is also not free from blame. I am confident that their imitation of the British system has done a great injury to their subjects. The British revenue system may have a shadow of justification if we grant that it is morally right for a handful of Englishmen to maintain their hold over our country in any and every circumstance. There can be no such plea of compelling necessity in the case of the Indian Princes. They have nothing to fear

from their subjects as their existence is never in danger. They do not need a large military force; no Prince has got this and the British would never permit it. Still they levy a taxation far beyond the capacity of the subjects to pay. I am pained to observe that our ancient tradition that revenue is intended only for popular welfare has been receiving but scant respect.

“ABKARI”

The Princes, imitation of the British *Abkari* Department in order to increase their revenue is particularly distressing. It is said that *abkari* is an ancient curse in India. I do not believe it to be so in the sense in which it is put. Princes in ancient times perhaps derived some revenue from the liquor traffic, but they never made the people the slaves of drink that they are now. Even granting that I am wrong that *abkari* in its present form has not been in existence from times immemorial, still I do not subscribe to the superstition that everything is good because it is ancient. I do not believe either that anything is good because it is Indian. He who runs may see that opium and such other intoxicants and narcotics stupefy a man's soul and reduce him to a level lower than that of beasts. Trade in them is demonstrably sinful. Indian States should close all liquor shops and thus set a good example for the British administrators to follow. I congratulate the Kathiawar States which have tried to introduce this reform and I trust the day is not distant when there will be not a single liquor shop in our peninsula.

SPECIAL CASES

I constantly receive complaints against particular States for publication and criticism in *Young India* and *Navajivan*, but I do not propose to refer to them just now, nor have I referred to them in those journals. I prefer to be silent so long as I am not in possession of all facts and have not heard what the States in question have to say. I hope to be enlightened about these things in the Subjects Committee and if then I find it proper to say or to do anything, I would certainly move in the matter.

KHADI AND THE SPINNING-WHEEL

There are two items in which we can expect full co-operation from the Indian States. At one time our national economics was this that just as we produced our own corn and consumed it so did we

produce our own cotton, spin it in our homes and wear the clothes woven by our weavers from our own yarn. The first part of this description is still true while the latter part has almost ceased to hold good. A man generally spends upon his clothing a tenth of what he spends upon his food; hence instead of distributing ten per cent of our income among ourselves we now send it to England or to our own mills. That means that we lose so much labour, and in the bargain spend money on our clothing and consequently suffer a twofold loss. The result is that we stint ourselves in the matter of food in order to be able to spend on clothing, and sink into greater and greater misery day by day. We are bound to perish if the twin industries of agriculture and spinning as well as weaving disappear from our homes or our villages. I will leave it to the members of the Conference to imagine what would be the consequence if all the villages under Bhavnagar were to order out the food and clothing from Bhavnagar. Still it is this unnatural procedure which we have adopted about our clothing. We either import our clothing from foreign countries or else get it from our mills. In either case it spells decay of our rural population.

Let us not be deluded by the example of the other countries which import their clothing from outside and still do not suffer economically. In other countries if people give up spinning and weaving, they take to some still more remunerative industry instead. We on the other hand gave up spinning and partly weaving and had nothing else to occupy the time thus left vacant.

For Kathiawar it is very easy to escape from the economic catastrophe. Our Princes can encourage the people by personal example, and induce them to reinstate khadi in their homes and thus arrest the progress of the ever-deepening poverty of Kathiawar. In my view the starting of mills and ginning factories in Kathiawar will not make for the people's prosperity, but will be in the nature of a disaster. It is not a healthy sign that the middle-class people are compelled to leave the peninsula in search of a livelihood. There is no harm if a few enterprising men leave Kathiawar in search of fortune; but it is shameful and disgraceful for the States that their subjects being reduced to poverty should feel compelled to leave the country from pure helplessness. Whenever I have returned to Kathiawar after staying outside for sometime I have found that the people have been losing instead of gaining in stamina.

Fortunately the arts of hand-spinning and hand-weaving are being revived day by day and the importance of khadi is being realized. Will not the Princes and Chiefs help this movement? It will reflect no small credit on them if they educate the cultivators to stock cotton sufficient for the requirements of Kathiawar, and spread the use of khadi by wearing it themselves. All khadi need not be coarse. The Princes by encouraging hand-spinning and hand-weaving can revive many arts and crafts connected with weaving. Royal ladies can spin fine yarn on wheels artistically painted and adorned with silver bells, get it woven into fine muslin and deck themselves with it. I have personally seen delicate varieties being woven in Kathiawar. That art has now nearly died out. Is it not the special duty of Princes to encourage such arts?

UNTOUCHABILITY

Another extremely important question is that of untouchability. The suppressed classes perhaps suffer more in Kathiawar than in other parts of Greater Gujarat. They are harassed even in railways. To succour the distressed is the special mission of Princes. They are the natural champions of the weak. Will they not come to the aid of the suppressed classes? Princes live by the blessings of their subjects. Will they not enrich their own lives by earning the distinction of the suppressed? The scriptures proclaim that there is no distinction between a Brahmin and a scavenger. Both have souls; both have five organs of sense. If they wish, the Princes can do much to ameliorate the condition of these classes and can remove untouchability by association with them in a religious spirit. Let them found schools and sink wells for the suppressed and find a throne in their hearts.

WHY I HAVE CRITICIZED

I have not criticized the States for the sake of criticism. I know the Gandhi family has been connected with them for three generations. I have myself been witness to ministership in three States. I remember that the relations of my father and my uncle with their respective States were perfectly cordial. As I believe that I am not devoid of the sense of discrimination, I am anxious to see only the good points of the States. As I have already said I do not desire their destruction. I believe that the States can do much good to the people. And if I have embarked upon criticism, it is in the interest of the Princes as well as of their subjects. My religion is based on truth and

non-violence. Truth is my God. Non-violence is the means of realizing Him. In passing criticisms I have endeavoured to state the truth and have been actuated purely by the spirit of non-violence or love. I pray that the Princes and Chiefs may understand and accept my remarks in the same spirit.

“RAMARAJYA”

My ideal of Indian States is that of *Ramarajya*. Rama taking his cue from a washerman’s remark and in order to satisfy his subjects abandoned Sita who was dear to him as life itself and was a very incarnation of Purity¹. Rama did justice even to a dog. By abandoning his kingdom and living in the forest for the sake of truth Rama gave to all the kings of the world an object lesson in noble conduct. By his strict monogamy he showed that a life of perfect self-restraint could be led by a royal householder. He lent splendour to his throne by his popular administration and proved that *Ramarajya* was the acme of swaraj. Rama did not need the very imperfect modern instrument of ascertaining public opinion by counting votes. He had captivated the hearts of the people. He knew public opinion by intuition as it were. The subjects of Rama were supremely happy.

Such *Ramarajya* is possible even today. The race of Rama is not extinct. In modern times the first Caliphs may be said to have established *Ramarajya*. Abubaker and Hazrat Umar collected revenue running into crores and yet personally they were as good as fakirs. They received not a pie from the Public Treasury. They were ever watchful to see that the people got justice. It was their principle that one may not play false even with the enemy but must deal justly with him.

TO THE PEOPLE

In my humble opinion I have done my duty by the Princes in saying a few words about them. A word now to the people: The popular saying, “As is the king, so are the people”, is only a half truth. That is to say, it is not more true than its converse, “As are the people so is the Prince”. Where the subjects are watchful, a Prince is entirely dependent upon them for his status. Where the subjects are overtaken by sleepy indifference, there is every possibility that the Prince will cease to function as a protector and become an oppressor

¹ The source has “pity”.

instead. Those who are not wide awake have no right to blame their Prince. The Prince as well as the people are mostly creatures of circumstances. Enterprising Princes and peoples mould circumstances for their own benefit. Manliness consists in making circumstances subservient to ourselves. Those who will not heed themselves perish. To understand this principle is not to be impatient, not to reproach Fate, not to blame others. He who understands the doctrine of self-help blames himself for failure. It is on this ground that I object to violence. If we blame others when we should blame ourselves and wish for or bring about the destruction, that does not remove the root cause of the disease which on the contrary sinks all the deeper for the ignorance thereof.

SATYAGRAHA

We then see that the people themselves are as responsible as and even more responsible than the Princes for the defects pointed out by me. If public opinion is opposed to a particular line of action, it should be impossible for the Prince to adopt it. Opposition here does not mean merely inaudible murmur. Public opposition is effective only where there is strength behind it. What does a son do when he objects to some action of his father? He requests the father to desist from the objectionable course, i.e., presents respectful petitions. If the father does not agree in spite of repeated prayers, he non-co-operates with him to the extent even of leaving the paternal roof. This is pure justice. Where father and son are uncivilized, they quarrel, abuse each other and often even come to blows. An obedient son is ever modest, ever peaceful and ever loving. It is only his love which on due occasion compels him to non-co-operate. The father himself understands this loving non-co-operation. He cannot endure abandonment by or separation from the son, is distressed at heart and repents. Not that it always happens thus. But the son's duty of non-co-operation is clear.

Such non-co-operation is possible between a Prince and his people. In particular circumstances it may be the people's duty. Such circumstances can exist only where the latter are by nature fearless and are lovers of liberty. They generally appreciate the laws of the State and obey them voluntarily without the fear of punishment. Reasoned and willing obedience to the laws of the State is the first lesson in non co-operation.

The second is that of tolerance. We must tolerate many laws of the State, even when they are inconvenient. A son may not approve of

some orders of the father and yet he obeys them. It is only when they are unworthy of tolerance and immoral that he disobeys them. The father will at once understand such respectful disobedience. In the same way it is only when a people have proved their active loyalty by obeying the many laws of the State that they acquire the right of civil disobedience.

The third lesson is that of suffering. He who has not the capacity of suffering cannot non-co-operate. He who has not learnt to sacrifice his property and even his family when necessary can never non-co-operate. It is possible that a Prince enraged by non-co-operation will inflict all manner of punishments. There lies the test of love, patience, and strength. He who is not ready to undergo the fiery ordeal cannot non-co-operate. A whole people cannot be considered fit or ready for non-co-operation when only an individual or two have mastered these three lessons. A large number of the people must be thus prepared before they can non-co-operate. The result of hasty non-co-operation can only lead to harm. Some patriotic young men who do not understand the limitations noted by me grow impatient. Previous preparation is needed for non-co-operation as it is for all important things. A man cannot become a non-co-operator by merely wishing to be one. Discipline is obligatory. I do not know that many have undergone the needful discipline in any part of Kathiawar. And when the requisite discipline has been gone through probably non-co-operation will be found to be unnecessary.

As it is, I observe the necessity for individuals to prepare themselves in Kathiawar as well as in other parts of India. Individuals must cultivate the spirit of service, renunciation, truth, non-violence, self-restraint, patience, etc. They must engage in constructive work in order to develop these qualities. Many reforms would be effected automatically if we put in a good deal of silent work among the people.

THE POLITICALS

Kathiawar is famous for its political class. This class affects an exaggerated politeness and consequently it has developed hypocrisy, timidity and sycophancy. They are an educated body of men and therefore, they must become the pioneers in reforms. They can do much for the people if they wish. We find contentment among the people in places where these political officials are men of character. Needless to say that my remarks apply to the politicals as a class. I do

not wish to suggest that they apply to every member of that class. On the contrary, I know that some of the best of workers are drawn from this class. Hence I have never lost hope about this class. Much good might result if only it served the States not for making money but for pure service.

OTHER CLASSES

Again, constructive service is easy for those who not serving the States have adopted an independent profession. I am anxious to see them develop the qualities mentioned above. We want silent workers and pure fighters who would merge themselves among the people. Workers of this description can be counted on one's fingers. Is there even one such worker for every village in Kathiawar? I know the answer is in the negative. The class of people who will read this will hardly have any idea of rural life. Those who have some idea of it will not like it. Still, India and hence Kathiawar lives in the villages.

THE SPINNING-WHEEL

How is this service to be rendered? Here I give the first place to the spinning-wheel. I have heard much against it. But I know the time is near when the very thing which is being abused today will be worshipped as *sudarshana chakra*. I am confident that if we do not take it up voluntarily, the force of circumstances will compel us. The study of Indian economics is the study of the spinning-wheel. It is the *sine qua non* for the revival of our languishing village industries. I do not look upon hand-spinning as an occupation but as a duty incumbent upon followers of all religious sects and denominations.

An American writer says that the future lies with nations that believe in manual labour. Nations are tired of the worship of lifeless machines multiplied *ad infinitum*. We are destroying the matchless living machines, viz., our own bodies by leaving them to rust and trying to substitute lifeless machinery for them. It is a law of God that the body must be fully worked and utilized. We dare not ignore it. The spinning-wheel is the auspicious symbol of *sharir yajna*—body labour. He who eats his food without offering this sacrifice steals it. By giving up this sacrifice we became traitors to the country and banged the door in the face of the Goddess of Fortune. The numerous men and women in India whose bodies are mere skeletons bear witness to this. My revered friend Mr. Shastriar says I am interfering even in the people's choice of their dress. This is perfectly true. It is

the duty of every servant of the nation to do so whenever it becomes necessary. I would certainly raise my voice against it, if the nation takes, say, to the pantaloon. It is wholly unsuited to our climate. It is the duty of every Indian to raise his voice against the nation using foreign-cloth. The opposition really is not to the cloth being foreign but to the poverty which its importation brings in its train. If the nation gives up its *jawar* and *bajri* and imports oats from Scotland or rye from Russia I would certainly intrude into the nation's kitchen, would scold it to the full and even sit *dharana* and make the agony of my soul heard. Such intrusions have even happened within recent times. During the late diabolical War in Europe people were compelled to raise particular crops, and the States controlled the food and drink of their subjects.

Those who wish to serve in the villages cannot but take up the study of the spinning-wheel. Hundreds and even thousands of young men and women can earn their livelihood by its means and doubly repay the nation for it. This work means organization and familiarity with every villager to whom one could easily impart a rudimentary knowledge of economics and politics. The work might also include the true education of the village children and give one an insight into the many wants and shortcomings of villages.

Not only is there no conflict possible between a Prince and his subjects in this khadi work but on the other hand their relations might be expected to become cordial. The fulfilment of this expectation is conditional on the workers, humility. I am therefore neither ashamed nor do I hesitate in asking this Political Conference to give prominence to the spinning-wheel

THE SUPPRESSED CLASSES

Such also is the work among untouchables. It is the bounden duty of all Hindus to remove untouchability. Here also no interference need be feared from any Prince. I firmly believe that Hindus would regain the strength of soul if by serving the suppressed and receiving their hearts' blessings they carried on a process of self-purification. Untouchability is a great blot on Hinduism. It is necessary to remove that blot. The Hindu who serves the suppressed will be a saviour of Hinduism and will enshrine himself in the hearts of his suppressed brothers and sisters.

Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punish-

ment and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment. When the members of this Conference will prepare themselves by loving service, they will acquire the right to speak on behalf of the people and no Prince will be able to resist them. Then only is there an atmosphere for non-co-operation, if it ever becomes necessary.

But I have faith in the Princes. They will at once recognize the force of such enlightened and forceful public opinion. After all the princes, too, are Indians. This country is all in all to them as it is to us. It is possible to touch their hearts. I for one do not think it difficult to make a successful appeal to their sense of justice. We have never made an earnest effort. We are in a hurry. In conscientiously preparing ourselves for service lies our victory, the victory of Princes as well as the people.

HINDU-MUSLIMS UNITY

The third question is that of Hindu-Muslim unity. I have one or two letters from Kathiawar which show that this question is exercising some minds even in Kathiawar. I need scarcely say that there must be unity between Hindus and Muslims. No worker dare ignore any single part of the nation.

MY FIELD OF LABOUR

I know that to many my speech will appear incomplete and even insipid. But I cannot give any practical or useful advice by going outside my province. My field of labour is clearly defined and it pleases me. I am fascinated by the law of love. It is the philosophers' stone for me. I know ahimsa alone can provide a remedy for our ills. In my view the path of non-violence is not the path of the timid or the unmanly. Ahimsa is the height of Kshatriyas dharma as it represents the climax of fearlessness. In it there is no scope for flight or for defeat. Being a quality of the soul it is not difficult of attainment. It comes easily to a person who feels the presence of the soul within. I believe that no other path but that of non-violence will suit India. The symbol of that dharma for India is the spinning-wheel as it alone is the friend of the distressed and the giver of plenty for the poor. The law of love knows no bounds of space or time. My swaraj, therefore,

takes note of *Bhangis, Dheds, Dublas*¹ and the weakest of the weak, and except the spinning-wheel I know no other thing which befriends all these.

I have not discussed your local questions of which I have not sufficient knowledge. I have not dealt with the questions of the ideal constitution for the States as you alone can be its fashioners. My duty lies in discovering and employing means by which the nation may evolve the strength to enforce its will. When once the nation is conscious of its strength, it will find its own way or make it. That Prince is acceptable to me who becomes a Prince among his people's servants. The subjects are the real masters. But what is the servant to do if the master goes to sleep? Everything, therefore, is included in trying for a true national awakening.

Such being my ideal there is room for Indian States in swaraj as conceived by me and there is full protection guaranteed to the subjects for their rights. The true source of rights is duty. I have therefore spoken only about the duties of Princes as well as the peoples. If we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek. If, leaving duties unperformed we run after rights, they will escape us like a will-o'-the-wisp. The more we pursue them the farther will they fly. The same teaching has been embodied by Krishna in the immortal words: "Action alone is thine. Leave thou the fruit severely alone."² Action is duty; fruit is the right.

Young India, 8-1-1925

39. OPENING SPEECH AT KATHIAWAR POLITICAL CONFERENCE, BHAVNAGAR

January 8, 1925

I have expressed in my address the great hesitation that I felt in accepting the chairmanship of this Conference. Man proposes and God disposes. I have felt the weight of this maxim many times in my life, as indeed all thoughtful men and women must have done.

I wanted to dwell in this Conference on only one subject of primary importance, but now fortunately I must dwell on two. The first, is, no doubt, khadi, than which nothing is dearer to me.

¹ A backward community in Gujarat

² *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 47

People think that I have a craze for the spinning-wheel and khadi. This is true. Only a lover can fully understand his beloved. Only he knows what true love means; and I, being the lover, alone know what my love is like and what flames of passion burn in my heart. I do not, however, wish to speak of them now.

This is a political conference; hence you would expect a discussion of political matters only. But my thoughts and feelings are those of a rustic, a peasant, a common man. Although I was born in a trading community—the Bania class—and my father and grandfather were connected with matters of State as well, I am no statesman; there is no trace of statesmanship or diplomacy in me; and if there is any, it is in spite of me. But I have another quality in me, which is not inherited but is entirely self-acquired, and that is the quality of being a peasant, a scavenger, a *Dhed*, the lowliest of the low. I cannot, therefore, define “politics” in your terms—as statesmanship. Being what I am, I cannot think of matters only concerning the State when taking up a “political” Subject, for a farmer cannot look after his fields by making speeches—he can only do so by taking up his plough and not giving it up under the hottest sun. Similarly, a weaver can ply his trade by hard work alone. The common meaning of the word “political” is, however, making speeches, organizing agitations or movements and finding fault with the Government. But to me, the meaning of this word is quite different. Even during the twenty-two years of my stay abroad, I had given it a different definition. Yet, as things look enchanting from a distance, people have been mistaking me for a statesman or a politician. No doubt, I like politics too, but it is of a different kind. There is no place for scheming in it; it is full of love and understanding. In fact, love and affection are a thousand times more effective than political manoeuvring besides, the interests of everybody including those of the peasant, the scavenger and the pariah, can best be looked after through understanding and love. You know, I gave a similar definition of statesmanship before the Congress and I was not ashamed of it. It is from this point of view that I have included khadi among political matters. I claim my view to be wise and enlightened, and hope that some day you will also hail my advocacy of the spinning-wheel and khadi as shrewd, wise and enlightened. When people mock at me today and describe the spinning-wheel as Gandhi’s toy, I pity them, and I am not going to give it up however much they laugh at me.

Now, to the next important subject. Ever since I was invited here and I wrote in *Navajivan* that, if a separate enclosure was arranged for seating the untouchables in this conference, then my place would be among them,¹ a big outcry has been raised in Bhavnagar. I have seen with my own eyes how bad is the evil of untouchability in Kathiawar. My own revered mother thought it a sin to touch a *Bhangi*. She is no less dear to me on that account. But I don't want to follow in the footsteps of my parents in this matter.² I have inherited from them the spirit of freedom, and I am convinced that, even if I think differently from them on this subject, the soul of my mother will bless me all the same and will approve of my stand, for in none of the solemn vows she made me take was touching someone mentioned as a sin. Before I went to England, she took three promises from me, but she never asked me to adhere to untouchability as religious duty. I can quite see the little—or I should say perhaps, big—commotion in Bhavnagar; and the *Nagars*, the *Vanias* and others are upset. To such people who are present here and who really believe that Gandhi is out to uproot the *sanatana* dharma³, I would like to say deliberately and emphatically that Gandhi has no such intention whatsoever; on the contrary, *sanatana* dharma is rooted in what Gandhi says. Some of you may be learned men who have learnt every word of the Vedas by heart; I would nevertheless like to point out their mistake and say that the very foundations of *sanatana* dharma are being shaken by people who consider untouchability to be the heart of Hindu religion. With due respect I would submit that such belief lacks foresight, wisdom, discrimination, humility or compassion. Even if I remain alone in my conviction; I must still proclaim to the very end that if we accommodate the present conception of unthouchability in Hindu religion, it will surely lead to decay and bring about eventual death. To Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras I would say that the emancipation of India does not rest so much on the Muslims and the Christians as on how the Hindus themselves uphold their religion; for the Kashivishvanath⁴ of the Muslim or the Christian is Mecca or Jerusalem outside India; but the Hindu must seek his salvation in this land alone and nowhere else. This is tile land of Yudhishtira, of

¹ *Vide* "With what Expectation?" 7-12-1924

² The Gujarati idiom literally means: "I do not wish to drown myself in my ancestral well."

³ Literally, the eternal dharma

⁴ Banaras, the holy place of the Hindus

Ramachandra. Ascetics and sages have lived and practised austere penance here. They have called our country a field of duty and not a garden of pleasure. I tell the people of this land that Hindu religion is on test today, and it is being weighed against all the other religions of the world. If anything inconsistent with compassion, morality or reason is allowed to stay in the Hindu religion, then it will surely perish. I am fully aware of the virtue of compassion, and am therefore able to see what hypocrisy and ignorance is being practised under the cover of Hindu religion. This hypocrisy and ignorance I shall fight, alone if necessary. I shall do penance and may die in this struggle. But if perchance I lose my reason and in my insanity admit my present views on untouchability as wrong and say that I have sinned in describing untouchability as a blot on Hinduism, you may safely conclude then that irresistible fear has overtaken me and being afraid of the consequences I have denied my former belief. You must then regard me as one talking nonsense in a state of stupor.

There is no selfish motive in whatever I am saying today. I do not seek any position or prestige thereby. If at all I seek any position it is that of a *Bhangi*. Cleansing of dirt is sacred work which can be done by a Brahmin as well as a *Bhangi*, the former doing it with and the latter without the knowledge of its holiness. I respect and honour both of them. In the absence of either of the two, Hinduism is bound to face extinction.

I like the path of service; therefore, I like the *Bhangi*. I have personally no objection to sharing my meal with him, but I am not asking you to inter-dine with or inter-marry him. How can I advise you? As far as I am concerned I am a fakir, who has given up the world, a sannyasi who is not bound by social customs, though how much of a true fakir or sannyasi I am, I cannot say. But I do like renouncing the world and its ways. I also like *brahmacharya*, though how much of a true *brahmachari* I am, I cannot also say, for according to me anyone who has unchaste thoughts or dreams cannot be called a *brahmachari*. If I utter one word of anger, do anything out of malice or jealousy, say anything in fury even to someone who considers himself my deadliest enemy, I cannot call myself a *brahmachari*. Therefore I do not know whether I am a true sannyasi or *brahmachari*; but I can assert that my life and my thoughts tend towards that state. With this ingrained trait in my character, I cannot refuse to serve a *Bhangi* girl or a leper when my help is sought or

needed, nor can I refuse to accept a drink or meal proffered by them. God may protect me or kill me, but serve a leper I must. I may even say that, while engaged in such service, I would be entirely unconcerned whether or not God protected me. I regard it my sacred duty to eat only after making the pariah or the leper eat. But I am not asking you to violate any social barriers as regards eating and drinking. I expect only one thing from you, namely, that you should not create a fifth caste. God has cast men in a fourfold structure of society. I can understand that; but please do not create a fifth caste of untouchables. I cannot tolerate untouchability and am much pained to hear that word. I would request those who oppose me to think carefully, to come to me and understand through discussion what I am talking about. If you talk recklessly and thoughtlessly; you are not going to convince anyone thereby. I have received today a telegram signed by two pandits. I do not know these gentlemen; they write to say that the accusations heaped on me in the name of Hinduism and in the name of the Pandits are baseless, that they are going to send me such messages signed by the learned men of their class that shall prove that many shastris support me. They also plead their inability to work as vigorously as I do in this field, for they say that I am fearless whereas they have to weigh many considerations. When Shri Krishna went to Dronacharya and Bhishmacharya and asked them if they were going to fight the Pandavas, the two elders expressed their helplessness since, they said, they had to think of their livelihood. We have many such Dronacharyas and Bhishmacharyas among us who, poor people, have to think of their stomachs first. They are in no position to do anything. The fault lies with Providence or their circumstances. Even so, they bless me in their heart of hearts and know that whatever Gandhi says is true. But here I must also add one more thing. I am a satyagrahi; my creed ordains me not to kill anyone but to lay down my own life. I shall have to go my own way. I have, therefore, a request to make to you. If you sincerely believe that untouchability is the very core of Hinduism, then stick to it; but give me also my right to my belief that it is a disgrace to Hinduism. You may, if you can, rouse the Hindu world in your favour; but give me also an equal opportunity to do likewise. For a Satyagrahi there is only one path to follow: he does not seek alliances or compromises with others. I shall therefore assure you that in my dealings with you, I shall always be guided by love. If I am left alone, I shall segregate myself and ask people to keep away from me.

To those who are assisting me in my work of removing untouchability, and to the so-called untouchables, I would counsel forbearance even against abuse. Tulsidas has said that compassion is the very source of religion. If you forsake love, you shall lose the battle. They who regard untouchability as sin, must not sin themselves by hating their opponents. Turn a smiling face even to those who abuse you. If you love them from the depth of your heart, and maintain the right attitude and behaviour, the sin of untouchability is bound to be eradicated.

I fail, however, to understand this opposition in Kathiawar. Kathiawar is the land of Sudama, of Shri Krishna and Aniruddha. Where should I go if untouchability finds a place in the land where warriors have shed their blood? However, the *Bhangis* tell me that the conditions here are worse than in any other part of Gujarat. I am pained to hear this.

Who is Narandas Sanghani but a son to me? Once he used to follow me blindly and delighted in serving me. He gave all his library to me. But God has now induced ill-will in him. However, he is still like a son to me. I believe that his mischief will not last long and that his rows will never be fulfilled. Even if God wishes it otherwise, and Sanghani raises his hand to attack me, I shall ask him to please himself and bless him. Prahlad disobeyed his father since, he said, the father was leading him towards the path of sin and he was not bound by the father's orders. If Narandas still believes that he is like the eldest son to me and yet he wishes to do away with me because I have gone astray, he should certainly strike me. I am sure his eyes will open when he has done so, and he will then come to you with downcast head to atone for his sin. He is just a child, he is young, whereas I have grown old. Many people have raised their hand against me, but I have survived. Once I had appendicitis and I was operated upon. During the operation the lamp went off and Col. Maddock was greatly distressed. But God wanted to save me and here I am with no harm done ! There is a story in the Upanishads that Vayu¹ was asked to move a blade of grass, and Agni² to burn it; but they had to run away after admitting failure. So, if God does not wish me to die, who can kill me? And if my days are over, I may pass away without anyone's knowledge just as I am talking to you now or sitting comfortably and

¹ God of wind

² God of fire

no one could do anything about it too! I have had some experience of the world and acquired some knowledge of things. I am therefore asking you to believe me and have pity on Narandas. I do not seek your pity for myself, for I depend only on God for compassion. I demand a true soldier's pledge from you. Once you take the pledge, I would insist that you fulfil it. If you take a pledge without giving serious thought to it, you will find me a difficult man. I shall see that you honour your pledge. So think carefully before you come here again tomorrow.

I wanted to speak to you for thirty minutes, but have actually taken up thirty-five minutes of your time. I had no right over these additional five minutes, but I know that you have allowed me this indulgence and I have availed myself of it through your goodwill for *Bhangis*.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan Supplement, 18-1-1925

40. CONCLUDING SPEECH AT. KATHIAWAR POLITICAL CONFERENCE, BHAVNAGAR

[January 9, 1925]¹

The following is a substance of Mr. Gandhi's concluding speech at the Kathiawar Political Conference:

Whenever I have come to Kathiawar I have been covered with overflowing love. It is no wonder when I know that everywhere in India I find Kathiawar, i.e., the overwhelming love of Kathiawar. Much as I prize that love, I crave for that "love amazing, love divine", which nourishes the soul, and not the love which, not being backed by the will to perform promises made, withers the soul. It is service of the people that connects you and me, and not circumstances of a private nature. Unless, therefore, you give all your love practical shape, turn it into work of public benefit, it has, for me at least, no meaning. I am an ordinary mortal, as much exposed to affections and passions as anyone of you. But I always try to control them. I therefore demand love which soothes but does not overwhelm. I want the fire of that love to purify and not to burn me. Let all your love therefore be converted

¹ From the *Navajivan* Supplement, 18-1-1925, which carried the report of the Gujarati speech

into work in fulfilment of the national programme.

I am grateful to you for allowing me to exercise the fullest discretion as regards the resolutions you had drafted for consideration before the Subjects Committee. Your draft contained a long list of grievances. I asked you to restrain the desire for passing resolutions regarding grievances and to cultivate self-discipline and the capacity of suffering. You accepted my advice, not out of regard for my personality, but because you know that I am a practical man and have some experience of public affairs. In advising you however to drop most of your resolutions, I did not mean to muzzle myself too on the matters referred to therein. I have taken up greater responsibility on my shoulders. I do not want to go to sleep, because you have waived all discussion of your grievances. It shall be, for me, a year of intense, unremitting toil.

But I shall work on my condition. The advice I have given you is based on trust, trust in human nature, trust in the Kathiawar Chiefs. Even so at Amritsar I pleaded¹ with my brother-delegates not to distrust Mr. Montagu, not to distrust Lord Sinha's judgment, not to distrust His Majesty the King, and you know that the Congress accepted my advice to a considerable extent. You must remember that against me was ranged that day no less an opponent than the late Lokamanya Tilak. But he and the others saw that I was suggesting the proper thing and accepted my suggestion. I pleaded with them somewhat in this wise: "Accept the Reforms today, as given in good faith. The moment you feel that they are more a burden than a blessing, you may reject them. For Mr. Montagu says that he has tried to secure all that he could for us. Lord Sinha, a man in the know and a distinguished patriot, has also advised the country to accept the Reforms". The King's message too was couched in graceful language. All those considerations led me to suggest acceptance of the Reforms. Out of that state of trust, when it was proved to be misplaced, arose non-co-operation. Today too I am asking you to adopt a policy of trust. But pray do not press the parallel too far. It is meant only to assure you that I do not want to sit silent. I have heard more tales of woe than you have told me. I do not know how much of all I have heard is true. But you may be sure that as soon as I am convinced that the complaints are true, I shall use whatever ability and resource-

¹ *Vide* "Speech on Reforms Resolution at Amritsar Congress", January 1, 1920.

fulness I possess to get them remedied. I shall try to see the Princes concerned. If I succeed in getting a hearing from them, I shall discuss all your grievances with them, and shall, if permitted, acquaint the public with the result. Mussalman friends from Dhoraji had a series of grievances against the Thakore Sahib of Gondal. They asked to be permitted to place them before the Conference. But I dissuaded them, as I was not in possession of the facts. I have the honour to know the Thakore Sahib of Gondal. I have had the pleasure of meeting him. I regard him with respect, and I know that he is a capable ruler. It is therefore unbearable that he should mean or do any harm to his subjects. How can I indict him at the instance of half a dozen or more people? So long as I have not seen him or not spoken to the subordinate officers concerned, it would not be possible for me to give any definite lead. It would be against my nature to do so. I therefore assured the friends from Dhoraji that I would inquire into all their charges, and then do the needful. It was an awkward situation, my having to advise the Mussalman friends who might not trust me and know that I make no distinction between a Hindu and a Mussalman. But Maulana Shaukat Ali's arrival has fortified me. I told them that the Maulana and I would both consider over the matter, and give them our joint advice. I am glad to say that they agreed to this.

Jamnagar is in the same position as Gondal. I have numerous complaints against the ruler of that State also. If a subject may claim friendship with a ruling Prince, I may say that Jamsahib and I were friends in our youth. The late Kevalram Mavji Dave gave me a note of introduction to Jamsahib when I went to England. Very often we used to meet each other there, and the wish was dearest to the hearts of every one of us, his friends, that he should succeed to the gadi of Jamnagar. But today I hear numerous charges against him, none of which I wish may be true. I also wish that Jamsahib should of his own accord remedy all the wrongs (if any) that may have been committed against his subjects by him or in his name. It is not my purpose to embarrass him. I should approach him in all humility and plead with him. I should do the same with my bitterest opponent. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, for instance, thinks I am the wickedest man on earth. If he were to return to India as the King's representative, I would not hesitate to approach him, if need be, in all humility. Why should I do otherwise with Jamsahib? I have a huge pile of material before me aspersing both him and the Thakore Sahib of Gondal. But how can I make use of it, how can I criticize them, without inquiry? But I am not

going to ignore or suppress any of the charges or complaints. I shall, during the current year, try my best to get them investigated and shall submit to you a day-to-day diary of my work at the close of the year.

A word now for your part of the bargain. I ask you not to disturb the task I have undertaken, by private or public criticism of a bitter or rancorous nature. I ask you not to irritate the Princes. They are, after all, rulers and are therefore like all men in authority. Authority blurs the vision. We cannot have Rama in every age, nor Umar. None of the Caliphs who came after the glorious thirty years of the Caliphate could ever approach anyone of the first four Caliphs. Such rulers are rare even as the gems embedded in the most hidden recesses of mines. Wherever, therefore, I find a ruler getting irritated or angry I am patient with him. For anger is natural to them as much as to you or me if we were similarly placed. Kings are no more philosophers or saints than anyone of us. The world knows only one Janaka Videhi. Even under swaraj we shall have to put up with a fair amount of failings of the swaraj officials. Why only an hour ago perhaps I gave you a foretaste of how a man in authority behaves. How can I say that I did not in any instance abuse my authority? A shastri and a *muni* asked for permission to speak; I did not give it, I told the *muni*: “No more this wordy warfare for you. Your business is to go about from place to place introducing charkhas in every home.” How do I know that I did not exceed the bounds of propriety in thus disallowing both? But I was clothed in authority, however brief, and so you put up with me. Wherever there is the use of authority, there is scope for anger and injustice and we must need drink many a bitter cup at the hands of rulers.

I have thus presented to you two sides of the case, one for the rulers and the other for the ruled. It is unbearable for me that a Kathiawar prince should do wrong to his subjects. To him I say: “For what earthly use do you behave thus?” To you I say: “You must learn lessons of forbearance and self-suffering.” I commend to your attention the last paragraph of my printed Presidential address. I would ask you to read and read that paragraph and to chew and digest it. No people have risen who thought only of rights. Only those did so who thought of duties. Out of the performance of duties flow rights, and those that knew and performed their duties came naturally by the rights. The Shastras inculcate reverence to parents. It means implicit obedience to them, and why do we willingly obey like that? We know

that an angry look from his mother was sufficient to make the giant-like Shaukat Ali cower before her. What is the secret of this willing obedience? It is that the obedience carries with it enjoyment of a right—the right to inheritance. At the back of obedience is a consciousness of a right to be enjoyed, and yet woe to the man who obeys with an eye to the right to inheritance. It is the Shastras again that inculcate obedience without an eye to the fruit thereof. He who thinks not of the right gets it, and he who thinks of it loses it. That is the rule of conduct I would like to place before you. If you follow it I have no doubt that you will create a disciplined army of workers for swaraj. After you have succeeded in raising such an army, no ruler dare ignore you. As it is, the gentleman who invited the next conference to Sorath did so with considerable trepidation, lest a ruler should refuse permission to hold it. You have therefore to clear the atmosphere, and to raise your moral stature to such a degree that no one would want to refuse your request. I hope you will not misunderstand me. I am not asking you to do aught that you should not do, that may be calculated to injure your self-respect. Always insist on truth, and urge it with humility and grace. I am a journalist of long standing. In my own way I claim to know my art well. For I make it a point to write only one thing when there are a hundred things that I might write. Now if I were to open the columns of *Young India* and *Navajivan* to all the controversial topics and complaints that are referred to me, that would be the surest way to lose the little reputation I have gained for these journals. And punctilious though I am in the observance of this rule, I dare say I err on occasions. I would therefore ask such of you as are journalists and publicists to curb your pen and tongue. Exercise the strictest economy of words, but not of truth. Restrain your expression, but not the inner light which should burn brighter with increasing restraint. Nor will you thus fall a prey to weakness. Flattery and anger are the two sides of weakness, one the obverse, other the reverse. The reverse—anger—is worse than the obverse—flattery. Only a weak man either resorts to flattery or tries to disguise his weakness under anger. Let no one flatter himself that his anger is an expression of his strength. Strength lies only in action and action is duty done. Those who have captivated the hearts of men are souls heroic and true, who have burnt their passions to cinders in the fire of restraint. For you also, therefore, who have the salvation of Kathiawar at heart, patience and restraint should be the watchwords. The king carries on his work by means of punitive

sanctions. You will carry on your work with the sanction of sacrifice and love. Drench both the rulers and ruled with the water of your sacrifice and love, so that you may convert Kathiawar into an Eden worthy for men and gods to behold. If I may bless you, that is my blessing. If I am not worthy to give you blessings, that is my prayer to God. Let the spinning-wheel be a symbol of your sacrifice and love for fellowmen.

Young India, 15-1-1925

41. SPEECH AT SAMALDAS COLLEGE,
BHAVNAGAR ¹

January 9, 1925

I have to speak today on the dharma or duty of students. That dharma is as easy as it is difficult. According to Hinduism, the student is a *brahmachari*, and *brahmacharyashrama* is the student-state. Celibacy is a narrow interpretation of *brahmacharya*. The original meaning is the life or the state of a student. That means control of the senses, but the whole period of study or acquirement of knowledge by means of control of the senses came to be regarded as *brahmacharyashrama*. This period of life necessarily means very much taking and very little giving. We are mainly recipients in this state—taking whatever we can get from parents, teachers and from the world. But the taking, if it carries—as it did—no obligation of simultaneous repayment, it necessarily carried an obligation to repay the whole debt, with compound interest, at the proper time. That is why the Hindus maintain *brahmacharyashrama* as a matter of religious duty.

The [lives] of a *brahmachari* and a sannyasi are regarded as spiritually similar. The *brahmachari* must needs be a sannyasi if he is to be a *brahmachari*. For the sannyasi, it is a matter of choice. The four ashramas of Hinduism have nowadays lost their sacred character, and exist, if at all, in name. The life of the student *brahmachari* is poisoned at the very spring. Though there is nothing left of the ashramas today which we may hold up to the present generation as something to learn from and copy, we may still hark back to the ideals that inspired the original ashramas.

¹ Published under the title “The Duty of Students”, this is a summary of Gandhiji’s speech in Gujarati reported in *Navajivan*, 18-1-1925.

How can we understand the duty of students today? We have fallen so much from the ideal. The parents take the lead in giving the wrong direction. They feel that their children should be educated only in order that they may earn wealth and position. Education and knowledge are thus being prostituted, and we look in vain for the peace, innocence and bliss that the life of a student ought to be. Our students are weighed down with cares and worries when they should really be “careful for nothing”. They have simply to receive and to assimilate. They should know only to discriminate between what should be received and what rejected. It is the duty of the teacher to teach his pupils discrimination. If we go on talking in indiscriminately, we would be no better than machines. We are thinking, knowing beings and we must in this period distinguish truth from untruth, sweet from bitter language, clean from unclean things and so on. But the student’s path today is strewn with more difficulties than the one of distinguishing good from bad things. He has to fight the hostile atmosphere around him. Instead of the sacred surroundings of a *rishi* guru’s ashram and his paternal care, he has the atmosphere of a broken down home, and the artificial surroundings created by the modern system of education. The *rishis* taught their pupils without books. They only gave them a few *mantras* which the pupils treasured in their memories and translated in practical life. The present day student has to live in the midst of heaps of books, sufficient to choke him. In my own days Reynolds was much in vogue among students and I escaped him only because I was far from being a brilliant student and never cared to peep out of the school text books. When I went to England, however, I saw that the novels were tabooed in decent circles and that I had lost nothing by having never read them. Similarly there are many other things which a student might do worse than reject. One such thing is the craze for earning a career. Only the *grihasta*—householder—has to think of it, it is none of the *brahmachari* student’s dharma. He has to acquaint himself with the condition of things in his own country, try to realize the magnitude of the crisis with which it is faced and the work that it requires of him. I dare say many amongst you read newspapers. I do not think I can ask you to eschew them altogether. But I would ask you to eschew everything of ephemeral interest, and I can tell you that newspapers afford nothing of permanent interest. They offer nothing to help the formation of character. And yet I know the craze for newspapers. It is pitiable, terrible. I am talking in this strain as I have myself made

some experiments in education. Out of those experiments I learnt the meaning of education, I discovered Satyagraha and non-co-operation and launched on those new experiments. I assure you I have never regretted having tried these last, nor have I undertaken them simply with the object of winning political swaraj. I have ventured to place them even before students. For they are innocent. They are today summed up in the spinning-wheel. First it was hailed with ridicule, then came scorn, and presently it will be received with joy. The Congress has adopted it, and I would not hesitate to offer it respectfully even to Lord Reading. I would not hesitate to do so, as I know that I would lose nothing in so doing. The loser would be Lord Reading if he chose to reject it. I did not hesitate to deliver the message of the wheel to the Bishop of Calcutta when I had the honour to make his acquaintance in Delhi. I did the same with Col. Maddock, and when Mrs. Maddock sailed for England I presented her with a khaddar towel as a memento, and asked her to carry the message from house to house.

I am not tired of preaching the message of the wheel on all occasions at all hours, because it is such an innocent thing and yet so potent of good. It may not be relishing, but no health-giving food has the relish of spicy foods so detrimental to health, And so the *Gita* in a memorable text asks all thinking people to take things of which the first taste is bitter, but which are ultimately conducive to immortality. Such a thing today is the spinning wheel and its product. There is no *yajna* (Sacrifice) greater than spinning, calculated to bring peace to the troubled spirit, to soothe the distracted student's mind, to spiritualize his life. I have today no better prescription for the country—not even the *Gayatri*—in this practical age which looks for immediate results. *Gayatri* I would fain offer, but I cannot promise immediate result, whilst the thing I offer is such as you can take to, with God's name on your lips, and expect immediate result. An English friend wrote saying his English common sense told him that spinning was an excellent hobby. I said to him, "It may be a hobby for you, for us it is the Tree of Plenty." I do not like many Western ways, but there are certain things in them for which I cannot disguise my liking. Their "hobby" is a thing full of meaning. Col. Maddock, who was an efficient surgeon and took supreme delight in his task, did not devote all his hours to his work. Two hours he had set apart for his hobby which was gardening and it was this gardening that lent zest and savour to his life

I have pleasure therefore in placing the spinning-wheel before you, even as a hobby if you wills in order that your life may have zest and savour, in order that you may find peace and bliss. It will help you to lead a life of *brahmacharya*. Faith is a thing of great moment in the student state. There are so many things which you have to take for granted. You accept them simply because you get them from your teacher. Some propositions in geometry, for instance, were very difficult of comprehension for me. I took them for granted, and today I not only can understand them, but can lose myself in a study of geometry as easily as I can do in my present work. If you have faith and ply the wheel, you take it from me that some day you will admit that what an old man once told you about it Was literally true. No wonder that one learned in the lore applied the following text from the *Gita* to the spinning-wheel:

In this there is no waste of effort; neither is there any obstacle. Even a little practice of this dharma saves a man from dire calamity.¹

Young India, 29-1-1925

42. TO SALESMEN OF SAWRAJ

It seems that even now the change in voting rights appears terrible to many. This does not surprise me. We are often troubled by a new thing; sometimes it produces fear. I hope that, as time goes by, fear will disappear and people will realize the value of the spinning franchise. In order to help such appreciation, it is necessary that those who have faith in the spinning-wheel should prove it by their persistence in it. Without waiting for orders from the Provincial Committee, those who are already spinning should do it more regularly and those who are not doing should start doing it. As hanks measuring two thousand yards are ready, people should hand them over to the Provincial Committees and get their names registered. This must not wait for a notice from the Provincial Committee.

Those who spin should also start persuading others to do so.

What is true of spinning applies also to khadi which needs a great deal of propaganda. In my journey through Dohad and Godhra I found that very few people have taken to khadi as yet. Of those who

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 40.

do wear it, one hears that many do so only at public gatherings. This is no way to boycott foreign-cloth. I found very little khadi among women. I would specially request volunteers in Dohad and Godhra to go from door to door and explain the necessity of using khadi and the duty to spin.

We are in the same position as the trader who day and night plans for an increase in his business. We are the salesmen of swaraj. We are aware that the business of swaraj will thrive only if the boycott of foreign-cloth is successful.

Each volunteer should understand his own responsibility. Each one should maintain a diary. At the end of the day one should ask oneself the following questions and note down the answers:

1. How many yards of yarn have I spun today?
2. How many people today did I persuade to adopt spinning?
3. How many people did I persuade today to *adopt khadi*?

He who regularly gives truthful answers in his diary will soon find that his capacity for work grows constantly. Every individual has some self-respect and no one likes to record failures for ever. Hence, an honest person overcomes his failures and achieves victory. A good businessman keeps a diary and derives invaluable benefit from it. It is obligatory for the captain of a ship to maintain a log-book. Why should not the salesmen of swaraj do likewise? If a despondent people wish to regain hope, the Congress has shown the royal road to it. If we give up idleness and become industrious, we shall get results immediately. This is no time for criticism, no time for doubts. This is the time only to work silently, that is, to spin, to make others spin, to wear khadi and to make others wear it.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 11-1-1925

43. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Paus Vad 2 [January 12, 1925]¹

CHI. MATHURADAS,

While touring in Kathiawar I thought of you and Anand. I wished for your presence and Anand's well-being. I shall await your

¹ From *Bapuni Prasadi*

letter when I reach the Ashram. Tell Anand that I remember her every day. It is just as well that the Sanatanists have risen in revolt. It will cleanse the atmosphere. Here there has been a great deal of cleansing. The Harijans were able to enter the pandal¹ without any fear.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

44. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

Monday [January 12, 1925]²

BHAISHRI DEVCHANDBHAL,

I shall reach there³ at 3 o'clock tomorrow, Tuesday. I shall directly go to Babusahib Yashwantprasad's. He had been to me yesterday and pressed me to put up with him. I hope you will see me there.

Will you be coming to Sojitra? If not, do come as far as Dhola or some such place so that we may be able to talk about the future.

I wish to know what arrangements have been made about [the cotton] that has been collected. We shall have good results if we make careful arrangements about the smallest things. Here also cotton is being collected.

Pattani Sahib has kept up spinning.

I will need my list of a hundred names. This year you are not to do any other work. You must obtain all the help you can from the States for the *Antyajas* from wherever you can.

More when we meet.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5716

¹ Gandhiji presided over the Kathiawar Political Conference held at Bhavnagar on January 8 and 9.

² Gandhiji left Trapaj on the 12th for Bhavnagar on his way to Ahmedabad and thence proceeded to Sojitra on the 16th. From the reference to Prabhashanker Pattani's spinning it appears that the letter was written at Trapaj.

³ Bhavnagar

45. *SPEECH AT GUJARAT PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE, AHMEDABAD*

January 14, 1925

A meeting of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee was held this evening to formulate a scheme in accordance with the new constitution of the Congress. Mr. Gandhi, who was present, suggested that they should begin enlisting members to the Congress. They should say who would spin themselves and who would give yarn spun by others. They should also say how many members they would enlist for the Congress. Mr. Gandhi himself promised to spin and enlist 100 members from Kathiawar. A remark was made that he should collect two lakhs of members from India. Mr. Gandhi replied that he would give the surplus to them. On the whole 74 members promised to spin, three promised to give yarn spun by others, and the total number of members promised to be collected was 1,700. Mr. Gandhi then suggested that over and above these members who would spin or give yarn, there might be many more who would spin for half an hour daily if they were given cotton. He wanted that cotton should be collected. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel promised to collect 500 maunds of cotton and Mr. Abbas Tyabji promised to collect 25 maunds.

The Bombay Chronicle, 15-1-1925

46. *CONVOCATION ADDRESS AT GUJARAT VIDYAPITH, AHMEDABAD*

January 14, 1925

STUDENTS, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I congratulate you, students, who have received degrees today and hope that you will fulfil the vow that you have taken. Normally, on such an occasion, an institution reports progress in the numbers of students and teachers and in other respects. You must have seen from the report which the registrar read today that during the last four years the number of students has gradually been going down. Ordinarily this would cause disappointment. I am not disappointed, though I would admit that if it had been possible for us to show an increase in the number of students or some other progress by commonly accepted standards, I would have been pleased. I cannot say that the present position of the institution pleases me, but I am also not disappointed. It is true I and many others with me had hoped that we would need to run this institution only for a year and that after the attainment of swaraj at the close of this period you would go back to your schools and colleges which you had left at the call of the

country. But four years instead of one have already passed and it is not yet possible to say how long we must still remain in banishment. I have now come to believe that even after we secure swaraj, many such institutions would continue to work independently of the Government. The only difference then would be that unlike today these institutions would not have to compete with Government schools and colleges and the latter would not be regar-dedas belonging to the opposite camp and therefore fit to be boycotted. But then also such experiments would certainly continue and there would be a place for institutions like ours. I hope, therefore, that the students who are studying here will not give way to disappointment nor think of the period they have been here as wasted.

This morning itself, when I reached the Ashram,¹ there was a postcard waiting for me. It contained accusations against this institution. The communication was anonymous. I have very often commented in *Navajivan* that no one should write an anonymous letter. It is shameful, cowardly in a way. We should give up this tendency. If we do not have the courage to proclaim our ideas to the world, it is better that we forget them, bury them. However, this tendency prevailed in this country for many years and, maybe, exists even now. I did, therefore, read the anonymous communication. It says: "Why don't you close this institution? Why don't you open your eyes? You have misguided the students. Many students are returning to Government schools after deserting this institution. Whatever you think, the students have not the least faith in the charkha. Therefore, you should close the Vidyapith and all affiliated institutions." I do not accept this advice, and I wish that you too should not accept it. No new institution can be judged on the basis of funds spent on it or the number of men working for it. If we calculate on this basis, we may be misled. A process of self-purification is under way in this country—we look upon non-co-operation as self-purification—and it would be wrong to expect that the number of students with us must increase. It is good if it grows, but we should retain our faith even if it does not grow, and we must continue to serve this institution as long as we have the faith.

I would indeed be sorry if it is a fact that the students have no faith in the charkha. Those who have no faith in the charkha must unhesitatingly leave the institution. You must remember the resolution which the Congress has passed about national institutions. I shall

¹ Gandhiji had returned to Sabarmati from Bhavnagar in the morning.

remind you of it here. No one present on the occasion opposed the definition of a national institution incorporated in the resolution. If the opposition was kept hidden in the mind but not expressed, it would bring-discredit to me, to them, and to the country. How can I believe that the consent given by so many intelligent, free and mature men was not sincere? I would, therefore, say that the definition was acceptable to thousands. Recently the Kathiawar Conference has also accepted the definition. What is that definition?

A national school to be classed as such must fulfil the following conditions: Spinning must have a place in the daily routine. Teachers and students must spin daily for half an hour and should wear only hand-spun and hand-woven khadi. The medium of instruction should be either the mother tongue or Hindustani. *Vyayam*, that is, physical training including the art of self-defence, should be given due importance. The school should endeavour to unite the hearts of Hindus and Muslims. It should in no circumstances close its doors to the untouchables. This definition of a national school has been laid down by the Congress. Therefore, when I say that those who have no faith in the charkha should leave the Vidyapith and other institutions working under it, do not please think that I am excessively harsh. This is the only way in which we can progress. It will show us where we are going and how many men, women and students are with us.

My attention was drawn to certain criticisms of an article in *Sabarmati*¹. Some of them are baseless because I have never entertained the ideas I am accused of. I have never said that the students should ply the charkha all the day; not that I have never thought of it. If I could persuade students and other countrymen that this would be most helpful to the country, I would indeed ask all people to spin for the whole day. But I cannot persuade the country today nor can I myself do it. If I can spin all the time, I would advise the students and the country to do likewise. My ambition is to be able to proclaim to India that real learning consists in spinning round the clock. In a way, if you select any pure activity and concentrate thereon, it will lead to real learning because it is a way of performing yoga. I won't speak of this here. I would merely ask the students to ply the charkha with faith and joy, spin fine yarn, and learn all the processes of charkha. You should have the same love and keenness

¹ A Gujarati bi-monthly published by the Gujarat Mahavidyalaya, affiliated to the Gujarat Vidyapith

for spinning as you have for other subjects. I would not grudge your giving all other time to the other subjects. But when you spin, do it with all your heart and not in a perfunctory way.

The other charge is about a certain remark of mine that the Vidyapith should make a scheme for a syllabus which would provide you with a livelihood after graduation. I say this even now. But this is not and should not be the principal aim before the Vidyapith or before you. If learning becomes merely a means of earning, it will lead to your degradation. The Vidyapith has defined learning as that which leads to liberation. Therefore, it would be wrong, in this idealistic institution, to learn merely for the sake of earning. There are many ways for earning. Learning is intended to improve the body, mind and soul. He has acquired real learning whose body is well-built and strong, who can endure extreme heat and soul who has a strong will, who is self-restrained and pure, whose soul is so pure that he can claim to listen to the beatings of his own heart, and since the seat of the soul is in the heart, his heart must also be pure. Why should one who has acquired this triple learning worry about earning one's livelihood? One should have the faith that He who has given teeth will provide the crumbs. I am being told that the students have to run a household and feed many mouths. It may be so; a family should be maintained and it needs courage to do so. But while acquiring the learning described above, we also secure the ability to earn our livelihood. Livelihood cannot be secured by searching. One who looks upon learning as a mere means of livelihood does not secure even that. The Vidyapith is making provision for livelihood even now. It would be rendering you an invalid if it secures you a salary of Rs. 300 or Rs. 30 immediately on your graduation and issues such a letter to you. If such provision is made, it will sap your patriotism and your self-confidence. The Vidyapith gives you the strength to face difficulties and find a way out of them. The Vidyapith, in fact, can give you nothing, it can merely bring out that is hidden in you. You should therefore convince yourself that you have lost and are likely to lose nothing by coming to the Vidyapith.

The registrar has asked me to make suggestions about the future development of the Vidyapith. But I am able to make no such suggestions. I do not know what changes may occur in the situation in India this year. I am full of hopes, and will remain so till I die. But I cannot tell you just now what those hopes are; that would not be

advisable. To the students, I would only say this: You should not bother about what happens to the Vidyapith. It is enough for you to know that your being here in this institution is the right thing for you, and going to a Government school or college would have been wrong, seeing that as things stand you would not have received there the kind of education that you should. As long as you believe that India did not get what she should have from Government institutions—and there is no likelihood of her doing so till she shakes off the foreign bondage—the Vidyapith is the right place for you and you must not think of leaving it. But if you feel that you can get all that you want from Government institutions, you had better go there. And in that case there can be no reason whatever for you to worry about the future of the Vidyapith.

You must banish from your mind the thought of Government schools, and no student here should feel any attraction for them. As long as this attraction lasts you will continue to compare the Vidyapith with them. You will say to yourself: “There are so many facilities there while here there are few.” That there are few facilities here is the distinguishing mark of the Vidyapith. How shall we learn to overcome difficulties if we create those same facilities here also? Or, to put it in another way, the very lack of these facilities is the facility offered to you at this place. There can be no comparison between the Vidyapith and the Government schools. Once you grasp this truth and have it fixed in your mind, there will be no need for you to worry about the future of the Vidyapith. It should be enough for you to be able to say that you have rendered your best help in the struggle for freedom by doing your duty. You and I have no right to know more than that. I know only this that the Vidyapith will exist only as long as it is helpful in the struggle for freedom; when it ceases to be so it will destroy itself. And what is wrong in its being destroyed in that case? The future of Indian swaraj is the future of the Vidyapith.

Whatever is pleasant is not always beneficial. Even now when I have grown old I know that everything that pleases me does not prove beneficial to me. We do therefore consult elders on many occasions. It is for this reason again that we have the ancient tradition of finding out a guru and seeking his shelter and support. A student used to prostrate himself before the guru and entreat him to guide his steps and stuff his brain with anything that he chose. These days an all-round guru is not available and the question of complete surrender

does not arise. However, you need here the assurance that the teachers are leading you along the right path and not otherwise. Many things are bitter in the beginning but beneficial in the long run. With this faith you should swallow a bitter pill. This is my advice as well as prayer to you.

I wish to come back to the vow that you have taken. You have also listened to the prayer read by our brother, Athavale¹. Both these things looked very common. But we cannot see power latent in common things. When an artist displays a trivial painting in a hall we praise it because it is the fashion. But no one ever cares for the glorious painting right above our head. The limitless sky, its brilliant stars and moon, the splendid hues at the hour of sunrise and sunset—can any artist paint all these? We do not, however, raise our vision but look lower and lower. That is why we are captivated by trivial paintings. This is a pitiable situation. It is very likely that, in the same manner, you may not have realized the significance of the prayer you have heard and the vow that was administered to you by the registrar. You should continuously ponder over them and try to fulfil the pledge. The noble *mantras* of the prayer convey a sustaining message which cannot be imparted by speeches and writings. It is natural sustenance like mother's milk. What will be the result if a mother withholds her milk from a new-born child and another woman offers him a lot of other dainties? The child will not survive. This commonplace food is like nectar. If we ponder over our ancient heritage, if we imprint it on our hearts and act in accordance with it, our life's mission would be fulfilled. You may think no more of my speech and all other things, but do not forget the prayer and the vow. Then your time and mine would not have been wasted.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 18-1-1925

47. TELEGRAM TO SURENDRANATH BISWAS²

[On or before *January 15, 1925*]

AM ANXIOUS TO ATTEND CONFERENCE. PLEASE REMIND
ME END FEBRUARY.

GANDHI

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 16-1-1925

¹ R. B. Athavale, professor of Sanskrit in the Gujarat Vidyapith

² Chairman, Reception Committee, Bengal Provincial Conference. The Conference was to be held at Faridpur.

48. *CONFESSION OF FAITH*

It gives me much comfort to be able to have this unsolicited declaration¹ from Rajagopalachari. The reader knows my regard for his sanity and judgment. And I was grieved whilst he was torn with doubts and fears. There is no “playing with truth” in the charkha programme, for Satyagraha is not predominantly civil disobedience but a quiet and irresistible pursuit of Truth. On rarest occasions it becomes civil disobedience. But conscious and willing obedience must, in the case of a large body of workers, precede it. The charkha which is the embodiment of willing obedience and calm persistence must therefore succeed before there is civil disobedience. It is because I am much afraid of playing with truth in even thinking of civil disobedience before the necessary atmosphere has been ensured that I must insist upon the charkha and upon full surrender to the Swarajists, and for that matter to all concerned, even though the workers may be reduced to the number of the digits on the fingers of one hand only. We must not have violent disobedience under cover of civil disobedience. The lesson of Chauri Chaura has sunk too deep in me to be easily obliterated. Not only is there no trace of regret in me for the Bardoli decision but I hold it to be one of the greatest among my services to the country.

Young India, 15-1-1925

49. *A NOTICE?*

The following notice was delivered to me at Belgaum:

We, the undersigned, delegates of the Kolaba District Congress Committee in tile Maharashtra Province, beg leave to direct your attention to the special circumstances of our district. The Kolaba district is not a cotton-producing district, nor is it near such a cotton centre. The people of the district, therefore, naturally have no inclination towards spinning. Even in the first year of the non-co-operation movement, it was only with great difficulty that a few charkhas would be introduced which, too, span for only some months.

The Kolaba District Congress Committee has, therefore, after full consideration of these facts, passed a resolution in September last, to the

¹ *Vide* Appendix “Extract from C. Rajagopalachari’s comment on Charkha”, January 15, 1925.

effect that this spinning franchise cannot work in this district and its introduction in the Congress Constitution would endanger the very existence of almost all the committees in the district. We, therefore, inform you at the earliest opportunity after the spinning franchise is adopted by the Congress, that, though several of us have either voted for the resolution in the Congress or have refrained from voting against it only because the Swarajya party had decided to treat it as a party question, and others because they thought it inevitable to do so for the sake of unity in the Congress, it is difficult for us to carry it out in practice, so that you may not afterwards have any occasion for disappointment.

It is dated 27th December and signed by twelve members including the President and the Secretary. I hope that the signatories do not propose to carry their threat into effect. If these gentlemen have voted for, or refrained from voting against the spinning resolution for the sake of discipline or unity, I beg to point out to them that the mere voting or refraining does not fulfil the conditions of discipline or unity. To be effective, discipline means the carrying into effect of the terms of the resolution in a proper soldierly spirit of obedience although it may not commend itself to reason. Such was the spirit of the Light Brigade whose memorable charge has been made famous by Tennyson. Such was also the spirit of the soldiers who, although they knew they were running into the jaws of death, followed their general during the Boer war and were riddled to death by the Boer bullets on the heights of Spionkop. A mechanical assent by them to their general's proposition that the heights should be carried would have meant nothing, and would have meant even disgrace. It was the action though reluctant yet as daring as that of the staunchest believers that made them heroes. Be it noted that they fought a battle in which defeat was a certainty. But heroes are made in the hour of defeat. Success is, therefore, well described as a series of glorious defeats. What if the franchise is found at the end of the year to have produced a failure? It will be a glorious defeat if the Congressmen irrespective of parties and irrespective of willingness unwillingness will work their best to make it a success.

Nor is it proper to say as the signatories have said that many have voted for the resolution for the sake of unity if they have not intended to work in accordance with the resolution. Unity is made of sterner stuff. It is not "a showy nothing" to be merely named on a paper resolution. Unity to be achieved means solid action in terms of

the resolution. I do not believe the Councils. But because my co-workers believe in it, I have given them the use of the Congress name. Now if my heart does not co-operate with my lip or my pen, I am a hypocrite and not a believer in unity. Having voted for the resolution that authorizes Council-entry, I must wish well to the Swarajists. I must in no way hamper their progress by any act of mine; I must even help them wherever I can to the best of my ability and if they fail, they should not be able to say that they have failed because I refused to help within the limits previously and mutually understood. Assuming that the No-changers do not in any way whatsoever hamper the Swarajists, even the latter's failure, if there is to be failure, will be a success because at the end of it we shall have found another way of compassing our end. Exactly similarly, if all parties have done their best to make the franchise a success and it fails, we shall all realize the fact frankly, accept the defeat and jointly set about cutting another road to success. For out of our defeats, if we are determined, we shall find the way that leads us to our goal.

And what is the difficulty these Kolaba friends find except that of their own creation? If there is no cotton grown in their district, let them buy it. Kolaba is nearer Bombay than Manchester. Will they be surprised to learn that not a pod of cotton grows anywhere near Manchester and the gentlemen there find no difficulty in importing and carding and spinning it? I assure the friends of the Kolaba district that they will not find it half as difficult as the citizens of Manchester to import cotton in their district. Let me further hearten them by telling them that if they have not the will to import cotton and organize carding and spinning, the Congress resolution permits them to buy hand-spun yarn and pay the required quantity to the Congress. Have they the will to buy yarn? It will still be well, provided that the yarn *is* hand-spun and is even and well-twisted.

Young India, 15-1-1925

50. WELL DONE

Deshbandhu's latest score against Lord Lytton is a brilliant stroke. His ailing condition and his being carried to the Council Hall on a stretcher adds a dramatic touch to the great victory. His mere presence in an ailing condition constituted a speech far more effective

than any spoken word. If Lord Lytton has sufficient imagination and enough of the sportsman in him, he should after all these repulses withdraw the ordinance, release the prisoners and throw the responsibility on those who voted with the Deshbandhu of dealing with the conspiracy for murder which His Excellency believes exists in Bengal. He must not complain of the conduct of the majority in the Bengal Council because they have voted against him. The essence of popular legislatures is that the Government that is responsible to them must depend for its existence upon their reasoned support. They may be obstinate, stupid or suspicious on occasions. The Government has then to wait patiently for their conversion and be prepared to run risks of misgovernment or even worse. Why should a popular assembly be expected to be free from the limitations of an autocrat? Lord Lytton does not claim for his measure capacity for securing absolute immunity from political crime. But I very much fear that all the cogent argument that is being advanced by Indian publicists, although it is almost unanimous in its condemnation of Lord Lytton's policy, will be lost upon a Government which has become habituated to treat public opinion with contempt. Hence it is that I say to the public men of India that if they will add force to their argument, they must ply the charkha. It is the only creative energy that is readily available to the nation. The discipline that Deshbandhu Das has brought about in the Bengal Council will act with telling effect as soon as but no sooner than the charkha has obtained a footing in every home and boycott of foreign-cloth has thereby become an accomplished fact. Oh, for one concrete act to the credit of the nation as a whole!

Young India, 15-1-1925

51. KATHIAWAR NOTES

It was no light thing for me to advise the Kathiawar Political Conference not to pass a string of resolutions on grievances of which the delegates had no method of enforcing redress even if they were capable of proof to the satisfaction of the public. I told them that the Conference should first develop a spirit of public service and sacrifice and then organized for redress of grievances. They would then be better able to deal with the various matters about which they felt and complained. This was the method of pacific resistance. The Subjects Committee had no hesitation in accepting this advice. But there was an interesting debate on the spinning franchise on which the organizers

had prepared a resolution. It was, however, carried by an overwhelming majority. This resolution differs from the Congress resolution in that it requires the original member habitually to wear khadi and not merely on state occasions. Here there was no disciplinary voting; everyone was free to vote as he chose.

It now remains to be seen how the resolution works. Everyone seemed to admit that the success would depend largely upon the zeal, earnestness and capacity of the principal workers who made themselves responsible for the resolution.

SIR PRABHASHANKER TO SPIN

The most startling event of the session perhaps was the solemn resolution taken by Sir Prabhashanker Pattani to spin daily for at least half an hour before taking his principal meal so long as he was not too ill to turn the wheel. He has made no exception for travels, for he contends, and rightly, that as he travels always first class, he should have no difficulty about carrying the wheel with him and spinning during his travels. It is a tremendous step for Sir Prabhashanker. I hope that he will be able to carry out his resolution. His example must give great encouragement to the hand-spinning movement in Kathiawar. Needless to say that Sir Prabhashanker is not expected to join the Kathiawar Sabha. I was anxious to make it clear that though spinning has its political aspect, every spinner need not concern himself with it. It was enough for me if Princes and their ministers spun to set an example and as a token of their identification with those they ruled. The peasantry of Kathiawar has ample leisure. The people are poor. And if the fashion of spinning is set by the ruling class and their ambassadors, the people will adopt it and make a substantial addition to the national wealth. The effect of the addition on individuals might be imperceptible, but on the people as a whole it must be most marked.

The reader will be interested to know how Sir Prabhashanker came to take the resolution. He attended the Subjects Committee by invitation as a visitor. After the Spinning Resolution was adopted I invited the members to enrol themselves as spinners. I told them that at Belgaum I had undertaken in common with others to enlist before the Ist of March at least 100 members who would undertake to spin 2,000 yards per months. I added, too, that I would have also two spinners from among the "unwilling" class. I told the audience that I had hope of Kathiawar giving me the 100 members and that among

the two unwilling spinners I had Sir Prabhashanker in mind when I gave the undertaking at Belgaum. Up jumped to his feet Sir Prabhashanker and in solemn tones announced the foregoing resolution amid cheers.

I was to be Sir Prabhashanker's teacher. At the time of writing he had only three lessons. On the third day he was able to spin within less than two hours forty-eight yards of even, well-twisted yarn of eight counts. As a matter of fact during the very first lesson lasting half an hour he was able to draw a thread. He then asked to be left alone to battle with the wheel. Let me hope that the other administrators and ministers will copy Sir Prabhashanker's noble resolve to the benefit of themselves and the people under their charge.

COTTON COLLECTION

Bhavnagar being a cotton centre, it was decided also to collect cotton for distribution among those poor spinners who might be disposed to give half [an] hour's labour but may not be able to give or beg cotton. As a result, over 275 maunds of cotton was collected—not a bad result of two days' begging. If the enthusiasm continues, the spinning organization must prosper in Kathiawar.

Young India, 15-1-1925

52. THE REVOLVING WHEEL

Baro Dada Dwijendranath Tagore as the reader knows has a weakness for me. Almost everything I say or do appeals to him with an irresistible force. The reader is therefore entitled to discount his approval of my ideas and schemes. But he cannot but admire Baro Dada's zeal and devotion for his country which make him keep in touch with the current thought in our politics. Here is his latest on the spinning-wheel:

In practice, though not in theory, most self-important people fondly believe that what seems improbable to them is impossible and what seems probable to them is alone possible. The enemies of Napoleon once thought that it was as impossible for an army to cross the Alps during the winter season as it would be to take a flight to the moon by means of a balloon; but Napoleon thought otherwise. To his penetrating view, crossing the Alps was the only means possible by which he could gain entrance into Italy.

In like manner most of our countrymen think it utterly impossible

that the cause of our economical, if not political, freedom can advance a single step by such a simple thing as plying the charkha; while on the other hand Mahatmaji thinks that that is the only means possible by adopting which we can hope to reach the goal of our endeavour.

Baro Dada adds in a footnote that a charkha is philologically equivalent to a circle and metaphorically to the revolving wheel of the universe—*samsara*. One of Kabir's songs is based on this imagery. But the most important part of Baro Dada's letter is his emphasis on the stern fact that howsoever impossible the charkha may appear to the worldly-wise, it is the only possible thing for the country's real advance. It is the only thing that can give substance to any big political move that the country may make.

Young India, 15-1-1925

53. NON-BRAHMINS

The *Chronicle* invites me to explain my action or inaction in connection with the Non-Brahmin Conference at Belgaum. It surprises me to hear complaints of indifference on the part of the Congress leaders regarding the Conference. Speaking for myself I was trying to attend all the conferences consistently with the work I had gone to Belgaum to do. The Non-Brahmin Conference that was held was not held, so I was told, in response to Maulana Mahomed Ali's invitation. It was not held on the Congress ground. It was not held in consultation with any Congressman so far as I am aware. I knew nothing of the time or the place of the meeting except through the admission card that was delivered to me in common with numerous such cards. Nevertheless I was anxious to attend it and was trying to fit in my visit there with my other appointments. Unfortunately I was attending to business. I could not leave, whilst the Conference was proceeding. When I finished my work and inquired I found that the Conference was already dissolved. I state these facts merely to show that there was neither disinclination nor discourtesy shown regarding the Conference. What applies to me applies to most leaders. In my opinion it was the duty of the organizers to consult me as to the time of the Conference so as to ensure my attendance. And I would then have made it possible for the other Congress leaders, too, to go. Maulana Mahomed Ali's invitation was not meant for a mechanical act of holding others conferences during the Congress week. It was to

bring the parties together in hearty contact. I find no fault with the organizers of the Non-Brahmin Conference; I am simply endeavouring to show that the Congress leaders would have gladly gone if they could have and if they had been given an opportunity. Since writing the foregoing I have seen Sjt. Gangadharrao's explanation which makes the position clearer.

Young India, 15-1-1925

54. DETAILS FOR WORKING THE NEW FRANCHISE

I give below a summary of the instructions for Congress Committees and workers prepared at my request by Sjt. Satis Das Gupta of the Khadi Pratishtan. They may serve as a model for the Congress Committees.

In order to conduct the work of storing and despatching yarn quotas received from the members, the taluka or other enrolling committees shall have to keep a set of books: (1) Member Roll; (2) Receipt Book for yarn; (3) Yarn Register for members.

Member Roll: For a new member, after the creed is signed, and for an old member, on receipt of the first yarn quota, the name of the member should be registered in the Member Roll.

MEMBER ROLL 1925

Taluka		District						Province					
		Yarn Quota Received											
S. No.	Name & Address	J a n	F e b	M a r	A p r	M a y	J u n	J u l	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c.
1.	J. F. Iyer	A	A	A									
2.	K. R. Nathan	B	B	B									

In the Member Roll serial number of the member and his name and address should be written. Against his name entry will be made of the class of his yarn quota. It is necessary to classify the members in order to know how the franchise works.

Classification of members: Class 'A'—those who spin personally; Class 'B'—those who obtain the yarn otherwise.

Receipts: The collector who receives yarn shall give a receipt to the member in the following form:

YARN RECEIPTS

Date	Receipt No.	C.C.
Received from		
Roll		
Class		
Cotton supplied (<i>tolas</i>)		
Hanks of yarn said to be . . . yds.		
Counts	Signature of Collector	

The receipts should be printed in triplicate; the first copy is to be kept by the Collecting Office, the second copy is to be sent to the Taluka Office, third copy is to be given to the member. The same form should be used whether the collector goes to the houses of the members or the members deposit the yarn in the Congress Office. If cotton is given in exchange, the quantity given should be entered in the receipt.

The collector should attach a label to the yarn bearing the roll number and the name of the members and some other details as shown below. The label is to be of strong paper double folded and pasted with a thread passing through or in any other suitable manner and tied to the bundle of yarn.

LABEL

Roll No.	Name	Class
. . . Yds.	Quota for	
. . . C. C.		
	Collector	Date

The collector shall deposit the yarn in the office of the Taluka Congress Committee.

It is assumed that the village or other committee subordinate to the taluka receives the Receipt Book only from the taluka and all the books are kept in the Taluka Office. Such subordinate committees as may be willing to keep other books may do so in order to better manage their affairs.

Receipt Books shall be printed by the Provincial Office and numbered in one series, the number of receipts required being 12 for each member for the year.

The Receipt Books shall be supplied by P.C.Cs. on application. The P.C.C. shall keep a register of all such issues in the following form:

REGISTERS OF RECEIPT BOOKS

Date	Name of C.C. and District	Name of officer to whom sent	Box No.	Receipt Number	
				From	To

Yarn collected should be sent by the receiving committees direct to the P.C.C. or to such other office as the P.C.C. may direct for this purpose.

No yarn once received as franchise quota should be used for the same purpose again. The P.C.Cs. shall have a Day Book for entering yarn received and issued and for showing the balance yarn in hand.

YARN DISPOSAL DAY BOOK

Province										Year		
Date	Yarn received from	Quantity			Issued to	Quantity			Balance			
		Mil.	S.	Fil.		Mil.	S.	Fil.	Mil.	S.	Fil.	
5-2-	Haripur T.C.C. for Madhubani	...	10	5	P.K.B. for weaving	...	8	2	...	
15-2-	V.C.C.			

VALUATION

The P.C.C. shall value the yarn quota received during each month and send 10 per cent thereof to the A.I.C.C.

The P.C.C. shall send a monthly return containing the list of members in the following form to the A.I.C.C.

MONTHLY RETURN OF MEMBERS

Province				Month	
District	Congress Committee	No. of members on the roll	No. of member who sent quota		
			Class A	Class B	

The P.C.C. shall keep an account with each Congress Committee sending yarn, so that at any time it may be ascertained how much out of the sale proceeds of yarn may be due as against the liabilities for cotton supplies to the Committee.

The yarn on arrival should be valued and put wholly to the credit of the C.C. in the first instance. Periodically sums due to the P.C.C. for A.I.C.C., P.C.C. and D.C.C. shares of the yarn values should be ascertained and debited to the account of the Congress Committee concerned.

ACCOUNT FORM FOR P. C. C.

Ac... Taluka Congress Committee						Year			
Date	Cotton supplied	Dr.			Date	Yarn received	Cr.		
10-1-	1/2 Md @Rs.40/- per B. Md.	20	-	-	5-2-	10 Sr. 5 Tolas @ Rs. 2/- per seer	20	2	2
20-1-	1 Md. @ Rs. 40	40	-	-		20 Seers @ Rs. 2-4 per seer	45	-	-
10-3	25/- of Jan., Feb. and March quota	16	4	6					

If an account as shown above is kept with regard to all Congress Committees and the A.I.C.C. it would be easy to satisfy all parties. The P.C.C. supplies cotton on account and realizes the value of yarn and has to apportion the A.I.C.C. share and the share of the other bodies in the value. It is by itself a complicated work and if proper accounts are not kept, the risks of failure would be great.

SPINNING OPERATIONS

In those provinces in which there are a considerable number of self-spinners and the khadi activity is of importance, it will not be difficult to enrol members on yarn franchise at once and work the existing charkhas. But in those provinces where spinning has not made much headway, the P.C.C. will have to make very special arrangements for enrolling members.

Up to now the Congress Committees were handling cash only, but with the introduction of the yarn franchise, yarn and khadi will have to be handled. The Congress office shall have a yarn and khadi section. Scales and weights for weighing and all the necessary items for the storing, packing, despatch and sale of khadi and yarn will have to be attended to. A full set of books shall have to be kept. Every Congress office will necessarily become a sort of khadi production centre.

Arrangements shall have to be made for making charkhas easily available to the members.

Every Congress Committee will require a training section to be attached with it. The worker in charge of spinning section must learn to card and use the carding-bow as an expert and also be a good spinner.

Young India, 15-1-1925

55. SPEECH AT CULTIVATORS' CONFERENCE, PETLAD

January 15, 1925

I would consider this Conference futile if the president¹ cannot be given the alms he is begging for. There need be no reproach if he demanded something excessive and beyond your capacity. It would be a matter of shame for you, as well as for me, if forty volunteers are not recruited from this Conference. This would be so because of my close association with *Patidars*—it does not date from the time I started my work here but from the time when I was in South Africa—and on the strength of that association I expect that forty volunteers should be readily available from such a gathering. Not only men but women volunteers too should be available. If the latter do not have a

¹ Dr. Sumant Mehta

place in this movement, we shall be able to achieve only half of what we wish to. In a way it is true that these volunteers are honorary workers. They accept payment not because they covet it. However, the public which wishes to avail itself of their services is under obligation to make arrangements for their livelihood. Forty workers are not enough for our purposes. In India we may need even four hundred thousand volunteers. We do indeed need five to seven thousand workers for the task that we have undertaken and, in this poor country, it is impossible that so many volunteers can work in an honorary capacity. Even in European countries it is not possible to get such people. God has not created us merely to eat and remain idle. We have violated the universal law of nature—if a man eats without working for his food and spends thousands of rupees, thousands will die of starvation. The British historian Hunter's writing of India says that one hundred million people get barely one meal a day and, that too, of *roti* and salt. The Congress too has passed a resolution that we should not expect all volunteers to be honorary workers. In order to set an example the leaders should make a beginning. I too should, if necessary, accept an allowance. So should Vallabhbhai. Of course, I get many things from friends. Perhaps, today Vallabhbhai and I do not need an allowance; however, if such an occasion arises, both of us will get ourselves recruited as paid volunteers. Take the example of Tilak Maharaj and Gokhaleji. When the Fergusson College was founded, both of them had pledged themselves to serve the cause of education, content with a meagre salary of Rs. 30/- Later on Tilak Maharaj gave this up for certain reasons but, so long as he was there, he considered it an honour to accept this sum. Gokhaleji, on his part, completed twenty years he was a member of the Legislative Assembly, he served on many committees, he received some money from this, but he had not ceased to take the salary that he received from the Fergusson College. Even when he became "great" and when he was in a position to get a salary of Rs. 10,000 he did not regard the large amounts with the same respect that he gave to his original salary of Rs. 75/-. He had also very respectfully accepted a small sum by way of pension.

It is not for volunteers to pay heed to public criticism. Those who have nothing to do can do a lot of harm, hence volunteers should not fear criticism coming from such individuals. Volunteers should regard criticism as the food on which they live. One who cannot stand being criticized by the world cannot become a volunteer. They should

be thick-skinned like buffaloes. A volunteer should be a yogi who would keep on working with bowed head, look neither forward nor backward and attend only to himself and his work. The volunteer who holds that he has placed himself at the disposal of the public would think day and night only of his work; however, he should not hesitate to accept an allowance—not *kheer* and *puri*¹ but *jawar* and *bajara*². Those volunteers who have tried and got used to simple food should get themselves recruited and remove the president's fear. Come forward if you wish to detain the president here. You may never get another president who will be satisfied with so little.

I must necessarily tell you about the mighty and momentous activity in India today—that of khadi, that of the spinning-wheel; as people keep opposing it, my faith in it gets ever stronger. Do not therefore think that I am stupid and stubborn and stick to a thing unintelligently. This object, of which I am speaking, I placed before India only four or five years ago, but I had put forward my arguments in its favour in *Hind Swaraj* before ever having set eyes on the spinning-wheel. Moreover, I find that the opposition to it is not based on experience or thought, whereas my arguments are based on an abundance of both. I regard myself as a straightforward person. I regard it my dharma to admit my own mistakes. I do not approve of filth. To bear filth on the body, in the mind or in the heart is a disease, hence not to admit a mistake is also a disease. He who does not admit his mistakes before God—although He is omniscient, He makes man strive and often deludes him—one who does not admit one's mistakes before God, that is, before the world, will fall a prey to consumption, will invite spiritual decay. This is even more harmful than consumption which is only physical. Only the body is wasted in one, while in the other the spirit seems to be destroyed. The spirit is immortal, indestructible; hence, even though there is an illusion of its destruction it is not really destroyed. In imagining the destruction of the soul which is immortal, one is stricken by a double disease. Hence I would not hesitate in the least to admit a mistake if I made one. It does not matter if, as a result of this, all spinning-wheels stop working and I am branded insane; but, then, I know that such a situation has not arisen. I have such faith in the spinning-wheel that even if my wife, my sons and my colleagues who are even closer to me than my sons gave it up, I would all alone keep singing its praises and plying it. Idleness is the great plague of India. It is not a natural tendency. It

¹ Rich food

² Simple food

could not be so for the peasant for, if that was the case, his fields would be ruined. In our country, idleness crept in with the ruin of the spinning-wheel. Crores of people became unemployed and to them employment cannot be merely an amusement. Some say that they will make baskets, others that they will make locks. Some wish to make matches and others soap. These jobs cannot be taken up by the millions and, even if these things were produced by the millions, they would find no market. If we work in this manner, there could be no national unity but rather a crowd of individuals. Such work cannot uplift us. It is for this very reason that I claim that what we need in India is a supplementary occupation. There are hardly any villages in Kheda which I have not visited and very few persons there whom I have not met. Most of these have plenty of spare time. If I proclaim that the spinning-wheel is the means of utilizing that time, it is not met with general approval. The result is, some resort to theft, others incur debts and yet some others starve. People who are in such a pitiable plight, who are forced to remain idle, are bound to be ruined. If they do not rouse themselves and rouse others too, they will certainly be ruined. This is a law of social existence. It is not a law which governs individuals but one which is true of society. Crores of persons cannot make a livelihood by the spinning-wheel nor has it been introduced as a source of livelihood, but it may be described as *annapoorna*, which indicates ghee and milk. Countless numbers of the poor cannot afford ghee or milk, they cannot afford a drop of milk or a particle of ghee for their wheat gruel. This situation is dreadful. The only remedy for it is the spinning-wheel. One person putting in labour worth a rupee makes no difference, but a town with a population of seven thousand earning seven thousand rupees in this manner does make a difference. By working the spinning-wheel, some other virtues are automatically acquired. It is accompanied by simplicity, sincerity and regularity; and regularity in one matter leads to regularity in one's entire life, just as, if one angle of a crooked square is set right, the other angles automatically resume their shape. This is a law of geometry. When one bit of work is done regularly, all others become regular. You will remember me too late if you do not take to the spinning-wheel today. As soon as there has been only a small downpour, you should raise the bunds and hold the water. He who tries to do so when the water pours down in torrents cannot stop it and consequently faces the loss of water as well as the bunds. Now, while there is still time, I would ask you to be on your guard and wake up. Do not like a miserly bania calculate what you can get from the spinning-wheel, but think rather of the gain it will bring the nation. In a small village of the size of Trapaj, people were astonished when the figures were explained to

them. Kathiawar is not a fertile region. Sticks and stones are all that grow there. Moreover, as the land is unproductive, people sit around the village square and chat idly not for six but eight months in the year while some would perhaps even take opium. I explained to the people of Trapaj how they could easily save two thousand rupees. The larger part of the expense on a seer of cotton consists of spinning, not weaving. If you use your own cotton, clean it and spin it at home, the only expense would be that of having it woven. And if this is all the cost that has to be incurred, we could compete with the textile mills of the world. For textile mills have themselves to incur almost the same cost on weaving as do handlooms. The people of India understood this and hence they were as accomplished in the use of the spinning-wheel as in cooking; with the disappearance of the wheel we came to lead unholy and godless lives and ceased to fear God. If you wish to have faith in God, to become pious, to protect your sisters' honour, then adopt the spinning-wheel. In its wake will follow the awakening of the country, the unity of Hindus and Muslims, the end of the country's poverty and the salvation of all the peasants of India. The entire social structure of India is based on the spinning-wheel.

I have heard that you *Patidars* do not treat the untouchables properly. If you look upon yourselves as Kshatriyas, you are not entitled to use force against the untouchables, to browbeat them, to practise the barbaric law of buying much labour for a small payment. The *Gita* asks you to keep the gods pleased: "The gods will give you rain, if you keep them pleased". The gods are not in heaven. For you, they are among the untouchables; they belong to the labouring class. The poverty-stricken people of India are her gods. Religion without compassion is a fraud. Compassion is at the very root of religion and one who forsakes it, forsakes God; one who forsakes the poor forsakes everything. If we do not look after the poor and the untouchables, we are sure to perish.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan 25-1-1925

56. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

SOJITRA,
January 16, 1925

MY DEAREST CHARLIE¹,

I do not know what cable you want me to send to Mr. Alexander², because the authority sent once is of a general character. If, however, you want me to send another, please send me draft and address.

Am too tired to write more just now.

With love,

Yours,
MOHAN

[PS.]

Do not think of the M. League³. The Congress represents all in this matter.

C. F. ANDREWS ESQ.

SHANTINIKETAN

Via BOLPUR

E. I. RY.

From a photostat: G.N. 2619

57. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S CONFERENCE, SOJITRA⁴

January 16, 1925

To women I talk about *Ramarajya*⁵. *Ramarajya* is more than swarajya. Let me therefore talk about what *Ramarajya* will be like—

¹ Charles Freer Andrews (1871-1940); British missionary; co-worker of Tagore and Gandhiji; honoured as “Deenabandhu” (brother of the poor)

² Horace Alexander, represented the Society of Friends of Great Britain at the International Opium Conference at Geneva; *vide* “Message to International Opium Conference, Geneva”, before October 2, 1924.

³ Muslim League

⁴ In Petlad district, Gujarat

⁵ The ideal rule of Rama

not about swaraj. *Ramarajya* can come about only when there is likelihood of a Sita arising. Among the many *shlokas*¹ recited by Hindus, one is on women. It enumerates women who are worthy of being remembered prayerfully early in the morning. Who are these women by taking whose names men and women become sanctified? Among such virtuous women Sita's name is bound to figure. We never say Rama-Sita but Sita-Rama, not Krishna-Radha, but Radha-Krishna. It is thus that we tutor even the parrot. The reason why we think of Sita's name first is that, without virtuous women, there can be no virtuous men. A child will take after the mother, not the father. It is the mother who holds its reins. The father's concerns lie outside the home and that is why I keep saying that, as long as the women of India do not take part in public life, there can be no salvation for the country. Only those can take part in public life who are pure in body and mind. As long as women whose body and mind tend in one direction—i.e., towards the path of virtue—do not come into public life and purify it, we are not likely to attain *Ramarajya* or swaraj. Even if we did, I would have no use for that kind of swaraj to which such women have not made their full contribution. One could well stretch oneself on the ground in obeisance to a woman of purity of mind and heart. I should like such women to take part in public life.

Who shall we say is a woman of this kind? It is said that a virtuous woman can be recognized by the grace of her face. Must we then accept all the prostitutes in India as virtuous? For it is their trade to deck themselves up. Not at all. The thing needed for grace is not beauty of face but purity of heart. A woman who is pure of heart and mind is ever fit to be worshipped. It is a law of nature that our outward appearance reflects what we really are within. If inwardly we are sullied, so shall we appear without.

The eyes and the voice are external signs. The discerning can recognize virtue by voice.

Then what does it mean to be virtuous²? What is the sign of virtue? I accept khadi as the symbol of virtue. I do not suggest that anyone who wears khadi has become sanctified for that reason alone.

I ask you to participate in public life. What does it mean to

¹ Verses

² The Gujarati word is *pativrata*, which literally means “devoted to her husband”.

participate in public life? Public work does not mean attendance at meetings, but wearing khadi—the symbol of purity— and serving the men and women of India. After all, what service can we render to the Rajas and Maharajas? If we try to approach the Maharajas, the sentry at the gate may not even let us in. Likewise, we do not have to wait on millionaires: To serve India therefore is to serve its poor. God we cannot see with our eyes; it would do if we serve those whom we can see. The object of our public life is to serve the visible God, that is, the poor. If you want to serve them, take the name of God, go amidst them and ply the spinning-wheel.

To take part in public life is to serve your poor sisters. Their lot is wretched. I met them on the banks of the Ganga where Janaka¹ lived, where Sitaji lived. They were in a pitiful state. They had scanty clothes, but I could not give them saris because I had not found the charkha then. Indian women remain naked even if they have clothes, because as long as one Indian woman has to go naked it must be said that all are naked. Or even if a woman is adorned in a variety of ways but is of unworthy soul, she would still be naked. We have to think of ways of making them spin, weave and thus covering themselves truly.

At present when people go to the villages to render service, the villagers imagine that they have come to exact *chauth*². Why do they imagine this? You must realize that you go to the villages to give and not to take.

Were our mothers mad that they used to spin? Now when I ask you to spin, I must appear mad to you. But it is not Gandhi who is mad; it is yourself who are so. You do not have any compassion for the poor. Even so you try to convince yourself that India has become prosperous and sing of that prosperity. If you want to enter public life, render public service, then spin on the charkha, wear khadi. If your body and mind are pure you will become truly swadeshi. Spin in the name of God. To spin for your poor sisters is to worship God. Giving in charity to the poor means an offering to God. That alone is charity by which the poor become happy. If you give in charity to whomsoever you please, it would be said that you indulge your whims. If you give in charity to those who have a pair of hands, a pair of legs and good health, it would be said that you were out to impoverish them. Do not give alms to a Brahmin because he is a

¹ The philosopher king of Videha ; father of Sita

² One-fourth of the farm-produce formerly collected as land revenue

Brahmin. Make him spin and give him a handful of jowar or rice. The finest sign of purity of mind is to go and work for khadi amidst such people.

The second sign of virtue is service to *Antyajas*¹. Brahmins and gurus of today regard touching an *Antyaja* as sinful. I say that it is a meritorious act, not a sin. I do not ask you to eat and drink with them, but to mix with them in order to render service. It is meritorious to serve sick *Antyaja* boys who are worthy of service. *Antyajas* eat, drink, stand and sit, and so do we all. It is not that doing this is either sinful or meritorious. My mother used to become *Antyaja* for some time and then she would not allow anyone to touch her. My wife similarly used to become an *Antyaja*. At this time she became an untouchable. Our *Bhangis* also become untouchable when they do their work. As long as they do not bathe, one can understand not touching them. But if you would not touch them even when they have bathed and tidied up, for whose sake do they bathe then? They have no God even. They think others have the same kind of nose and eyes and yet the latter despise them. What then should they do? Think of this: Did Ramachandraji despise the *Antyajas*? He ate berries already savoured by Shabari and he hugged the king of Nishadas, and they were both untouchables. You can see for yourselves that there is no untouchability in the Hindu religion.

The third sign of virtue is furtherance of friendship with the Muslims. If someone tells you that “they are Mias” or “Mia and Mahadev cannot get on”, then tell him that you cannot harbour enmity towards the Muslims.

If you do these three things, you will be said to have taken full part in public life. By doing so you will become worthy of being prayerfully remembered early in the morning; and it would be said that you have worked for India’s salvation. I beseech you to become thus worthy.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 87-90

¹ Hindus traditionally regarded as untouchables, whom Gandhiji later described as Harijans, God’s folk

58. SPEECH AT KSHATRIYA CONFERENCE, SOJITRA

January 16, 1925

BROTHERS,

I feel sorry that we have only ten minutes within which to finish the work of this Conference. For I have asked the *Antyaja* brothers to come in at four. You have passed three resolutions. All the three are very useful. You have resolved not to take alcohol; that is good. Temperance is not the concern of your community alone. Members of other communities also drink. You have passed resolutions saying that you will not sell your daughters and abduct women. Those are also good. You are Kshatriyas and you believe that you possess Kshatriya virtues. If we look at our Shastras we find that a true Kshatriya would not retreat after taking a step forward. Moreover, he protects others. You realize without my having to tell you that it is the quality of a Kshatriya to act in that manner and accepting that principle you should not shirk your responsibility. A vow is a pledge, an undertaking to do something, with God as witness. You have vowed not to drink, not to sell girls or to abduct them. But if you do not keep your pledge, it will be said that you have sinned against the whole world. Each of the four *varnas*¹ must adhere to the vows it takes.

To break a pledge is to retreat. So if you once raise your hand to take an oath and then forget about it, you cease to be a Kshatriya. You would feel ashamed and so would I. That would weigh on me. Having promised Ravishankar² who is working among you that you would not steal, suppose you did so, what could he do? Government would punish you for it. On the other hand, Ravishanker would suffer by fasting; by doing so he would tell you that you had better kill him than break faith. It is with this Ravishankar as a witness that you have taken an oath; so if you break your pledge you will force him to fast. I am of Ravishankar's fraternity and know how to follow him. I know not how to kill, but how to die. And remember that Ravishankar is not just one person, but a full harvest. Having cautioned you thus, I ask you: Will you keep your promises? This is not a theatre and I can't act myself. No community progresses through imitation. It is we, the educated, who by our play-acting have corrupted you. So think well before you raise your hand. The time has passed when a pledge could

¹ Literally, a colour; the four castes among the Hindus

² A silent constructive worker of Gujarat

be fulfilled by merely raising a hand. So much about your vows.

And now two other things. One, you must wear khadi. You must not imagine that your country consists of only what lies between the Narmada and Sabarmati. Yours is a large country. It is 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad. If you want to walk all that distance, it will take 190 days. The people living in this country are your brothers and sisters. It is necessary for you to spin yarn for them and that yarn has to be given to the Congress. There is no other way to make khadi cheaper. Spin for half an hour each day. If crores of people do the same, khadi will cost nothing.

The other is to make the *Antyaja* community your own. A Kshatriya is the protector of the cow and the Brahmins. The cow is not the animal with two horns, but any being in distress. *Antyajas* are an unhappy community. If a Kshatriya forsakes the *Antyaja* community, he ceases to be a Kshatriya. If people who deem themselves to be Kshatriyas forsake the *Antyajas*, no one will count them as Kshatriyas.

I pray to God that He may sustain you in the fulfilment of your pledges. If you mean to keep your pledges, then believe my humble words. Those who wish to keep the vow should take the name of Rama on getting up in the morning and before going to bed and pray, "Oh Rama ! Bless me and help me keep my vow." If you do that, you will not be tempted by liquor, you will feel no lust when you look at a woman. Our poor daughter is a cow. You would hate yourself if you sold her.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 91-3

59. SPEECH AT ANTYAJA CONFERENCE, SOJITRA

January 16, 1925

We must not conceal nor feel shame at the dirt within us. Women smoking hookahs are insufferable. Their mouths stink. The craving for liquor is also similar. I well know from experience the lot of drink addicts. I also know about people who take bhang. Liquor and bhang are first cousins. I wish you would give up all these bad habits. If you would listen to me, give up meat altogether.

Those who won't touch the untouchables raise many objections. When I remonstrate with them, they say that the *Antyajas* are dirty, they drink toddy and eat meat. I tell them that such people are found

even among Brahmins, *Vanias*¹ and other castes, yet their children go to schools and go to the temple; what perverse reasoning is this? Although I argue with them, I tell you at the same time to rid yourselves of the blot so that they will have nothing to blame you for. You should bathe regularly after your day's work is over. I have done much scavenging, and so have my sons; your Raojibhai, too, has done such work. There is no disgrace in it. This work is sacred and the man who removes filth is doing sacred work. You should also have a bath after cleaning hides. Good men always clean their teeth, wash and bathe and keep their bodies tidy. Do all this and tell the beads taking the name of Rama. If you don't have a rosary, tell the name of Rama on your finger tips. Through the name of Rama all your bad habits are bound to disappear. You will become purified and everyone will respect you. If you repeat the name of Rama on getting up in the morning and before going to bed in the evening, the day will go well for you and the night pass without bad dreams. To remain clean, don't eat what others have left over, do not take stale food. Even if you get sweets others have partaken of, go without them and eat *roti*² you yourselves have made. After all you are not born to eat left-overs. You have eyes, nose, a pair of ears. You are a complete man. Learn to preserve your human dignity.

Lots of people will come and tell you that your Hindu religion is all wrong, as you are not allowed to go to school or enter the temple. To such people you should say, "We shall settle accounts with our Hindu brothers; you may not come between us any more than you may intervene in a quarrel between father and son or among relatives"; and you should remain steadfast to your religion. I am myself an outcaste. There are many like myself. Shall I give up my religion because of that? Many Christian friends urge me to turn Christian. I tell them there is nothing wrong with my religion. Why should I give it up? Let me be an outcaste. If I am pure and clean, why should I be unhappy? I have joined the *Antyajjas* and if for that reason Hindus persecute me, do I cease to be a Hindu? Hinduism is intended for me and for my soul. Tell this to both the Christians and the Muslims and be firm in your own religion. *Antyajjas* are not pawns in a game of chess so that anyone can play with them. It is in my self-interest that I come to you calling you my brothers and sisters. My

¹ Business Community

² Unleavened bread

self-interest is my desire to rid myself of the sins my forefathers have committed against you; you are not to be blamed for that. So why should you give up your religion? It is I who have to make atonement. Why should you give up chanting the name of Rama? It is the way of Rama to make his followers and servants suffer and it is thus that he tests their devotion. It is my prayer that you will pass that test.

In conclusion, let me ask you to be compassionate, for we, all of us in this world, thrive on love. Let me ask you in the end to ply the spinning-wheel, weave yarn and wear khadi only.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 93-5

60. SPEECH AT BARDOLI

January 17, 1925

These gifts of coconut, yarn and money do not make me rejoice. I do accept these; but my search is for true men. I visited a very fine school in Varad. There are many fine teachers there, but many children were withdrawn from the national school after the Vidyapith resolution allow-ing *Antyaja* children to join it. I may make it known that a resolution has also been passed for the merger of the village school with the national school. However, what is the sense in forgetting our responsibilities one moment and remembering them the next? Were we merely staging a play in 1921?¹ We then thought that swaraj without the abolition of untouchability was worthless. Swaraj without khadi would also be futile. Today, however, I find that Bardoli lacks faith, lacks the courage to be independent. The latter implies the courage to carry on with the unfinished job with a handful of men when all others have been beaten back. Bardoli has completed neither the khadi programme nor the abolition of untouchability and has left the *Dublas*² in a sorry plight. I would, at any rate, ask Bardoli to correct the errors it has made. I shall not lose faith in Bardoli. I find the same affection and sparkle in the eyes of women as I found there before. I have been informed that they have brought yarn and money along with them voluntarily and that they have not been prompted by

¹ A reference to the Non-co-operation movement

² A backward community of Gujarat

anyone to do so. It is the men, however, who have lost the spirit. Shri Raichura¹ instead of singing that Gujarat has saved the honour of the Punjab, Bengal, etc., should say that Gujarat has not saved its own honour. Gujarat still has the opportunity to do so. I do not ask you to go to jail today; today I ask you to practise what is our ordinary dharma which is very easy to practise. I was not very eager to come here but came along as a matter of my dharma. Though I have not lost hope, I am certainly disheartened, as we have lost self-confidence today. The time is not yet gone. Think no more of boycotts which were a temporary affair. I have given up all those things which were only a means for securing swaraj. You must, however, pursue that which helps the attainment of self-purification—khadi, the abolition of untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity. Practise these as your ordinary dharma regardless of whether swaraj is secured or not, otherwise we shall surely perish. Hinduism will be destroyed if untouchability is not ended and, without khadi, there will be such starvation in the country that our flesh will be eaten up by crows and dogs, leaving only bones behind.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 8-2-1925

61. REMINISCENCES OF KATHIAWAR

IN AN OCEAN OF LOVE

Whenever I go to Kathiawar, I am overwhelmed by the affection I receive. This has ceased to surprise me. Whenever I go, I see Kathiawar. Yet, being an Kathiawar makes a difference. Can it be that I myself need love from Kathiawar? Or, that I wish Kathiawar to make an exhibition of its love? I cannot fathom the nature of my feeling. Why should there be any exhibition of love in Kathiawar? What kind of love is that which requires formal courtesies to express it?

GREATER EXPECTATIONS

Or else, could it be that I expect more of Kathiawar? I am not satisfied perhaps by its external manifestation of love. Perhaps I am inwardly dissatisfied at this external show alone. If a mother, trying to be polite towards her son forgets to serve him his *roti* and is busy in decorating the dining room in his honour, he will feel that she is

¹ A poet and writer from Saurashtra

keeping him at arm's length. Do I have a similar feeling? Am I not, by my behaviour, suggesting that I shall be entirely satisfied if I am favoured with that one thing for which I have shamelessly come? Yes, I am.

Whether that is true or not, I came and stayed in Bhavnagar,¹ regarding it as the land of my forefathers, and built castles in the air. Not one of my hopes was shattered. The reception committee had drafted so many resolutions, all of which I could be said to have cast aside. My suggestion that those resolutions should be withdrawn did not meet with the approval of all. The committee, however, accepted my advice.

THE SPINNING-WHEEL

I did not go to Bhavnagar in the hope that the spinning-wheel would be made a condition for franchise. Hence I was certainly pleased to find the resolution about the spinning-wheel. Parts of it were overdone. It said that all members were to sell annually khadi worth Rs. 50 and, members of the executive committee, khadi worth Rs.500. I suggested that this condition should be dropped. If members accepted responsibility to that extent, we could boycott foreign cloth without delay. However, by incorporating something in the franchise, which would depend upon co-operation from others, the intrinsic merit of the franchise would be destroyed.

Although this has been dropped from the franchise, those who are able to spread khadi will certainly do so. The discussion in the Subjects Committee pleased me greatly. Everyone expressed his views fearlessly. I found that a considerable section expressed its opinion against spinning. Their argument, however, did not appeal to a vast majority. There were no two sections as Swarajists and No-changers in this case. Hence the discussion centred round the merits and demerits of spinning. There were two opposite standpoints. One was in favour of spinning, while the other was opposed to introducing spinning in the right to vote.

The duty of those who have voted in favour of spinning is absolutely clear. They have to prove their faith by steadfast spinning and by spreading khadi in other ways. They will be regarded as having betrayed Kathiawar and myself if, in spite of having so voted,

¹ For the Kathiawar Political Conference held on January 8 and 9, 1925. Gandhiji presided

they do not spin regularly. On the other hand, if they spin regularly, by the end of the year they will make non-spinners take up spinning.

WEAR KHADI

What is true of spinning is true of wearing khadi. I saw hardly any opposition to wearing khadi. Despite so many votes in favour of khadi it is sad to find so few khadi-wearers in Kathiawar. It is a great pity that khadi is sent out of Kathiawar and that very little is sold locally. However, now that so many votes have been cast in its favour at the Conference, its sale must considerably increase in Kathiawar.

LIFE MEMBERS

There are about thirty-six members of the Kathiawar Political Conference because they have paid a lump-sum contribution of Rs. 5. One of them raised the question of their rights and asked me as the President to give a decision in the matter. As the resolution regarding spinning drops the clauses opposed to it, the question arose whether life members did or did not retain their rights. According to the resolution, clauses which opposed spinning were automatically dropped. The question was a complicated one; however, there was no alternative for me but to give a verdict. I have given the verdict that life members continue to remain members even if they neither spin nor make others do so.

I have not given the decision whether or not the Conference has the legal authority to do away with such rights. It was necessary for me only to decide whether the resolution of the Conference made any difference to the rights of the life members and, as mentioned above, I have given that decision in favour of the life members.

REQUEST TO THEM

I would request them, however, not to take advantage of this right but, instead, write letters to the Secretary of the Conference informing him of having given up this right and having voluntarily accepted the resolution of the Conference. I am aware that many members did not wish to raise the above question. Many are prepared to spin. Hence, when the Conference has adopted an important change, it is not proper for the life members to disregard it by asserting their rights. This is my humble opinion.

SIR PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI¹

In some respects I regard Sir Prabhashankar Pattani's pledge to spin as a major achievement of the Conference. The words with which he announced his pledge were very solemn. They left a very deep impression on the members. That pledge originated in the following manner. After the final session of the Congress at Belgaum,² many persons had come to the decision that they would enrol a certain number of spinning members before the first of March. I had personally undertaken to try and enrol a hundred names in this venture, and I had also said I would try to persuade two additional persons who were thought to be unwilling to spin. As I had to come to Kathiawar in any case, I had hoped to find these persons here. I counted Pattani Saheb among those averse to spinning. When the Subjects Committee accepted the resolution on spinning, I asked for a hundred names and also promised to try and persuade Pattani Saheb to spin. No sooner had these words escaped my lips than Pattani Saheb stood up and took the pledge that as long as he was in good health, he would spin regularly for half an hour before his meal. He then laid down the condition that I should teach him how to spin. I got what I wanted. At the close of the Conference I was to be his guest. The very day after the Conference, I taught him for half an hour. Within that very half-hour, he learnt how to take out threads from the spinner. On the second day, within two hours, he spun 48 yards of fine eight-count yarn and on the third day he spun 27 yards within an hour. On both the days he had his meal only after taking a bath and spinning the yarn. In this manner, if other well-known officials and members of princely families set an example in spinning, it would make a good impression on the poorer sections of the people in the country and make them industrious. I hope that Pattani Saheb's pledge will be fulfilled in all respects.

I should inform you that he will not become a member of the Congress or the Kathiawar Political Conference. Nor did I want or wish him to do so. In my opinion, spinning is related to politics. However, spinning can be undertaken even without political motives. Compassion for the poor, the religious sentiment underlying spinning and its economic implications are acceptable to all. I even wish that

¹ (1862-1937) ; Dewan of the former Bhavnagar State; member, India Council, 1917-19

² Held in December, 1924

Lord Reading¹ would spin. Without any reference to political matters, if the ruler and the subjects both start spinning and using khadi, I am confident that India would automatically come into its own. This is a matter in which all can participate unhesitatingly and be of some service to the country.

COLLECTION OF COTTON

As soon as the Conference was over, Shri Devchand Parekh², Shri Manilal Kothari, Shri Barjorji Bharucha and others set out to collect cotton to be supplied to the poor so that they would be required to give only half an hour's labour daily and before leaving Bhavnagar they collected about 275 maunds of cotton. It is hoped that nearly 2,000 maunds of cotton will be collected as gift from kathiawar alone. I hope that this drive for collecting cotton will be enthusiastically carried out and those who can give will not hesitate to do so.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 18-1-1925

62. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

SARBHON,
*Paus vad 9 [Januay 18, 1925]*³

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I received your letter. I am not insisting on *brahmacharya*, But I am indifferent. I am not convinced that it is necessarily a duty of parents to settle their children. I think parents should help their children in getting settled. The case of U.P. was altogether different. In our narrow world it has become a delicate problem. I am keeping myself alert. Anand must have recovered her health. I shall be at Sabarmati on the 20th and 21st. I shall leave for Delhi on the 22nd morning. You will have passed on to Kalidas Paramanand the telegram which I sent through you.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

¹ 1860-1935; Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1921-26

² The Secretary of the Conference

³ From the postmark

63. LETTER TO PREMIBEHN MANCHHARAM PATEL

Paus Vad 9 [January 18, 1925]¹

DEAR SISTER,

There are very few in this world who show perfection in their work. Hence, people who are earnest, who do not hide their mistakes but endeavour constantly to correct them should continue to do the work of service assigned to them with total involvement.

MRS. PREMIBEHN MANCHHARAM PATEL

L. R. KANYASHALA

RANDER

DISTT. SURAT

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 1106. Courtesy: Premibehn Bhushanlal Shah

64. SPEECH AT BHUVASAN

January 18, 1925

What hopes does a man entertain and what is he required to do? I do not want to think about your unhappiness and mine. We had hoped to do a great deal of service to India through Bardoli.² But no one knows how many things man proposes and God disposes. We are puppets in His hands.

Let me say one or two important things. You used to spin a lot and found interest in carding. Shankerlal Banker³ used to live in your midst. Just now while at my meal I asked him how things stood with you then. He told me that you used to say, “If nothing else, we have learnt the *mantra*⁴ of khadi. We sow the best seed for growing cotton. We know the technique and we have the time. Why then should we not make our own clothes?”

That is a good thing. Moreover, I wish that as Bardoli District is self-sufficient in the matter of food, so must it become in cloth; that

¹ From the postmark

² In 1921-22, it was decided to make Bardoli the first unit for mass civil disobedience to mark “the national revolt” against Government’s policies regarding the Khilafat, Punjab and swaraj.

³ Social worker and labour leader of Ahmedabad

⁴ Sacred formula with magic efficacy

the children, women and men of Bardoli become diligent instead of lazy. It is not that people who, by God's grace, are wealthy need alone become industrious. It will be a good thing if those who are not altogether invalid have some work to do. The saying that an idle man calls down ruin is true. We can improve our condition and banish starvation by carding and spinning. You would not know about starvation but the *Kaliparaj*¹ and the *Dublas* might know. Their lot is more or less that of the animals. The condition of those owning land must be better. Judging from the eyes and teeth of those who work with the upper castes for a mere pittance, I do not think their state is too good. In one village I saw many such *Dublas*.

I do not ask others to court prison; only Dayalji², Vallabh-bhai,³ and I have to do so, and that too not just yet. The reason is that according to the policy initiated in 1921, one was to go to jail only according to one's free will. The present is not the time to go to jail. For jail-going a different set of conditions apply. The common people of India have not yet acquired the qualities necessary for jail-going. I think, however, that stray individuals will serve the purpose. It is my ambition to recruit such persons from among you. But that is another matter. My intention just now is different.

You used to do good work. It was everyone's hope that if nothing else we would be able to produce khadi in Bardoli district. You had realized that our glory lay along this path alone. But now you have forgotten all that. Where has all your faith gone? If someone like me comes along and starts one or two new schemes conceived in haste which you may not like, would you for that reason give up your own worthwhile work?

And that is exactly what you have done. You have set up an Ashram for which a Parsi gave you the money. He was a Parsi like Hatimtai. Few could be as generous as he. He was as charitable as Baliraja and that great man of Iran. I am talking of Rustomji⁴. His celebrated name will endure as long as the town of Sarbhon exists. It

¹ Literally, black people; the name of a community in Gujarat; *vide* the following item.

² Dayalji Desai; a public worker of Surat

³ Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950); Congress leader from Gujarat; first Deputy Prime Minister of free India

⁴ An Indian merchant of Natal who took a prominent part in Gandhiji's satyagraha campaigns in South Africa

was not as if he had anything to do with you. But Parsi Rustomji took no notice whatever of differences of religion. When he got to know that the people of Bardoli were brave and self-denying, he sent the money. And from that money the workers of the two Ashrams you had built are being maintained.

Gujarat's best workers have come to these places—Narahari¹ among them. But it was he who has offended against you. If my son, whom I had appointed my successor, commits an offence, it must be considered my offence—not, of course, if he is a spoilt child. I appointed Narahari my representative. He is a co-worker of mine in the Ashram and I have great faith in him. We brought money from outside and poured it into Bardoli. We made the name of Bardoli famous through the world. The praise of Bardoli was sung all over India. People thought of sending workers there, arguing “If one brought disgrace on the name of Bardoli, it would be a terrible thing.” Narahari was one of those who came. You are offended because he started teaching and working for *Dublas*. Let me tell you that if this was his offence, it was an offence worth committing.

Hindu dharma tells us to have our meal only after serving the poorest of the poor. Our dharma also tells us to tend weak animals. Even if their ribs stand out they should not be killed. Even the ant-holes should be filled with flour. We owe kindness to the animals. A meticulous ethics that teaches this would not expect us to treat men as animals. It would teach us to be compassionate to the poor. One should treat all people as one's kinsfolk. In many old-fashioned families a servant is not a servant but himself a master. How can we fail to feed his children who are like our own?

Who am I? Who is Narahari? No one can be imposed upon you. Narahari, Jugatram and others did not come here to lord it over you. But what can they do if they feel unhappy? What can a wife do if the husband turns cruel and beats her? She would weep and not eat. If a man loses his temper, is he to blame for it or God? I speak from experience. I am married and have known the happiness of family life. If there is a quarrel between husband and wife, she would either call him names or weep. Narahari has behaved like a woman and stopped eating. You thought that Narahari has been tyrannizing over you. Nothing of the sort. He has offered satyagraha. One who

¹ Parikh

normally offers satyagraha against the Government has now offered it against you. But there is no place for fasting in the satyagraha against the Government. You have noticed that I myself do not fast [in this manner]. I did fast at Bombay but that was against our own people—the champions of the Congress and the Khilafat.¹ What you have done is to me my death. If we hurt others, if we repeat what the people did at Chauri Chaura², it would not be accepted as satyagraha against the Government which is a matter of jail-going. There it was not a matter of awakening sympathy through a fast unto death. The Government's claim over you is that of an enemy. Narahari's was that of service, love and friendship. His heart fluttered; but you were in a rage. It would have been well if you had killed him. But why were you angry with yourselves? Why have you given up khadi? You thought Narahari wanted to pick up a quarrel with you. You could have said that you would do nothing for the *Dublas*. But what is the point of forsaking khadi and carding? How cruel! How absurd!

I want therefore to tell you that you must take him back and make amends. The atonement would consist in your considering boycott of mill cloth as dharma and in spinning. Narahari asked me, "May we leave Sarbhon?" I said, "No. That would be the act of a coward. If you do that people will get angry. You can't run away from them, or desert your post. You will have to stay there and make them see that you do not want to harm them. That you can do only by serving them, no by running away. Plant yourself firmly and do your work. If no one accepts your work, you should keep on carding, spinning and weaving." I do not know if Narahari is soothed by my words. It is another matter if he can't bear all this but it is his duty to teach the *Dublas* and the *Antyajias* if they ask him. To allay your fears let me assure you that he has no quarrel with you.

I seek an assurance from you also. If one of your hands is in a huff, do not let the other lose its temper. There is neither justice nor sense, neither discretion nor foresight, in letting that happen. That will show a backward-looking mind. I was listening the questions put to you. You people—living in and around Sarbhon— have no difficulty

¹ Gandhiji had fasted in November 1921 in Bombay. In September-October, 1924, he fasted in Delhi, for securing Hindu-Muslim unity.

² A small town near Gorakhpur in U.P. where, in 1922, a violent mob locked up some policemen and burned them to death. Consequently, Gandhiji withdrew the Non-co-operation movement.

in ginning and spinning. What a shame if in spite of all this they cannot give 2,000 yards [of yarn]. Surely the Bardoli which talked so much of bravery is not afraid of this. At present all the boys of the Varad National School spin—studies are also going on well. Everyone spins in Sunav. A teacher of Varad spun 70,000 yards by working fifteen hours a day for twenty days. That place is also in Bardoli tahsil.

Do you fear that we intend to deceive you? If you have any such fear, get rid of it. Is there any instance of anyone of us having deceived you? What more shall I say to you?

Sisters, I shall not be satisfied with coconut, yarn and money. I expect many things from the women of Bardoli. I want you to give no place to foreign goods. How good would it be if you wore a sari out of hand-spun yarn? It is through you that I seek *Ramarajya*. How nice it would be if everyone of you became a Sita? Your children must learn both dharma and karma. Members of some of your families remit ill-got-ten money from South Africa. But a weaver earns Rs. 40. Your children will be happy if they learn this vocation. Cherish the *Antyajas*. If any woman wishes ill of *Antyajas* she will lapse from the grace of woman-hood. If you have any *Dublas* in your household treat them with love and compassion. Give them *roti* smeared with ghee. Prosperity comes to homes in which the servants are well cared for. See what happens to the man who earns through deceit. Millionaires are left heirless. May God give you such purity of mind and heart that you may understand aright and take to heart the prayer just heard.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 101-6

65. SPEECH AT “KALIPARAJ” CONFERENCE, VEDCHHI

January 18, 1925

BHAI JIWANBHAI, BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF “KALIPARAJ” AND OTHER COMMUNITIES,

I have seen many conferences in my time. If fifty men gather, it is called a congress and, if five, it is called a conference. I have seen some exclusively of the people we call lower castes. I have seen many as unostentatious as this, not only in India but in Africa and Europe. But it is for the first time that I have seen such a beautiful and pleasing

conference. And for this, the Reception Committee and the volunteers deserve thanks. It is only right that the expenses were kept down to the minimum, for that is proper in our poor country. Alongside of the Conference, you have organized a model exhibition. If after seeing it any Indian leader still has doubts about spinning, I shall look upon him as pitiable. Having once seen it, no one would ever think that spinning and carding are superfluous. If you want to banish poverty, you should realize that these two activities are essential.

Mahomed Ali¹ has wired seeking forgiveness for his inability to attend. You are probably unaware that he held a high post at one time. You know too what happened later. At that time he had tried to share the happiness and sufferings of the *kaliparaj* people. He longed to renew your acquaintance but he fell ill after that. Moreover, he has to run two journals. He has wired me to seek forgiveness for his inability to be present.

This Conference has been meeting annually for the last three years. Each time similar exhibitions have been organized. I have read all the resolutions of the previous years. This time the resolutions have not been drafted. But after a few minutes' talk I find that some resolutions have to be passed.

Kaliparaj or *Kalipraja* does not mean dark-skinned people but those lower communities who have to earn their livelihood through manual labour. These people do not need to call a conference. This is labour's age. One who does not accept labour as noble will cease himself to be noble. In the coming age there won't be any hierarchy.

Today money is looked upon as God. But will it have the same place for ever in the world? Does Satan retain his eminence? Those who fear God have not accepted this. Mammon and Satan are synonyms. Some Shastras say that money has many enemies. I do not say that you need no money at all. You do need some. But everything has its own place. A man who does not produce anything has no place in society. We miss our own role if we exaggerate the role of money in society. When we lose ourselves and make room for money instead, we go astray.

I have said so much about money, but one should not think for that reason that I mean to malign the wealthy; or wish ill to them. The

¹ 1871-1931; editor of *The Comrade* and a prominent politician; took a leading part in the Khilafat agitation along with his brother, Shaukat Ali; President of the Indian National Congress, 1923

wealthy, too, are our brethren. I want to exact work from them also. If they live recognizing their role in society, we consider that a good arrangement. You are labourers and therefore worthy of reverence. A country where labourers are not respected but despised falls into decay. Here, too, they are not respected.

But this is a period of transition. Many have come to realize that labourers should be given their due place [in society]. India cannot do without labourers, so it is not proper to run them down as *Kaliparaj*. On the contrary they should be given a high place. Some have taken up the business of deceiving the labourers and through them serving their self-interest. Such people have done no good to the labourers. But there are some who have taken to labour and enjoy it. They lead a happy life. One comes across such people. I believe that no one stumbles except through one's faults or wrong doings. We exceed the limit when we do not see our own faults and abuse others. I fear that you are doing something like this. You believe that not you but someone else is responsible for your lot, but in fact no one else is. Ever since I came here I have been telling you that our faults bring about our downfall and our good deeds uplift us. The problem is not how to earn bread—a labourer can never face this problem. One who has a pair of legs and a pair of hands is independent. Who can make him unhappy?

You have two causes of unhappiness. You drink liquor and toddy! You are an example of all the misery that addiction to alcohol can bring. Brothers and sisters of *Kaliparaj*, it is the new fashion to think that not to drink alcohol is a sin. They enjoy saying that if people do not drink, the habit will die out and therefore the trade will disappear. Do not get entangled in this net. Let me remind you that two years ago all of you had taken a vow not to drink. Stick to that. If some doctor tells you that you would die if you do not drink, do not listen to him. The body must perish sometime or other. But the vow must not die. I grant the kind of decline that sets in the body if you don't drink. Once having given up drinking don't go back on your vow. Many persons fall into all kinds of temptations and commit sins. If we are to be free of this, we should not allow the slightest exception to what we consider to be the rules of good conduct. If we leave a hole in the wall, insects, reptiles or thieves might creep in; similarly, if there is any gap in the wall of vows raised to protect the soul, torrents of sin may rush in; and we may repent too late. You should, therefore, shun liquor. Better keep away from it.

Your ignorance is not due to illiteracy. It is not a question whether you can or cannot read and write. Many amongst you do not know how to read but have the wisdom gained from experience. You are simple at heart and therefore misled. It is good to be innocent. Innocence and simplicity are divine qualities. Once the truth is told, the simplest of the innocents cannot be shaken from his belief. In your innocence you believe in ghosts. You believe in my divinity also. Let me tell you that it is wrong to do so. You can get nothing out of my divinity. To do puja to me would be of no avail. Someone will deceive you tomorrow to do puja to someone else. Another will tell you to drink alcohol. A third will swear by me and ask you to give up the spinning-wheel. What will then happen to you? You vow to yourself to abstain from liquor. I am told that by appealing to some superstitions I should encourage you to give up drinking. But the country is full of superstitions, and I do not want to add one more to the lot. If your drinking cannot be stopped without starting a new superstition, it does not matter. What I mean to say is that if you don't give up drinking through your own understanding, your abstinence will not be worth while. I wish you should give up liquor, and so should people in the neighbourhood give up both liquor and meat. The whole world should give up these; but not out of superstitious beliefs, for if you do that, your abstinence will not last long. One sin cannot be washed off by another. I hoped to help you to rid yourself of superstition and convince you [to give up drink] not for my sake but because it is good in itself. It is your own ignorance if anyone can deceive you. To set you free from this ignorance, I have asked the volunteers to be patient. I counsel patience again today. Take the next step in full knowledge and make others do the same.

You have complained against your Parsi brethren. I dote upon the Parsi community. It is a small community but has earned wide fame. They have many virtues; but have some vices also. Today many Parsi men and women are giving up liquor. Of course, there are still many who drink. Parsis are engaged in the drink trade. In this business they commit sins and atrocities. But what can I say to them? They tempt you, give you gifts and even bribe you. What can I say to that? If it were my business I would do the same. One has perforce to do all kinds of things for one's stomach. The stomach can make us blow someone else's trumpet. That is why I make this speech. It is being written down and will have to be edited. I wish to put life into you.

I have a complaint against you similar to the one against the Parsis. There is a group amongst you which says that not to drink is a sin. You can survive not by fighting with them but on the strength of your vows and austerities. You tell the Parsis that you have given up drinking, and then they would wind up their business. I have many Parsi friends, including engineers, doctors, lawyers and business men as well. One of them was an intelligent and generous business man. He gave a large sum of money. He had started an Ashram also. Even if I persuade the Parsis, someone else may come along tomorrow—say a Christian, Jew, Muslim or Hindu may come and ask you to drink, how can I go on persuading all of them? The best remedy therefore is that I should talk to you and convince you.

I request the Gaikwar and the Vansada Governments to close down the drink shops in their jurisdiction. But to persuade the Princes is a difficult job. Even so I shall try. But they are like the Parsis; so it is difficult to succeed with them. It is their business too and they earn a large revenue from that. But you are their subjects—their children, so to speak. It is my experience that it is easier to persuade the children than the parents. I therefore have faith only in you.

What are the things that will help you to give up drinking? Spinning-wheel is the chief amongst these. I have put all my faith in the spinning-wheel. If India is to get salvation it will be only through the spinning-wheel. I am delighted to see the young children spinning and this has strengthened my faith in it. And it increases day by day. The means of your livelihood is agriculture but you are poor and find it hard to get food. In these circumstances the spinning-wheel provides the thread of life and also produces peace. When you feel like taking liquor sit at the wheel. As you ply it slowly the craving for liquor will diminish. It will be enough if you do this at my bidding. If the rains fail the crop will wither but the spinning-wheel is ever fruitful. If you serve it well, it will become an *Annapurna*¹.

Along with the resolutions to be passed here, I want you to take a vow. If you concede that abstinence is desirable then take a vow that “we with God as our witness swear that we won’t take liquor or toddy and persuade our brethren to do likewise.”

And now to the second thing. After explaining to you

¹ A name of Goddess Durga, the mother who is worshipped as the giver of food

everything, I want you to take a vow. If you have understood my views on khadi, you, men and women, vow to wear henceforth only hand-spun and hand-woven clothes. It is dangerous to wear foreign cloth. If many among you after leaving this place wear foreign clothes, then it would amount to a condemnation of your witnesses.

Brothers and sisters, I have made you take these two vows. And for this purpose we have made God our witness. I wish that these two vows may bear fruit. It is not easy to keep these vows, but I will show you a device for keeping them; a secret which is the solace of the poor. Many have swum across with its aid. I have told it to *Antyajas* and *Dharalas* in Sojitra. Get up early in the morning, rinse your mouth, wash your face, clean your teeth, remove the mucus of the eyes and take the name of Rama. Rama means God. Repeating *Ramanama* is a sovereign remedy. We must pray to him “O Rama! let me stay pure and help me keep the vows I have taken at Vedchhi.” Even if you are tired and feel sleepy [at night], take the name of Rama for a minute and tell Him, “It is through your help that I have been able to keep my vows. I should not smell of liquor even at night, neither in my dream. And so, too, of foreign cloth.” Then you need have no fear of ghosts. Rama does not need a coconut from you. His hunger is for your love. He is seated in the hearts of all men. You should know him. This clock is ticking. But Rama does not have to make such noise. May He shower blessings on you all.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 107-13

66. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI¹

SARBHON,

Posh Vad 9 [January 19, 1925]

I do not press anyone to observe *brahmacharya*; in fact, I am indifferent. I cannot accept the position that it is the duty of parents to arrange the marriages of their young ones. I am of the opinion that parents should assist them in thus “settling down.”

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 66

¹ 1894-1951; son of Anandbehn, Gandhiji's sister's daughter; co-worker of Gandhiji; Secretary, Bombay Congress Committee, 1922-23

67. NOTES

NOT 25,000

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan¹ wires as follows:

On my return to Lahore I have seen it announced in local papers on authority of *Young India* that I promised you twenty-five thousand spinning Muslim Congress workers by end of this year. I am afraid there is a misunderstanding somewhere. Perhaps my language was not sufficiently clear. All I promised was that I would strain every nerve to place the services of ten thousand Muslim volunteers at your disposal before your term of office expires and I stick to this offer.

I gladly print this wire. There was no misunderstanding, so far as I am concerned. The offer was so striking that I warned the Maulana against being over sanguine. He stuck to his guns. The promise was too good to be withheld from the public. But the offer was a free gift. And no prudent man will look a gift-horse in the mouth. As things go even ten thousand volunteers is a good and encouraging number. Let me remind Maulana Saheb that one must be a spinner to be a volunteer. That is an old Delhi resolution stiffened at Ahmedabad Congress in 1921. I shall therefore be satisfied with ten thousand Mussalman volunteer spinners spinning every month two thousand yards of good yarn with clock-work regularity. I do not doubt that if the Maulana secures ten thousand spinners, he will have no difficulty about getting even twenty-five thousand. For once the spinning movement catches, it will gather strength like a snowball.

SOME CONFERENCES

Last week, I had the honour of attending several conferences which deserve more than a passing notice. They were Petlad District Farmers' Conference held at Sojitra and presided over by Dr. Sumant Mehta² and also *Dharala*, i.e., Baraiya Kshatriya Conference, Ladies Conference and Untouchables' Conference at the same place and a *Kaliparaj* Conference at Vedchhi near Bardoli. At all these conferences khaddar was much in evidence. The special feature of the Farmers' Conference was Dr. Sumant Mehta's offer that he would intern himself in the Petlad District for one year if he got forty whole time workers for the year. He was taken at his word and he has

¹ President of the Punjab Khilafat Committee

² A political and social worker of Gujarat

over forty-five earnest volunteers at his disposal for the whole year. This Conference had four classes of visitors, one of which could gain entrance by paying a fixed quantity of hand-spun yarn. The Conference cost the Reception Committee very little money. The pavilion was spacious and unpretentious. Of course there were no chairs, the wood-work and cloth, chiefly old khaddar, were lent. Labour was volunteered. One of the citizens opened a free kitchen for the strangers who required food. The guests were taken over by another citizen and the delegates by a third. The arrangement proved thoroughly satisfactory. Order was admirably kept by volunteers from Professor Manik Rao's pupils from his gymnasium at Baroda. The proceedings were brief and to the point. The Chairman of the Reception Committee took about fifteen minutes during which he read extracts from his printed speech. The President took not more than thirty minutes for his address. Not a superfluous word was spoken at the meeting. The officials looked more like servants than like leaders. The resolutions were chiefly concerned with things to be done by the people themselves.

“DHARALAS”

Dharalas are a fierce military tribe in Gujarat. Their occupation is chiefly farming. But through economic distress they have taken to thieving. Murder is not an uncommon thing among them. The wave of self-purification that passed through India in 1921 could not fail to touch them. The class of workers that has come into being are working in their midst with the sole intention of carrying out internal reform among them. The brilliant satyagraha movement initiated and led so successfully by Vallabhbhai during 1923 brought about great awakening among these people. Their Conference at Sojitra was one of the fruits of the reform. They assembled in their thousands. They listened to the proceedings in perfect silence. The resolutions carried were about abstaining from intoxicating drinks and drugs, from selling their daughters in marriage and from abduction, a habit which seems to be rampant among them.

THE UNTOUCHABLES

The untouchables of Sojitra and surrounding places met, too, in the same pavilion. The leaders occupied the platform. The touchables mixed freely with the untouchables. The resolutions referred to abstention from drink and to wearing khaddar. It was a bold thing on the part of the organizers to have lent the pavilion for the Untouch-

ables' Conference. For the Petlad District, I discovered, is not free from prejudice against untouchables.

WOMEN IN CONFERENCE

This Conference was a stirring sight. *Patidar*¹ women observe modified seclusion. Sojitra has a population of not more than seven thousand. There must have been present nearly ten thousand women. I have hardly known a women's meeting more largely attended even in big cities. These ladies listened to the speeches with attention and without noise. Often I have found it difficult to secure silence at ladies' meetings. This meeting was therefore an agreeable surprise to everybody including the organizers. No resolutions were taken at this Conference. Speeches were chiefly devoted to khaddar and the wheel. The Farmers' Conference lasted five hours spread over two days. The others lasted an hour each.

"KALIPARAJ"

Whilst the arrangements for the Conference at Sojitra were simple and effective, those at Vedchhi surpassed all expectations. The remark immediately escaped my lips that I had not seen a conference so grand as at Vedchhi for its simplicity, naturalness and artistic beauty. He who selected the site and conceived the whole arrangement was undoubtedly an artist child of nature. The spot selected lay on a river bank. The river ran between a row of homely hills shaded with trees and shrubs. The bed of the river was sandy, not muddy. The main platform was erected in the waters of the river. It rose nearly eight feet high. A sandbag was the first step to the platform. The whole meeting lay in front of the platform, the people occupying even the ridge of the hill opposite. The decorations were all bamboo and green leaves. There was not a single portrait arranged anywhere, not a scrap of paper was used for decoration, and not even yarn. Yarn is out of place for such decorations and much too valuable to be wasted. The canopy was split bamboo and green leaves. The effect was soothingly beautiful. On either side of the road that lay in front of the platform, huge masses of men and women, over twelve thousand, sat in perfect silence. There was no entrance fee. All were delegates. There was no distinction between delegates and visitors. (I don't present this fact for imitation. Here it would have been cruel to have made the distinction which in organized bodies is inevitable.) A little distance

¹ A community of cultivators and farmers

from the meeting a long strip of the bank alongside of the line of hills was occupied for the charkha exhibition. Old men and old women and little boys and little girls ranging from five to ten years were plying the wheels. There was method about having only old people and youngsters. The middle-aged spinners were busy rendering service as volunteers all drawn from the *kaliparaj*. Near the row of charkhas was a portion allocated for khaddar manufactured in Gujarat. There was therefore no question of having the fine Andhra khaddar. Those of the *Kaliparaj* who wore khaddar used only the coarse stuff. A very small portion contained pictures of the all-India leaders and a selection of literature. The thing cost literally nothing. The bamboo and the leaves belonged to the people. They brought the material and arranged it under supervision and without remuneration. No arrangement had to be made for victualling the thousands who came either on foot or in carts, the nearest railway station being twelve miles off the Conference ground. The people brought their own cooked or uncooked food. They camped in the open wherever they liked. Everything was done without bustle and without noise.

The business done was also natural and simple in the extreme. Nothing was to be put before the people that was not suited to their needs.

THEIR TWO VOWS

This was the third year of their Conference. At all their Conferences only a limited number of resolutions were adopted. There was one about drink which is the curse of these people, another about khaddar and a third about discarding stone ornaments worn by their women. The resolutions about drink and khaddar were in the nature of vows. The audience solemnly undertook themselves not to drink and gently to persuade their neighbours to do likewise. The other vow bound them to ply the wheel and to wear hand-spun to the exclusion of all other cloth and to persuade others to do likewise. I took pains to see that they understood what was being said and what they were asked to commit themselves to. Volunteers were sent to the farthest ends of the meeting to ascertain whether they were following the proceedings. The wind being favourable the voice carried exceptionally well without much effort. They, both men and women, took the vows with God as their witness. Let the reader understand that they had been passing these resolutions for the past two years. Almost all of them had some part of their dress in khaddar. They had taken to

it readily and intelligently. Hundreds had learnt how to spin. Some of the young men were trained at the Ashram at Bardoli to become expert carders, spinners and weavers. A few even earned their livelihood by weaving. The audience was therefore really prepared for the vow regarding khaddar and spinning as it was regarding intoxicating drinks.

I closely examined an old man of sixty to know what actuated him to spin after a hard day's toil on his farm. He spins at the rate of about four to five hours per day. He needs little sleep. He therefore spins at night and gets up early again to be at the wheel. I thought he would tell me that he was spinning for pleasure or for others. I was agreeably surprised to find him give me an economic reason. He said, "I spin for myself. I grow my own cotton. Now I weave my own clothes in my own family and save ten rupees per head per year." The sight of these people organizing all the processes for themselves should convince the hardest unbeliever of the necessity of hand-spinning and khaddar. Here in the midst of the most ignorant villagers village organization of the trust type is quietly going on. It is revolutionizing their lives in every department. They are learning to think for themselves.

AFTER THE MEETING

I held the meeting of the elders after the Conference was finished. Over thirty of them including ladies gave their names as workers. They are themselves pledged to spinning, wearing khaddar and to total abstinence; they are each to try to enlist five such inside of five weeks at the end of which they are to meet again to consider how further to develop the reform movement.

"RAMANAMA"

It is easy enough to take a vow under a stimulating influence. But it is difficult to keep to it especially in the midst of temptation. God is our only Help in such circumstances. I therefore suggested to the meeting *Ramanama*. Rama, Allah and God are to me convertible terms. I had discovered that simple people deluded themselves into the belief that I appeared to them in their distress. I wanted to remove the superstition. I knew that I appeared to nobody. It was pure hallucination for them to rely upon a frail mortal. I therefore presented them with a simple and well tried formula that has never failed, namely to invoke the assistance of God every morning before sunrise and every evening before bedtime for the fulfilment of the

vows. Millions of Hindus know Him under the name of Rama. As a child I was taught to call upon Rama when I was seized with fear. I know many of my companions to whom *Ramanama* has been the greatest solace in the hour of their need. I presented it to the *Dharalas* and to the untouchables. I present it also to the reader whose vision is not blurred and whose faith is not damped by over-much learning. Learning takes us through many stages in life but it fails us utterly in the hour of danger and temptation. Then faith alone saves. *Ramanama* is not for those who tempt God in every way possible and ever expect it to save. It is for those who walk in the fear of God, who want to restrain themselves and cannot in spite of themselves.

THE MODEL SCHOOLS

To hearten those teachers and pupils who are frightened at the Congress definition of a national school or college, I would like to mention two schools whose teachers and pupils I met during these conferences. One is at Sunav, a village in Anand Taluka and the other at Varad in Bardoli Taluka. In both these schools all the boys are zealous spinners. In Varad the boys card their own cotton and make their own slivers. They are regularly giving some yarn to the All-India Khadi Board from month to month. I was able to have a long chat with the Sunav boys whom I found to be exceptionally intelligent. They knew why they were spinning. The contribution they gave for the sake of the poor, and they spun otherwise in order to be self-contained so far as their clothing was concerned. I would invite the curious to visit these schools and find out for themselves how they are working. Their position was at stake when the Gujarat Vidyapith insisted on their taking untouchable boys. The teachers braved the storm. Some boys have left but the schools are flourishing. At Varad the parents who had withdrawn their boys on the admission of untouchables have now undertaken to send their children back to the national school. There need be no fear of national institutions suffering because of the definition of the Congress, if only the teachers and managers will combine firmness with gentleness, humility and toleration.

Young India, 22-1-1925

68. AN APPEAL

The reader will find something about *Kaliparaj* in my usual weekly notes. Many outside Gujarat may not know the meaning of

Kaliparaj. It literally means black people. The name seems to have been given to a portion of the people of Gujarat by those who regarded themselves as superior to them. So far as colour is concerned the *Kaliparaj* are no blacker than or different from the rest. But today they are down-trodden, helpless, superstitious and timid. Their great vice is drink. By far the largest number of them belong to the Baroda State.

It was among these people that a great awakening came three years ago. Thousands left off drink and even flesh-eating. This proved too much for the liquor dealers. Most of these were parsis. It is said that they tried all the means possible to induce the teetotallers to revert to drink and that they succeeded to a great extent. The officials, too, are said to have conspired against the reformers. And now, whether as a result of these efforts or otherwise, there has sprung up among these people a party who teach them to regard temperance as a sin and by ostracism and other means seek to break the spirit and the zeal of those who are battling against themselves and an evil habit handed down from generation to generation.

One of the resolutions passed at the meeting of which I have taken a fairly long notice elsewhere was to ask the States of Baroda, Dharampur and Vansda and also the British Government to close down all liquor shops. This is a big order, it will be said. The attempt of a whole nation to bring about total prohibition, it will be added, failed miserably. How then can the ineffective appeal of a handful of helpless men and women succeed? There is a great deal of force in the argument. And yet the two attempts stand on a different footing. The attempt of 1921 was directed against the British Government by non-co-operators who were bent on wresting power from the Government. It was moreover directed by those who had not themselves suffered from the existence of liquor shops. Now the appeal comes from those who have been a prey to the evil. It is an appeal from the powerless to the powerful. It is addressed to all the governments concerned and not merely to the British Government. These men are no non-co-operators. They do not know the difference between co-operation and non-co-operation. They slave for others unwillingly, almost unknowingly, and often under fear of oppression. They do not know what swaraj is. To them giving up drink and removal of the temptation in the shape of liquor shops is swaraj. Their appeal therefore is on humanitarian grounds and should prove irresistible.

As President, I am bound to give effect to their resolution addressed to the Governments concerned. The appeal to the British

Government can only be through the Legislators. It is open to the Councillors to forgo the liquor revenue even though they may have to run the risk of starving the education department. I invite them to see the people themselves and have an ocular demonstration of the evil that is corrupting a whole race of men and women. They must dare to do the right thing if they will save their countrymen.

It is different with the States of Baroda, Dharampur and Vansda. They can, if they will shut up the liquor shops and save their people and themselves from destruction. I use the pronoun “themselves” deliberately, because the destruction of a large body of people in small States means their own destruction. Will they not listen to the appeal of those who want to be helped against themselves?

And of the Parsi liquor dealers? I know that it is with them a question of livelihood. But they belong to one of the most enterprising of races among men. They are resourceful and intelligent. They can easily find other honourable means of livelihood. Men and women have been known before now to give up questionable callings and take up work or professions conducive to the moral growth of society. I claim the right to speak to the Parsis, for I know and love them. Some of the best of my associates have been and are Parsis. They have done much for India. They have given Dadabhai¹ and Pherozechah Mehta². More is expected of those who do much. Let the Parsi liquor dealers commence by abstaining from interference (assuming the truth of the charge) with the reform.

Young India, 22-1-1925

69. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

ON THE WAY TO DELHI,
*Posh Vad 13 [January 22, 1925]*³

BHAI FULCHAND⁴,

I have your letter. This time I shall certainly stay for a few hours

¹ Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917); the first Indian to be elected member of the British Parliament in 1893; President of the Indian National Congress thrice, in 1886, 1893 and 1906; author of *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*

² 1845-1915; one of the founders of the Indian National Congress, its President in 1890

³ The letter was written soon after Gandhiji's visit to Kathiawar in January 1925.

⁴ An inmate of the Satyagraha Ashram; a political and constructive worker of Kathiawar

in Wadhwan City.

If what you write about Pattani Saheb is true, it is a sad thing. I heard such an allegation for the first time at Bhavnagar, but I paid no attention to it. But I cannot brush aside your writing. But I want to know from you if your knowledge is based on direct evidence. If you did not yourself see it, how did you know about it? What kind of adultery is it? I want to know this because I have had very high notions and favourable impressions about Pattaniji.

Your views that one should not stay at the house of such an adulterous officer or at a prince's place are not proper. How can we sit in judgment over others? You know that there are all sorts of allegations against many people at whose houses I put up. Some of these are true, I know. For this reason people go into the solitary forest and stay there. But so long as we want to remain in society, we cannot behave as you would wish.

I am not telling you all this from the practical point of view, but from the spiritual. It is our duty to stay wherever our host puts us up; but we may not stay with those who by putting us up with them seek our countenance for their immoral conduct.

But this is an exception. Suppose you or I have committed adultery in thought, don't we put up at one another's place?

In this world full of sin who is there so sinless that sitting on a high pedestal he can despise others? I do not give anyone testimonials such as you imagine. If a well-known courtesan plies the spinning-wheel, I would certainly praise her for doing so; but that would not mean that I gave her a certificate for chastity.

"God has made this world, both *jada*¹ and *chetana*², full of short-comings. Like the proverbial swan which separates milk from water and takes only the former, a good man accepts the good and rejects the evil."

Our duty is to recognize merit and sing its praises. The world is hardly likely to be deceived by testimonials. I certainly have not given any testimonial of purity to Pattaniji. But my mind was led to give it. It was at Trapaj³, that I was pleasantly surprised to see his simplicity, his deep knowledge, his firmness, etc. In spite of all this, however, he

¹ Material or inconscient

² Conscient

³ A village about 17 or 18 miles from Bhavnagar

may be impure. In that case, I must give up the feeling of respect that I came to have for his purity of character. Your letter will be useful to me for my future conduct. What has happened has been, I believe, quite proper. Even if I come to believe that he is an adulterer, when I go to Bhavnagar for public work, I shall put up at the State Guest House if he puts me up there. I shall stay even in his own house, if he lodges me there. I do believe to a certain extent about the immorality of the Prince of¹ But if he puts me up at his place, I would certainly stay there and I would not think that I was committing any sin. My non-co-operation is with sin, not the sinner; with Dyerism, not with Dyer.

I am afraid I have not been able to explain everything I wanted to. But try to understand this much. For the rest, you may come here and ask me personally. You may write and ask, if you like. The path of ahimsa is very difficult; it is sharper than the edge of a sword. There must be compassion in ahimsa. Tulsidas² considered himself to be the most sinful person. “Who is there so crooked, so wicked and so sensual as I?” sings Bhakta Surdas³.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 2826. Courtesy: Shardabehn Shah

70. LETTER TO REVASHANKER ZAVERI

Posh Vad 13 [January 22, 1925]⁴

RESPECTED REVASHANKERBHAI⁵,

As I have already told you, instead of writing a letter I sent a telegram to Prabhashanker⁶. After reading his letter I thought it proper to see Nanalal. He was of course to come to Bardoli but did not. Nevertheless, he came and saw me [here] yesterday. I, therefore, wired to Prabhashanker and to Doctor⁷ also. I have written saying that

¹ Name omitted

² A 16th-century Hindi poet; author of *Ramacharitamanasa*

³ A 16th-century poet of Krishna *bhakti* cult

⁴ From the postmark

⁵ A business man of Bombay and brother of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta

⁶ Father of Champa who was to be married to Dr. Mehta's son

⁷ Dr. Pranjivan Mehta, Bar-at-law and jeweller who, from the days of Phoenix Settlement till his death in 1933, rendered financial help to Gandhiji in his activities

a sizable amount will be deposited in Chi. Champa's name. I have also written a letter to Prabhashanker.

Tulsi Maher¹ told me that carding is slightly laborious. Once the hand is accustomed, there is no labour at all. The [carding-] bow may be made smaller. If you card like the women of Andhra, there would be no difficulty.

Respects from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1263

71. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Paus Vad 13 [January 22, 1925]²

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter about the Maulana. It would have been as well if he had not delivered the speech he did. But he is a bad craftsman who finds fault with his tools. We have no duty except to see that our character is pure. If we can be sure of that we can be saved as Mirabai was and we can say like Janaka: "What does it matter to me if the city of Mithila burns?" How is Anand? Tell her I always think of her.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

My entourage is off to Delhi. Accompanying me are Shankerlal, Bharucha³ and Mahadev. Neither Christodas nor Pyarelal will be accompanying me this time.

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

¹ An inmate of Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati

² From the postmark

³ Barjorji Bharucha

72. SPEECH AT ALL-PARTY CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING, DELHI

January 23, 1925

The All-Party Conference Committee convened¹ as the result of the discussions held at Bombay in November last met here last evening (Friday) at the Western Hostel, Raisina. Mr. Gandhi presided. A lively discussion took place on the proposal of Mr. Gandhi to appoint a sub-committee to suggest lines of agreement between Hindus and Mussalmans and among all the political parties and also to draw up a scheme of swaraj. Speeches were made by the representatives of the various communities and parties who explained their respective positions and the Conference eventually adjourned till Saturday afternoon.

The Conference was attended by a large number of members and also by several Indian members of the Central Legislature. . . .

Mr. Gandhi explained that the objects of the Conference were to explore the avenues of communal and political unity and formulate a scheme of swaraj. He suggested the appointment of a sub-committee to suggest the lines of an agreement. . . .

Mrs. Besant² thought it would be impertinent, nay, anarchical, on the part of the Conference suddenly to make new resolutions which might run counter to those passed by the Belgaum Congress and thereby unseat Mr. Gandhi from his presidentship.

Mr. Gandhi said his suggestion for a Committee did not go so far as Dr. Besant feared and that the suggestion was made to show that Congressmen were not hidebound to anything but the new franchise or the creed of the Congress. Those could not be lightly altered merely because the proposed sub-committee might come to certain conclusions. The Congressmen knew their mind and they would prosecute their programme but if the non-Congressmen joined the Congress and convinced them of the error of their ways and of the propriety of altering the creed or the franchise then they could undertake to call a special session of the Congress. Personally he did not think any alteration was called for. . . .

Mr. Gandhi, at the request of Mr. Dalvi, read the Liberal Federation's resolution that the Liberal Party would rejoin the Congress only, (1) if the object of the Congress, defined as Dominion Self-government, was to be attained by constitutional methods; (2) If non-co-operation and civil disobedience were

¹ *Vide* "Speech at All-Party Conference, Bombay", November 21, 1924.

² 1847-1933; Leader of the Theosophical movement; founded the Home Rule League in 1916; President, Indian National Congress, 1917

definitely abandoned as also the yarn franchise; and (3) if the Swaraj Party were not constituted as the only accredited representatives of the Congress in the legislatures.

Mr. Gandhi added that the suggestions from other political bodies were almost along the same lines. . . .

The Bombay Chronicle, 26-1-1925

73. DRAFT CONSTITUTION OF ALL-INDIA COW- PROTECTION SABHA¹

[January 24, 1925]²

ALL-INDIA COW-PROTECTION SABHA

OBJECT

Whereas the Hindus have failed in cow-protection which is an obligation imposed on them by their religion, and whereas the cows in India and their progeny are deteriorating day by day:

The All-India Cow-protection Sabha is formed for the proper fulfilment of the religious obligation of cow-protection.

The object of the Sabha shall be to protect the cow and her progeny by all moral means.

“Cow-protection” shall mean the protection of the cow and her progeny from cruelty and slaughter.

Note: It will be against the fundamental policy of the Sabha to bring physical force or pressure to bear on those communities whose religion does not prohibit, or regard as obligatory, cow-slaughter.

MEANS

The Sabha shall carry on its work by the following means:

1. By pleading with those who may be ill-treating cows, bullocks, etc., and by carrying on propaganda against such ill-treatment by means of leaflets, lectures, etc.;
2. By taking charge of diseased and disabled cows and oxen from their owners wherever the latter cannot afford to maintain them;
3. By superintending and inspecting the administration of

¹ Prepared by Gandhiji; *vide* Mahadev Desai's :“Delhi Letter” in *Navajivan*, 8-2-1925.

² *Vide* “All India Cow-protection Sabha”, 15-3-1925 and “Cow-protection”, 9-4-1925.

existing *pinjarapoles*¹ and cow-protection institutions, and by helping in their better organization and management, as also by establishing fresh institutions;

4. By breeding model cows and draught cattle by means of cattle farms, etc., and by providing clean and cheap milk through properly kept dairies;

5. By opening tanneries for tanning hides of dead cattle and thereby stopping or reducing the export abroad of disabled cattle;

6. By enlisting men of character and education in the cause, and founding scholarships, etc., for training them in the work;

7. By holding an inquiry into the causes of the disappearance of grazing lands and into the advantages or disadvantages thereof;

8. By investigating into the necessity or otherwise of the practice of castrating bulls, and if found necessary and useful, investigating into the possibilities of discovering a harmless method of castration or a wholesome modification in the present method;

9. By collecting funds; and

10. By taking whatever other steps may be necessary for the work of cow-protection.

MEMBERSHIP

Any person of the age of eighteen years, who subscribes to the object of the Sabha, and

1. who pays to the Sabha an annual subscription of five rupees; or

2. who gives to the Sabha enough time and labour to enable him or her to spin and send 2,000 yards per month of even and well spun yarn to the Sabha; or

3. who devotes one hour daily to any work that may be prescribed by the Sabha

shall be a member of the Sabha.

Note: In respect of (2), slivers, if necessary, will be supplied by the Sabha.

ADMINISTRATION

The members of the Sabha shall annually elect their president by a majority vote and he shall nominate the secretary and the treasurer.

¹ Institutions for the care of disabled and useless cattle

A Working Committee consisting of not less than five members of the Sabha shall be elected annually at a general meeting to be convened by the president.

The treasurer shall be responsible for the accounts of all the receipts and disbursements, all amounts exceeding one thousand rupees to be kept deposited in a bank of his approval.

Young India, 9-4-1925

74. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

DELHI,

*Saturday [January 24, 1925]*¹

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter concerning the *Chronicle*. I discussed the matter with Motilalji here yesterday. In my opinion, it would be better if Belgaumwala does not get involved in it. We certainly do not wish to oppose the Swarajists. The spinning-wheel has very little need of the Press. That has always been my experience. The spinning-wheel reaches where the newspapers do not reach. Its reach will extend still farther. I would advise Belgaumwala, Jamnalaji, etc., to use their money and intelligence only for the spinning work. We shall take only as much help from the Swarajists as they can give

Show this letter to Belgaumwala.

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

75. SPEECH AT ALL-PARTY CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING, DELHI

January 24, 1925

The Committee of All-Party Conference resumed its session last [January 24] evening and after important speeches delivered by representative spokesmen

¹ The postmark bears the date January 26, 1925. The Saturday preceding this date fell on January 24.

including Mr. Jinnah¹, Lala Lajpat Rai², and Dr. Annie Besant, a fully representative sub-committee³ consisting of over forty members was appointed. . . .

Gandhiji, who presided, thought that if the meeting could arrive at a satisfactory, real and honourable solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem and Brahmin and non-Brahmin problem, etc., they would have made a very substantial advance towards swaraj. If the meeting could find a scheme which would commend itself to all parties, they would have taken a very long step towards swaraj. If the representatives present at [that] meeting could see eye to eye on [those] main questions, there would be no difficulty in parties uniting on the Congress platform and making a unanimous demand in the name of the nation. . . .

Mr. Jinnah in urging an early decision gave expression to his surmise that Government would let the Assembly discuss the Reforms Enquiry Committee's Report in February. As much had been made of Hindu-Muslim differences in connection with the work of the Committee, he wanted to tell Government when the time for discussion of the Report came that Hindu-Muslim differences had been made up and they stood united in their demands.

Mahatma Gandhi replied that Mr. Jinnah's purpose would be served by the publication of the sub-committee's report. The sub-committee would soon sit to work from day to day till it finished its labours and prepared a report. . . .

The Hindustan Times, 27-1-1925

76. MY NOTES

KATHIAWAR

Shri Bharucha, who is at present working in Kathiawar, writes to say that he goes around with Devchandbhai every day and collects cotton from different places. As many as 186 spinning members have

¹ M. A. Jinnah (1876-1948); a leader of the Muslim League; founder and first Governor-General of Pakistan

² 1865-1928; Congress leader from the Punjab and a social reformer; founder of the Servants of the People Society; President, Indian National Congress, 1920

³ The task of the sub-committee was to "(a) frame such recommendations as would enable all the parties to join the Congress; (b) to frame a scheme for the representation of all the communities, races and sub-divisions on the legislative and other elective bodies under swaraj and recommend the best method of securing just and proper representation of the communities in the services with due regard to efficiency and (c) to frame a scheme of swaraj that will meet the present needs of the country." It had the instruction to submit the report on or before February 15. *The Bombay Chronicle, 26-1-1925*

already been enrolled and more are being enrolled. There is scope for getting much good work done provided the enthusiasm can be fully canalized. Proper arrangements should be made for supplying spindles, for sending spinning-wheels wherever they are required and for training those who lack a proper knowledge of spinning.

I should warn the workers in Kathiawar that I shall be returning there on the 15th of February. I shall expect a great deal to have been achieved in the meantime. Even now, I am imagining the spectacle which will confront me in Rajkot. I wrote in the *Navajivan* a few months ago about the complaint by a Kutchi gentleman that there was no khadi in Rajkot. Will I face the same situation on 15th February?

CORRECT ACCOUNTING

We are collecting cotton instead of money. Hence the system of maintaining accounts is bound to differ. If accounts are maintained after due thought from the beginning, it will facilitate matters greatly in the future. Arrangements have to be made for collecting cotton, stocking it properly and incurring expenses for the various processes through which it has to pass. Moreover, some will hand in yarn spun from their own cotton, while some others will hand in yarn spun from cotton given to them by the Conference. Hence, two sets of accounts will have to be maintained. Then again, the accounts for the yarn that is used should be separate. The account books will multiply in this manner. This work can be done only with patience, forethought and understanding.

SPINNING-WHEELS WORTH A HUNDRED RUPEES

A gentleman raises the question whether those taluks which allow the contribution of two thousand yards of yarn spun by others should be entitled to the above prize. Although it may not have been clearly stated, the prize is only for those who do their own spinning. The khadi-lover's intention is not to reward that taluk which excels in recruiting members who get their yarn spun by others. I hope that there will be keen competition for this prize. The amount of Rs.100 is no consideration. It is the prize that is important, not its value. Even Borsad, if it takes it upon itself, can, by making the maximum effort, recruit five thousand members.

“KHEDUTS”¹ CONFERENCE

I have the courage to use the word *Khedut* as the organizers in

¹ Cultivators

Sojitra have spoken of the *Patidars* as *Kheduts*. The custom of discarding old names as contemptible and coining new ones is not worthy of emulation. There is no merit in being called a *Patidar*. *Khedut* is both a sweet and a good name.

It could be said that the *Patidars* of Sojitra became *Kheduts* for at least two days. This is because they took upon themselves the burden of providing the necessary help for the Conference. A *Khedut* is always a labourer. He is great by virtue of his labour. *Patidars*, both great and small, served in Sojitra and thereby added to their own dignity. The workers themselves put up the *pandal*¹ for the Conference. It was apparent that expenses had been reduced to the minimum. Some members shared among themselves the responsibility of providing meals for the guests, delegates and others. In this manner things were better organized and the reception committee was spared that expense. The work of the Conference was facilitated since it was given all necessary facilities by the Baroda Government.

THE PRESIDENT

Dr. Sumant Mehta too looked like a *Khedut*. Waerever one looked, one saw nothing but work and service. The speeches both of the chairman of the reception committee and of Dr. Sumant Mehta were brief. They did not read out the whole of them and saved the time of the Conference by reading out only some parts.

“ DHARALAS ”

Along with this *Patidar* Conference, separate conferences of *Dharalas*, women and untouchables were also organized. As these had been arranged one after the other, those who wished to attend them all could easily do so. *Dharalas* have now come to regard themselves as *Baraiya* Kshatriyas. If, however, I may advise them, I would ask them to stick to the name *Dharala* and sanctify it. No purpose is served by changing a name. Status is not gained by assuming the name but only by acting in a manner befitting the Kshatriyas.

Having made this criticism, I have nothing but praise for the Conference. The *pandal* was overflowing with *Dharalas*; yet, in spite of the numbers, they maintained perfect silence. The resolutions too only dealt with reforms amongst them. The evil customs of taking liquor, forcibly carrying away women and selling brides have been prevalent among them from ancient times; the Conference passed a

¹ Covered enclosure

resolution to give up all the three practices.

It is also the Kshatriyas' dharma to abide by his pledge. The superior kind of "*apalayanam*"¹ consists in ignoring any kind of internal or external danger, and abiding by one's resolve. Courage lies not in wielding the sword but in the strength of one's determination.

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

The number who attended the women's conference at Sojitra exceeded all estimates. One finds that most *Patidar* women observe *purdah*. In spite of this, the Conference pavilion was filled with women. The attendance was enough justification for the Conference. No resolution seemed to be necessary. It should be a matter of satisfaction that they listened attentively to speeches on the spinning-wheel. If a resolution had been proposed hands would have been raised but it was all unnecessary.

"ANTYAJAS"

The Conference of the *Antyajas* was held in the very same place. The organizers deserve to be congratulated on their courage in permitting this Conference to be held in the same *pandal*. It is a good sign that even though untouchability is not yet entirely abandoned by the *Patidars*, the Conference was held under the same roof. Many who were not untouchables attended the Conference. This Conference took the pledge to give up liquor, to ply the spinning-wheel and to wear khadi. Each word in the pledge had been explained to the men and women. Of the latter a large number was present. They had brought incense with them. I was misled by the smoke I saw. I presumed that they were smoking *bidis*². However, I was immediately informed that the smoke rose from the incense. There was an expression of joy on the faces of these men and women in the *pandal*.

"KALIPARAJ"

Although the Conferences held at Sojitra were good in their own way, the Conference of *Kaliparaj* left on me a deeper impression. Underlying the former were commonsense, simplicity, economy and skill. All this was also there in the *Kaliparaj* Conference, but in addition it was artistic. I cried out unwittingly: "I have seen many conferences, but in point of unstudied beauty, I have not seen one like this." I see no exaggeration in these words. It seemed as if nature

¹ Not taking to one's heels in a battle

² Country cigarettes

herself had invisibly arranged everything. In my opinion, true art consists in learning from nature without struggling against it. I could be said of Vedchhi village where this Conference was held that it comprises little more than a few wells and a few houses. The *Kaliparaj* however do not live in houses or villages but in their grass huts and fields. The population of Vedchhi could not be more than three or four hundred people. However, as compared to the cluster of grass-huts of the *Kaliparaj*, the cluster of houses in Vedchhi could be said to be fairly decent. In view of this, the Conference was arranged at Vedchhi. Ordinarily a field is chosen as the site of the Conference. Our artists looked around and chose a spot which was filled with natural beauty. A river named Valmiki flows near Vedchhi. It dances along between rows of hills adorned by trees. The organizers of the Conference chose this spot. The main rostrum was placed in the flowing water and, just as branches spring out of a tree, the seats for the delegates were arranged in front of the main rostrum. As it was winter, and, moreover, as the water was cool, this artistic expert argued that not only did the delegates did not require any shade but the afternoon sun at 2.00 p.m. would be welcome to them, hence the golden sky provided the dome of the pavilion and the river sand, the seats. As this river flows on one side of a hill, the bank stretching from the opposite row of hills to the edge of the river is dry. There is no mud on the river bank but only sand. Hence no artificial adornment or carpets and such other things were needed. The canopy above the rostrum was made of bamboos and green leaves. A broad pathway led right up to the rostrum. Bamboos had been used for this purpose too and creepers of the arum plant had been entwined on the path. The first step leading to the rostrum was made of a sack filled with sand. There was not a single picture here and not a single strand of cotton was used for decorative purposes. One need not add that even decorations made of yarn cannot enhance the beauty of such a spot. Yarn is man-made and is in place in a house. Where the sky is the ceiling and sand the ground, only trees and leaves harmonize with the scene. Moreover, one who loves yarn would not waste it. On the contrary, he would store up even a yard of yarn or a wad of cotton.

EXHIBITION

A little distance away from the site of the Conference but still on the banks of the river and at the foot of the row of hills, an exhibition of spinning-wheels and khadi had been arranged. Old men and women as well as children, both boys and girls ranging from six or

seven to ten years of age, were plying some fifty spinning-wheels. This arrangement too had been well conceived. The youths had become volunteers. Some of the Khadi had been spun, woven and dyed by the people of *Kaliparaj* themselves. The rest of the coarse khadi had been sent by the Gujarat Khadi Bhandar. Along with the exhibition, the special flute of *Kaliparaj* was being played, and there were pictures of a few prominent leaders and some literature. Little had been spent on all these arrangements. The red and yellow buntings, etc., made of thin foreign paper which are usually conspicuous in *pandals* could not be seen even if one searched for them. Decorations made of such paper show neither taste nor discrimination. It is like trading one's sleep for sleeplessness. Whenever I see such paper decorations, I am pained at this outrage on art. Even Sojitra could not rise above this.

TIED BY YARN

The *Kaliparaj* is well tied up by yarn. They themselves grow cotton. The people are poor and simple, they wear foreign cloth. However, they have not developed a liking for it. If khadi is available at low price, they would certainly wear it. As the sari worn by the women is short, with the lower hem tucked into the waistband, it weighs less. Hence, the spinning-wheel and the propaganda for khadi seem to be popular among these people. A sixty-year old peasant, even though he looks after his field, regularly spins till late at night and at dawn. He had his own clothes made out of the yarn and he wishes to give what remains to his children. In this manner the goal is for one family after another to spin and weave for themselves. When I asked this old man the reason for his spinning, he replied that it was in order to save money. He saved Rs.10/- which was his annual expense on clothes.

DRINKING LIQUOR

Kaliparaj means black people. They are not so called because they are darker than those belonging to other castes. Those belonging to the higher castes, however, showed contempt for them; hence the name. Today they are in a very pitiable plight. Timidity, superstition and addiction to drink are ruining them. In spite of the fact that they live in jungles, they are afraid of everyone and everything. Drinking liquor is their greatest failing. Toddy or liquor is ruining the community. There has been some reform since they too joined in the awakening of 1921, yet much remains to be done. Liquor has taken

such hold of them that many regard drinking as something meritorious! When the agitation for prohibition started, a section arose which took upon itself the task of breaking up this movement and began harassing those advocating prohibition. It is said that the Parsi owners of liquor shops were behind this. If *Kaliparaj* gave up liquor for good, that trade would come to a standstill and the owners of liquor shops would suffer. Looking at it from this standpoint it is difficult to blame the owners. However, I believe that I have a right to address them too. I am a great admirer of the Parsi community. I am closely associated with many Parsis. I have great respect for that community. Hence the owners of liquor shops will not misunderstand me. Many persons, we know, had given up a trade which is harmful to others. These gentlemen are enterprising and resourceful. It is not as if they cannot take to another trade if they give up this one. Whether they go to this extent or not, I hope that they do not join hands with the advocates of liquor in order to keep their business going.

PLEDGE

This Conference took two pledges after much thinking. The first one regarding the giving up of liquor and the other regarding the wearing of khadi and spinning of yarn. The pledges have been taken with God as witness. Despite this, they will succeed only if volunteers keep working ceaselessly.

“RAMANAMA”

Yet God's mercy works where man's efforts produce no result. Hence I have requested the *Dharalas*, the *Antyajas* and the *Kaliparaj* to chant the name of Rama. They should wake up in the morning before sunrise, brush their teeth, rinse their mouths and pray to God asking Him to help them in the fulfilment of their pledges, and they should chant the name of Rama. The same should be repeated before going to bed at night. My faith in *Ramanama* stretches back over many years. It has proved a panacea for some friends. It has saved them from many mental anxieties. One who cannot articulate properly, one who cannot remember the *Dvadasha Mantra*¹, one who finds it difficult to pronounce the word *Ishwara*², even for such a person, chanting the name of “Rama” is easy. I believe that whoever chants that name with faith is well protected. May *Ramanama* bring

¹ Formula of 12 syllables, *Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya*

² God

good results to these men and women.

THE DUTY OF BARDOLI

I have just returned from Bardoli taluk. I was reminded of past events and past promises. I was unhappy but, being an optimist, I was not disheartened. Hence I have returned with renewed hopes regarding Bardoli.

Bardoli could do anything if it wished to. The *Patidars* of that place are far-sighted. Many of them have gone as far as South Africa and undergone sufferings. The taluk is financially well off. Excellent cotton is grown there. A great deal of effort has been put into this taluk. Volunteers from other parts of Gujarat have gone and settled down there. Ashramas have been built. Money donated by the late Parsi Rustomji has been spent there. Bardoli is famous throughout the country.

What will the *Patidars* of such a place do? If they choose to do so, they can introduce the spinning-wheel in each home, spin their own cotton, wear clothes woven out of it and boycott foreign cloth. This task is child's play for Bardoli.

Kunvarjibhai and Laxmidasbhai have taken the first step. They have both entered into a pact under which one provides the cotton and the other gets it woven. They have made this division of labour. Kunvarjibhai has pledged himself to collect 2,000 maunds of cotton, Laxmidasbhai to get it spun. If this succeeds, Bardoli would shortly become self-sufficient in cloth. May God make Bardoli famous.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 25-1-1925

77. LETTER TO A GERMAN

January 25, 1925

The one condition for fighting for peace and liberty is to acquire self-restraint. To do that, it is necessary to give up the pleasure of the world.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

78. SILENCE DAY NOTE¹

January 26, 1925

True, there is cow-protection to some extent in Gujarat, but then Kathiawar is an exception. Nonetheless, there too, when there is a famine, cattle are abandoned. I have seldom been satisfied with our treatment of cattle, whereas in Europe you will hardly find any ground for dissatisfaction. In Arabia the horse is almost worshipped and is religiously taken care of. I do not know why we in India are so heartless towards the cow. The cattle in Europe are simply wonderful.

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

79 . LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

DELHI

Maha Sud 3 [January 27, 1925]²

CHI. MAGANLAL³,

The demand I made in my postcard must be satisfied by someone or other. It is proper that those who give cotton get the yarn. Make suitable arrangements for this. Primarily it should be so arranged that the cotton is obtained from the district itself.

I have had satisfactory talks with Chi. Radha. She is firm in her resolve. However, it is desirable that we are also on the look-out.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I shall be in Delhi a few days more.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6092. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

¹ This is in reply to Mahadev Desai's criticism of Gandhiji's speech at the Cow-protection Conference.

² In 1925, *Maha Sud 3* fell on January 27. Also, Gandhiji was in Delhi at this time in connection with the meeting of the All-Party Conference Committee.

³ Second son of Khushalchand Gandhi, Gandhiji's cousin; assisted Gandhiji in his activities and experiments in South Africa and India; manager of Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati

80. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Maha Sud 3 [January 27, 1925]¹

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI²,

A letter from you, after so many days.

I do not have absolute trust in anybody; it is, however, our duty to trust all our fellow-beings. Do we not expect to be trusted by others? When both the parties are in the wrong, it is very difficult to apportion blame. I have decided upon the only way out of this—to treat the wicked equally well with the virtuous.

I may have to stay in Delhi for three or four days more. Speaking from the practical point of view, I am not exactly satisfied with the present state of things; spiritually, I am content with doing my duty.

Yours,

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]

Since Dr. Ansari's³ wife is unwell I am putting up with Sulta[n] Singhji.

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6102. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

81. INTERVIEW TO PRESS

DELHI,

[January 27, 1925]⁴

In view of the forthcoming debate on the Bengal Ordinance⁵ in the Assembly our representative asked Mahatma Gandhi as to his opinion on the Bengal

¹ From the contents, it is evident that the letter was written in 1925.

² b.1894; Business magnate and philanthropist; chairman, Harijan Sevak Sangh

³ Dr. M. A. Ansari (1880-1936); Physician; President, Indian National Congress, 1927.

⁴ From the datelines in the reports published in *The Bombay Chronicle* and *The Searchlight*, this interview is presumed to have been given on January 27.

⁵ Promulgated to enable the Government to arrest and keep in jail anyone without trial.

Ordinance and inquired whether in view of Lord Lytton's speech¹ before the Bengal Council and the Viceroy's speech² in the Assembly he had altered his opinion. Mahatma Gandhi said he had seen nothing to change his opinion.

On the contrary, he held that both the speeches were irrelevant to the issue before the nation, because he held that the powers taken under the Ordinance should not be granted except on an extraordinary occasion and then never without the sanction of the duly elected representatives of the people. In matters where the questions of life and death were concerned and where the liberty of the subject was involved the opinions of functionaries, however highly placed they may be, were of no consequence.

In fact, Mahatma Gandhi went further and said:

India had been used to such emphatic declarations before now. Did not Sir M. O'Dwyer³ and even Lord Chelmsford⁴ practically swear that treason and conspiracy were rampant in the Punjab, and did not Sir M. O'Dwyer claim to be able to prove the existence of general rebellion in the Punjab? We knew now that there was very little warrant for these statements.

Mahatma Gandhi, therefore, was glad that so far at any rate as the Ordinance was concerned Indian opinion was unanimous in condemnation and hoped that the agitation against it would grow in strength day after day such that it would become irresistible.

The Bombay Chronicle, 28-1-1925

¹ In a speech delivered in the Bengal Legislative Council on January 7 on the Bengal Ordinance Amendment Bill, Lord Lytton, the Governor of Bengal, had said:

“The only justification for a Bill of this kind is that the welfare of the State as a whole is in danger, that the danger cannot be averted by any other means. . . . Your swaraj government, when it comes, will never have a chance of success if you only admit the right of those who disapprove of it to threaten the murder of those who are responsible for it. . . . If you will persuade these men to sink their weapons in the Hooghly and to abandon terrorism once for all as a political method, we will promise you our whole-hearted co-operation in providing them with other and better ways of serving this country”. *The Indian Quarterly Register-1925, Vol. I, January-June*

² Speaking in the Legislative Assembly on January 20, on the Bengal Ordinance Amendment Bill, Lord Reading had justified the promulgation of the Ordinance in order to cope with the terrorist movement in Bengal and the danger from the widespread secret societies. The progress of the movement, he said, involved loss of life among officials as well as innocent citizens and the ordinary law even when enforced by Regulation III had been ineffective in dealing with these crimes. *The Indian Quarterly Register-1925, Vol. I, January-June*

³ Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, 1913-19

⁴ 1868-1933; Viceroy of India, 1916-21

82. INTERROGATORIES ANSWERED

During last month I had a hearty discussion with an English friend who takes deep interest in matters Indian and who is anxious to serve India to the best of his ability. He asked me whether I would publish the gist of our conversation. I readily agreed but asked him to jot down the points he raised which he gladly did. I do not disclose the friend's name as the name does not matter. It is my views that matter because they are exciting some interest at the present moment. If I am a friend of Englishmen, as I claim to be, I must patiently answer all the doubts that may arise in their minds. The English friend put the questions not all on his own behalf but mostly on behalf of those Englishmen who had originally raised them.

Here are the questions with answers.

What is the real purpose of your insistence upon the khaddar programme as a means of obtaining swaraj?

I am interested in the attainment of swaraj only by non-violent and truthful means. This is possible only through a diligent and successful prosecution of the khaddar programme. Swaraj can be peacefully attained only if the whole Indian mass work as with one will, be it on ever so little a constructive and useful thing for ever so little a time. Such an effort presupposes national consciousness. This is possible only through the spinning-wheel. It is not remunerative enough for individuals. It is therefore not enough incentive for an individual selfishly inclined. It is however enough to raise at a bound the national prosperity in an appreciable manner. An increase of one rupee per head per year may mean nothing to the individual. But Rs. 5,000/- in a village containing a population of as many would mean the payment of land revenue or other dues. Thus the spinning-wheel means national consciousness and a contribution by every individual to a definite constructive national work. If India can demonstrate her capacity for such an achievement by voluntary effort she is ready for political swaraj. Any lawful demand of a nation with a will of its own must prove irresistible. I have hitherto said nothing of the immense economic value of the wheel and its product khaddar. For it is obvious. The economic prosperity of India must indirectly affect the course of her political history—even using the word “political” in its narrow sense. Lastly, when the exploitation of India by Lancashire ceases by reason of the ability of India through the wheel to clothe

herself and consequently to exclude foreign cloth and therefore also Lancashire cloth, England will have lost the feverish anxiety at any cost to hold India under subjection.

This means revolutionizing the national taste? Do you expect to persuade your countrymen to give up the use of foreign cloth?

I do. After all I am asking for very little. Millions are indifferent as to what they wear. They merely look to the cheapness of the articles they buy. It is the middle class whose taste has to be revised. I do not think that the substitution of foreign cloth by khaddar is an impossible task for them. Moreover it should be remembered that nowadays it is possible for khaddar to suit a large variety of tastes. And improvement in fineness is making steady progress. I am therefore of opinion that if any constructive work is capable of success, it is the khaddar programme.

What do you mean by swaraj and what are its limitations, if any?

By swaraj I mean the Government of India by the consent of the people ascertained by the vote of the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native-born or domiciled who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters. This Government should be quite consistent with the British connection on absolutely honourable and equal terms. Personally I have not despaired of the substitution for the present servile condition of equal partnership or association. But I would not for one moment hesitate to countenance or bring about complete severance if it became necessary, i.e., if the connection impeded India's full growth.

To what extent are you committed to the programme and methods of the Swaraj Party?

I am personally committed neither to the programme nor to the methods of the Swaraj Party. As a Congressman I recognize its undoubted influence in the country and therefore its right to represent the Congress—a right which it now enjoys by arrangement but which it otherwise might have secured by a party vote.

What are the relations between you and the leaders of that party?

They are of a most cordial character. I give them the same credit for patriotic service and sacrifice that I would like to claim for myself.

It has been stated that you have surrendered to Mr. Das?

The statement is true in the sense that I have avoided a quarrel among Congressmen. But it is not true if it is intended to convey the meaning that I have surrendered an iota of my principles.

Was not your attitude on the Saha resolution¹ different from the one you have now adopted?

Not in the least. At the time of the Saha resolution I was opposing an internal error. At the present moment I am resisting external oppression based on erroneous assumptions. Moreover, my attempt then to secure consistency of conduct and control of the Congress executive by one party must not be confused with my action on the Saha resolution. The two things were totally different and were not even inter-related. As soon as I discovered that the attempt to secure unity of control led to bad blood, I retraced my steps and declared complete surrender to the Swaraj Party.

It has been stated that you have lost your moral authority by your surrender—?

Moral authority is never retained by any attempt to hold on to it. It comes without seeking and is retained without effort. I am not conscious of loss of moral authority, for I am utterly unconscious of being guilty of any single act compromising my moral conduct. What I have undoubtedly lost is the intellectual co-operation of a large number of educated men in my presentation of the means of attaining swaraj, e. g., the spinning-wheel.

Why do you insist upon non-co-operation while every one of the activities has failed? What is the purpose in speaking of its suspension?

I do not insist now. But I do not admit that every one of the activities has failed. On the contrary, every activity of non-co-operation succeeded to an extent. I can speak only of its suspension because to me non-co-operation is a vital principle of life and because in my opinion it had done India and, if you will, the world an amount of good of which, at present, we have not adequate conception and also because, if I found an atmosphere of substantial non-violence and real co-operation among the people and if the end remained still unattained, I should not hesitate to advise its resumption by the nation.

How do you propose to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem?

By constantly insisting upon both the communities cultivating

¹ Passed by the Bengal Provincial Conference, paying homage to the “patriotism” of Gopinath Saha who had murdered Ernest Day; *vide* “Interview to *The Times of India*”, June 5, 1924.

mutual respect and trust and by insisting upon Hindus surrendering out of strength to the Mussalman in every mundane matter and by showing that those who claim to be nationalists and are in an overwhelming majority should stand out in any unseemly competition for legislative or administrative control. I hope also to achieve the end by demonstrating that real swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words; swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.

What is your own real attitude towards the English and your hope about England?

My attitude towards the English is one of utter friendliness and respect. I claim to be their friend, because it is contrary to my nature to distrust a single human being or to believe that any nation on earth is incapable of redemption. I have respect for Englishmen, because I recognise their bravery, their spirit of sacrifice for what they believe to be good for themselves, their cohesion and their powers of vast organization. My hope about them is that they will at no distant date retrace their steps, revise their policy of exploitation of undisciplined and ill-organized races and give tangible proof that India is an equal friend and partner in the British Commonwealth to come. Whether such an event will ever come to pass will largely depend upon our own conduct. That is to say I have hope of England because I have hope of India. We will not for ever remain disorganised and imitative. Beneath the present disorganization, demoralization and lack of initiative I can discover organization, moral strength and initiative forming themselves. A time is coming when England will be glad of India's friendship and India will disdain to reject the proffered hand because it has once despoiled her. I know that I have nothing to offer in proof of my hope. It is based on an immutable faith. And it is a poor faith that is based on proof commonly [so] called.

Young India, 29-1-1925

83. NOTES

HOW NOT TO DO IT

Jamiet-al-Tabligh Islam has favoured me with the following translation of a resolution recently passed by it:

Resolved that the responsibility for the entire series of deplorable events which took place during the recent disturbances at Kohat¹ and which resulted in great loss of life and property to the residents of that place, lies with the person or persons who published at Kohat the offensive and provoking pamphlet which contained vile attacks on Islam and deeply wounded the religious feelings of Mussalmans. The Hindus who fired shots and killed Mussalmans are also responsible for aggravating the delicate situation still further. This Jamiet expresses sympathy with all those residents of Kohat, irrespective of creed and caste, who suffered loss of life or property in the course of these disturbances. As a religious society, this Jamiet feels bound to point out to Mahatma Gandhi and other political leaders that unless scurrilous attacks, in writing or by speech, on religion and founders and leaders of religious movements are absolutely stopped, the creation and maintenance of Hindu-Muslim unity in India will always be found impossible.

I am unable to congratulate the Jamiet on its resolution. It seems that both the parties have made up their minds on the main fact although no impartial inquiry has yet been held. Is it an established fact that the responsibility for “the entire series of deplorable events” lies with “the person or persons who published at Kohat the offensive and provoking pamphlet”? Is it also an established fact that “the Hindus who fired shots and killed Mussalmans are also responsible for aggravating the delicate situation still further”? If the two facts above mentioned are clearly established the Hindus at least are not entitled to any sympathy which the Jamiet shows for the loss in life and property suffered by them. For they have reaped what they have sown. The Jamiet is therefore inconsistent in showing sympathy to the Hindus. And what is the point in the Jamiet telling me and other political leaders that “unless scurrilous attacks on religion and founders of religious movements are absolutely stopped the creation and

¹ As a result of strained relations between the Hindu and the Mussalman communities, riots had broken out on the 9th and 10th September, 1924, in the city of Kohat in the North-West Frontier Province.

maintenance of Hindu-Muslim unity in India will always be found impossible”? If what the Jamiet contends is true, is not the impossibility of unity a fact for the Jamiet to note as well as the political leaders? And must Hindu-Muslim unity be impossible because some person delivers attacks on religion? According to the Jamiet one insane Hindu or one insane Mussalman is enough to make Hindu-Muslim unity impossible. Fortunately Hindu-Muslim unity does not finally depend upon religious or political leaders. It depends upon the enlightened selfishness of the masses belonging to both the communities. They cannot be misled for all time. But I hope that the original resolution of the Jamiet does not read as bad as the translation before me.

IAN AZL-I- USSAIN¹

A correspondent asks me to give my impressions of the interview I had with Mian Fazl-i-Hussain during my last visit to Lahore. I gladly comply. I had a very pleasant time with the Mian Saheb. His manners were most charming. He was reasonable and plausible in his conversation. He protested against the charge of partiality brought against him by Hindus. He said that he was trying to do tardy justice and that too in an incomplete manner to the Mussalmans. He was accessible to all and was anxious to explain his own position to anybody who cared to study the question. More than this, no man had a right to expect. Whether as a matter of fact there is anything to be said against the Mian Saheb's policy, I do not know. I have not been able to study the question on either side. When I am able to do so I shall gladly publish my opinion of Mian Fazl-i-Hussain's claim that he has done less than justice to the Mussalmans. Sufficient in the meantime for me to feel that in Mian Fazl-i-Hussain one has a gentleman, calm, cool, dignified and reasonable to deal with.

UR ELPLESSNESS

Orders are pouring in at the Ashram at Sabarmati for spinning-wheels, spindles, slivers, etc. If we were well-organized, such helplessness should be impossible. Time was when every village carpenter could make a spinning-wheel. Today city carpenters often do not know what a spinning-wheel is like, and they equally often refuse to make one from a model. Similarly, whereas formerly every carder knew how to make slivers, today they shrug their shoulders or

¹ A Muslim leader; member of the Viceroy's Executive Council

want to charge exorbitant prices. But the success of hand-spinning depends upon our resourcefulness and upon the co-operation of the artisans of India. No single institution can meet the growing demand for the wheel and its accessories. Fortunately things are improving but not as fast as they ought. Those who are in need should make a desperate effort to get these things made in their own cities or districts before ordering things from the Ashram. No doubt it is better to get them even from the Ashram than wait for an indefinite period of time for them. So far as slivers are concerned, I agree with Mr. K. Santhanam¹ who showed in his admirable essay that every spinner should make his own slivers. Carding with a small bow is an incredibly simple and easy performance. It is learnt much more quickly than spinning. And good carding invariably adds to the output of yarn and facilitates its evenness. For those who spin for wages carding adds to their earnings. There are carders all over India who can make a full living out of carding. A good carder can earn twelve annas per day—not so a good spinner. Every Congress Committee worth the name must have a depot for making and supplying wheels and the accessories.

N A S E F I S A P P R O P R I A T I O N

An Andhra friend writes:

Many people are taking undue advantage and not paying the amounts due to Congress Committees and Khaddar Boards knowing it for certain that they would not proceed against them in British courts. This of course amounts to misappropriation and cheating if not worse. In view of what you have written already regarding misappropriation of funds, and now the removal of ban on courts, I am quite sure that the Congress Committees can proceed in courts under these circumstances.

I have already given my opinion in such cases. I have no doubt that even when the boycott of courts was on foot it was the duty of Congress Committees to proceed against fraudulent and defaulting debtors. The boycott was not meant for the Congress to commit suicide. It presupposed honesty on the part of those who dealt with the Congress.

A. I. K. B.' E S O L U T I O N S

I invite the attention of all concerned to the following

¹ b. 1895; Lawyer, journalist and politician; then Secretary, Tamil Nad Congress Khaddar Board

resolutions of the A.I.K.B. regarding the working of the Congress Franchise:

In view of the Congress having made hand-spinning part of the franchise and in order to enable the provincial Committees to receive facilities in the matter, the All-India Khadi Board resolves that it will be prepared to give the following assistance directly as well as through the Provincial Khadi Boards.

1. The Board will be prepared to supply cotton to any province where cotton is not easily available.
2. The Board will be prepared to consider applications for cotton loans on terms to be arranged.
3. This Board advises the Provincial Khadi Boards to render every possible assistance to enable members to get models for making good charkhas and carding-bows and supply all necessary accessories as also to assist in the matter of getting carded slivers until members make their own arrangements.
4. The Board will, so far as possible, arrange for experts to give the necessary tuition in carding, spinning, etc., under arrangements to be made with the Board.
5. The Board will be prepared to buy yarn from any provincial Congress Committee at bazaar rates or to get it woven for the Committees.
6. The Board will be prepared, if so desired, to supply hand-spun yarn at reasonable rates in connection with the yarn required for satisfying the franchise.
7. The Board warns individuals and committees against buying hand-spun yarn from the bazaar for the purpose of the yarn franchise as the bazaar yarn is likely to be mill yarn or spun from mill slivers and not to be even and well-twisted. (It is possible only for experts to distinguish between mill-spun and hand-spun yarn or to say when yarn is well-twisted; even experts will be unable to say when hand-spun yarn is spun from mill-made slivers.)
8. Lastly, the Board will be prepared to give any further information or help to individuals or committees which it is in its power to give.

Time is running against us. I hope therefore that the Provincial Committees are organizing themselves under the new franchise. Properly worked, its possibilities are immense. But the working requires attention to the minutest details. And when once the organization is in working order, it must grow from day to day in geometrical progression and make the Congress a self-supporting, wealth-producing institution.

Young India, 29-1-1925

84. LETTER TO KRISHNADAS

DELHI,
January 29, 1925

MY DEAR KRISHNADAS¹,

The enclosed is for Pyarelal². I hope you are not worrying about me. I am receiving all the attention I need. Mahadev³ is not overworked. Deen Dayal has found himself with me again. He has taken over personal attendance and freed Mahadev for the most part for personal correspondance⁴. Private negotiations are now going on for a settlement of the Hindu-Muslim problem. It is difficult to forecast the result. We are here till at least 31st. I hope you are getting stronger daily. It is very cold here and I am glad you are not here. Mr. Andrews is here and will be for two days longer. Tell Kikibehn⁵ I was glad to hear that she was taking a regular tailoring class at the Ashram. It distracts her attention and will do⁶ good, if she does not overwork herself.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 5598

85. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

DELHI,
Maha Sud 5 [January 29, 1925]⁷

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Avantikabehn has been ill, so I have written to her that she should go to the Ashram. As she has neither answered nor acknowledged the letter, she may not have received it. Please find out and let

¹ Gandhiji's secretary

² Pyarelal Nayyar, Gandhiji's secretary, author of *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*

³ Mahadev Desai, (1892-1942); Gandhiji's secretary for 25 years

⁴ The source has "personal attendance".

⁵ Sister of J. B. Kripalani

⁶ The source has "go".

⁷ From the postmark

me know. I have to be in Delhi at least for the next two days. Let us see what happens after that.

Anand will be all right now.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Avantikabehn's letter has arrived.

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

86. TELEGRAM TO DR. PRANJIVAN MEHTA

January 31, 1925

TO

DR MEHTA

GOLDGOD

RANGOON

EIGHTH MARCH WOULD BE MY SILENT DAY AND I AM KATHIAWAR DURING THAT WEEK. WILL TWENTY-SIXTH FEBRUARY DO? AM PRACTICALLY ABSENT UP TO 22ND FEBRUARY.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S. N. 2456

87. A SHAME

A friend from Tanganyika writes:¹

It is likely that the picture is completely true. I have personally observed such things happening in the Portuguese territory, i.e., in Delagoa Bay. The Muslims there have opened an orphanage for their children and thus made some provision for them. Hindus hand over their children to the care of Muslims. All these children are brought up as Muslims. This is one way out. I, however, do not approve of this

¹ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent has described the plight of children born to Negro women secretly married to Hindus who afterwards abandoned them and left for India.

solution. To my mind, the action of both deserves condemnation. In the first place, it is wrong to treat a union of this kind as a marriage. I, for one, regard it merely as a means of sensual gratification. Moral restrictions tend to become lax in a foreign country, since the fear of social opinion disappears. But there is a difference of degree between the guilt of the two parties. The Muslims accept and rear the children of love and bring them up in their faith. If the provision made by the Muslims were not available for the children of the Hindus, the latter would simply starve to death. Since the children are the fruit of mere sensual gratification, their Hindu fathers do not care in what religious faith they are brought up. In my view, a man so blinded by lust has forsaken his religion. It is difficult for me to regard anyone who obeys no moral principle in his conduct to be a religious man. For purposes of census persons born into a certain religion may be regarded as belonging to that religion, but really speaking they have renounced religion. There is nothing apart from conduct which may be defined as religion. It is not the one who repeats the Gayatri mantra¹ every day or studies the Vedas that truly belongs to the Vedic religion, but the one who lives according to the teachings of the Vedas is a true follower of the Vedic religion. Some Christians make a deep study of the Vedas and other scriptures, but that along does not render them true followers of the Vedic religion. In other words, those who recite the Gayatri and other mantras hypocritically or because they are ruled by superstition, are not followers of the Vedas. Their claim of belonging to any religion can be accepted only if they understand the teachings of that religion and follow them in practice to the best of their ability. Judged from this point of view, the Hindus of Tanganyika should be considered to have forsaken their religion.

This is only an abstract solution. In practice, these Hindu or Muslim fathers are regarded as Hindus or Muslims, as the case may be, and so we should find a solution which will work in practice. The Hindu fathers should convert such union into regular marriage and take their children under their loving care and make necessary provision for their education, etc. This is a solution to the problem of the children already born. In future, however, everyone intending to go and live in a foreign country should take his family along with him. For those children, however, whose fathers are altogether heartless, there is no other solution except opening orphanages. Such

¹ Prayer to sun-god

orphanages should best be opened in the countries in question. We may assume that the mothers of the children will stay with them in the orphanages. These mothers had sacrificed themselves to earn their livelihood. They are, however, not aware of the sinful aspect of their conduct. For, though Negroes have the institution of marriage among them, it is not considered immoral for a woman to offer her body for money. Such women, nevertheless, do feel the mother's love in their heart. We should tend it and encourage them to do their duty as mothers. In these pitiable cases, the child's mother-tongue is different from its father-tongue. Which language should it be taught? The father generally feels little attachment for his children born in this manner and so the latter learn the mother's language. Hence, those in charge of the orphanages should teach these children their mother-tongue. If they are taught both the [father's and the mother's] languages, they will be better equipped to earn their livelihood in future.

The problem of their religion is more intriguing. It does not arise, as we have seen, as far as the Muslim fathers are concerned. But it is the general rule that the children of a Hindu father should be treated as Hindus. I have no doubt in my mind that, following this rule, the children of Hindu fathers should receive instruction in Hindu religion. The children themselves are helpless in this matter. They will assimilate the atmosphere in the orphanages where they are brought up. If these are run by men imbued with a religious spirit, they can instil it in the children.

I hope that the Hindus living in Tanganyika and such other territories will think and consider what their duty is, and do it. Their first duty is to overcome their lust. This refers to the future. To bring up properly the children already born, to provide for their religious instruction and in every way to do their duty as fathers—this is their duty at all times. Those who can should take their wives with them. A man should judge a woman's condition by his own. If a man cannot endure separation for a long time, neither can a woman. That men and women married at a proper age should not remain separated for a long time needs no proof. In not remaining so lies the guarantee of the purity of their character.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 1-2-1925

88. MY NOTES

WORTHY OF EMULATION

I reproduce the following relevant extract from a reader's letter from Palitana: ¹

What a great advance in reform can be brought about if other [public] servants emulate this example! Through such work one serves both the Ruler and the people, and one's own interest as well. This couple will, by and by, have all their cotton and woollen garments made from yarn and wool spun by themselves. We have noted that among the *Kaliparaj* tribals the annual expenditure on clothes amounts to Rs. 10 for every person. The expenditure in the family of this correspondent must be even higher. He will save considerably on that expenditure and, in the bargain, will have acquired a skill, earned the blessings of the poor and learnt something about the varieties of cotton and wool and how to improve their quality. At this time when spinning and allied activities are making good progress in Kathiawar, I wish that officials of all grades who come into frequent contacts with the public in the course of their work should teach the people, as this correspondent does, to spin and do other work relating to khadi. This friend wants a portable spinning-wheel which can be carried on horse-back. Others, too, are likely to ask for such a wheel. But the right solution is that people in every village should have spinning-wheels in their homes. Whether in Kathiawar or elsewhere, there ought to be no village without at least one spinning-wheel. If in a village there is none, arrangements must be made to instal them, so that officials can borrow them and do their spinning. If all the people take up spinning, there should be in the central meeting place in every village two or three spinning-wheels which may be used by the *patels*² as also by the poor people and the officials on their visits. Meanwhile, however, the idea of having a portable spinning-wheel which can be carried on horse-back is an excellent one.

KHADI STORE

I frequently receive letters about the closure of the khadi store

¹ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent, who was an employee in the Palitana State service, had said that he and his wife devoted their spare time to spinning cotton and wool and that the State authorities, far from objecting to his activities, encouraged him.

² Village headmen

run by the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee. One such letter is lying before me just now. I notice from it that there is some misunderstanding about this matter. I have never advised that the Provincial Committee should run no khadi store. What indeed I have suggested is that a khadi store which runs at a great loss or in which the loss is increasing, instead of diminishing, should be closed down, and that buying khadi for a store from outside Gujarat should be stopped. This advice is inspired by nothing else but a careful calculation and some knowledge of economics. I cannot, even in my dream, wish ill of other provinces and well to Gujarat. It is, however, of the very essence of the principle of swadeshi that one should serve one's neighbours first. This principle is violated when wheat from the south is preferred to the wheat produced in Gujarat and the procedure, therefore, is detrimental to Gujarat, to the south and to the whole country. The philosophy of khadi had its origin in this principle.

Let us now examine the aims we hope to serve through khadi. The first is that it will revive Indian villages. This can happen only when every village produces its own khadi. This in its turn is possible only if every province produces its own khadi and uses what it produces.

The second aim behind khadi is to bring about a boycott of foreign cloth through it. This can be achieved only if India manufactures all the cloth its population requires. If Indians demand cloth similar to the foreign product, India cannot meet that demand. Indians, therefore, should accustom themselves to wear, with pleasure, such cloth as the country produces. If all the people insist on wearing only khadi manufactured in Andhra, Andhra cannot meet all that demand and the boycott of foreign cloth can never be achieved. Every province, therefore, should try to produce fine khadi. For the same reason, every province should produce its own khadi. As a general rule it is observed that, so long as there is no demand for a commodity, no effort is made to produce it.

This certainly does not mean that no one should wear or order Andhra khadi. My only point is that the Congress at any rate should always adopt the ideal course. If it wishes, the public will adopt the second best course. If, because the ideal course is difficult, even the Congress does not adopt it, no one else is likely to do, and without such efforts success is impossible.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 1-2-1925

89. SHORTAGE OF SPINNING-WHEELS

I notice that spinning has now spread considerably and, in consequence, there is a great demand for supply of spinning-wheels by the Ashram. The latter cannot provide all the spinning-wheels demanded. Nor can the movement progress in this manner. Each province, each district, each taluk and, finally, each village should be able to boast of a carpenter who can make spinning-wheels. The spindle-holders are now made of string or coir. The benefits of the spinning-wheel movement are not confined to the spinners and weavers. It provides work to carpenters and blacksmiths, too. There will be no section of society which will not share in the benefits.

NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS

It is but natural that at this time when a determined effort is made to spread the khadi movement in Maha Gujarat we should require a large number of volunteers. We need both part-time volunteers and full-time volunteers. It is essential that every volunteer should know all the processes connected with spinning. Any persons who wish to offer their services as such volunteers may send their names to me, so that as and when the need arises their services may be utilized. This request for names is not addressed to those who are already working some-where or other. I invite, however, the names of persons who are able and willing to serve but who have had no opportunity till now. Those who send their names should also give particulars of their age, aptitude for work, etc.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 1-2-1925

90. TELEGRAM TO GOKALDAS THAKER

February 1, 1925

TO

THAKERS¹ GOKALDAS

MORVI

CONVEY ONE OTHER EARLIER DATE. ACCORDING[LY] JOSHI
AMRITLAL NEED NOT WAIT.

MOHANDAS

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

91. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

DELHI,

Maha Sud 8 [February 1, 1925]²

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter. I am trying to get a better charkha for you. While at the charkha, one can repeat *Ramanama* as well. There is the case of two learned men who saved themselves from [an attack of] madness only by repeating *Ramanama* while plying the charkha. Ultimately, things happen to us according to our aspirations.

Yours,

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C. W. 6103. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

92. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Maha Sud 9 [February 2, 1925]³

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Please read the enclosed letter carefully and watch out for the steamer mentioned in it. Meet the person whose name has been given in the letter. You have only to tell him that his mother has written to me. If he intends to see me, he may come to the Ashram. Buy his ticket if he has no money. It is possible that being a sailor he may not

¹ Presumably a slip for Thaker

² From the reference to the charkha, it is clear that the letter belongs to 1925. Gandhiji was in Delhi on February 1, 1925.

³ The letter is placed among the letters of 1925. *Maha Sud 9* in 1925 corresponded to February 2. Gandhiji, however, left for Rawalpindi on February 3.

be relieved. In this regard you have to accept whatever happens. Maybe it is necessary for him to obtain permission for living in India. Please see to all this. You can consult me if you want to ask anything more. I shall reach the Ashram on the 10th. I am very glad to read that Mother is well.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

We are going to Rawalpindi today. Preserve this letter and send it back to me.

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

93. LETTER TO ABDUL KADIR BAWAZEER

DELHI,

February 2, 1925

BHAI IMAM SAHEB,

Chi. Chhaganlal writes that you are ill. Remember that we have no right to fall ill. It is our duty to keep our body healthy. I hope Amina and Qureshi are well and looking after you.

Here talks are going on, but one cannot say what the result will be. Tomorrow I may go to Rawalpindi. I hope to be there¹ on the 10th.

Vandemataram from

BAPU

BHAI IMAM SAHEB

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM

SABARMATI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 10784. Courtesy: Ghulam Rasool Qureshi

¹ At Ahmedabad

94. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Maha Sud 11 [February 4, 1925]¹

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Vithalbhai² is not giving the lunch. I had asked you to follow the instructions of the Party. You need not go for the lunch. I shall explain further later.

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

95. PERTINENT QUESTIONS

I printed sometime ago a thoughtful letter³ from Bengal on the question of untouchability. The writer is still pursuing his diligent search. Now I have a similar search from a Madras correspondent in the form of questions. It is a healthy sign that the orthodox Hindus are moved to an inquiry into this thorny question. There is no denying the earnestness of the framer of the questions. They are typical because there is hardly one among the long list that has not been put to me in my rambles. In the hope, therefore, that my answers may guide the path of the correspondent who claims to be a worker and an earnest seeker, and such other workers and seekers, I make an attempt to solve the many riddles presented by my correspondent.

1. What are the practical steps to be taken to remove untouchability?
 - (a) To open to untouchables all public schools, temples and roads that are open to non-Brahmins and are not exclusively devoted to any particular caste.
 - (b) For caste Hindus to open schools for their children, to dig wells

¹ The postmark bears the date February 6, 1925, in which year *Maha Sud 11* corresponded to February 4.

² Vithalbhai Patel

³ *Vide* "Can Untouchability be Defended?", December 5, 1924.

for them where they are in need and to render them all personal service that they may need, e.g., to carry on temperance and hygienic reform among them and to provide them with medical aid.

2. What would be the religious status of the untouchables when the ban of untouchability is completely removed?

The religious status would be the same as that of the caste Hindus. They will therefore be classed as Sudras instead of *Atisudras*.¹

3. What would be the relation between the untouchable and the high-caste orthodox, Brahmin, when untouchability is removed?

The same as with non-Brahmin Hindus.

4. Do you advocate inter-mingling of castes?

I would abolish all castes and would keep the four divisions.

5. Why should not the untouchables build temples for their own worship, without interfering with the existing temples?

The "higher" castes have not left them much capacity for such enterprise. It is the wrong way of looking at the question to say that they interfere with our temples. We, the so-called higher caste men, have to do our duty by admitting them to the temples common to all Hindus.

6. Are you an advocate of communal representation, and do you hold that the untouchables must have representation in all administrative bodies?

I am not. But if the untouchables are purposely shut out by the influential classes, it would be an improper exclusion barring the road to swaraj. My disapproval of communal representation does not mean exclusion of any community from representation but, on the contrary, it lays the burden on the represented communities to see to the proper representation of the unrepresented or inadequately represented communities.

7. Are you a believer in the efficacy of *varnashrama dharma*?

Yes. But there is today a travesty of *varna*, no trace of *ashram* and a misrepresentation of *dharma*. The whole system needs to be revised and brought in unison with the latest discoveries in the field of religion.

8. Don't you believe that India is *Karmabhumi*, and that everybody born here is endowed with wealth and intelligence, social status and religious aspirations

¹ *Antyajjas*

according to his good or ill deeds in his previous birth?

Not in the sense the correspondent means. For everybody everywhere reaps as he sows. But India is essentially *karmabhumi* (land of duty) in contradistinction to *bhogabhumi* (land of enjoyment).

9. Is not education and reform among the untouchables a primary condition to be fulfilled are one can begin to talk of the removal of untouchability?

There can be no reform or education among the untouchables without the removal of untouchability.

10. Is it not natural, and just as it should be, that non-drunkards avoid drunkards, and that vegetarians avoid non-vegetarians?

Not necessarily. A teetotaller would regard it as his duty to associate with his drunkard brother for the purpose of weaning him from the evil habit. So may a vegetarian seek out a non-vegetarian.

11. Is it not true that a pure man (in the sense that he is a teetotaller, and vegetarian) easily becomes an impure man (in the sense that he becomes a drunkard, and non-vegetarian) when he is made to single with men who drink, and kill, and eat animals?

A man who being unconscious of the wrong, drinks wine and eats flesh foods, is not necessarily an impure man. But I can understand the possibility of evil resulting from one being made to mingle with a corrupt person. In our case, however, there is no case of *making* anyone associate with untouchables.

12. Is it not owing to the above fact that a certain class of orthodox Brahmins do not mingle with the other castes (including the untouchables), but constitute themselves into a separate class, and live together or their spiritual uplift?

It must be a poor spirituality that requires to be locked up in a safe. Moreover, days are gone when men used to guard their virtue by permanent isolation.

13. Would you not be interfering with the religions and caste-system (*varnashrama dharma*) of India, whatever may be the bad or good points of the above systems and religions, if you advocate the removal of untouchability?

How do I interfere with anything or anybody by mere advocacy of a reform? Interference there would be, if I were to advocate removal of untouchability by the use of force against those who retain untouchability.

14. Would you not be guilty of doing *himsa*¹ to the orthodox Brahmins, if you

¹ Violence

interfere with their religious beliefs without convincing them in the first instance?

I cannot be guilty of *himsa* to the orthodox Brahmins as I do not interfere with their religious belief except through conviction.

15. Are not the Brahmins guilty of untouchability, when they do not touch, dine with or marry the various other castes leaving along the untouchables?

Brahmins are guilty of the sin if they refuse to “touch” the other castes.

16. Does it satisfy the hunger of the untouchable when he is made to parade Brahmin *agraharams*¹ in the exercise of his right as a man?

Man does not live by bread alone. Many prefer self-respect to food.

17. Does not satyagraha in this direction lead to violence, seeing that the untouchables are not so well educated as to understand the full doctrine of non-violence non-co-operation, and also seeing that the Brahmin cares more for his religion than or politics?

If reference is to Vykom, experience shows that the “untouchable” has shown amazing self-restraint. The latter part of the question suggests the possibility of violence by the Brahmins concerned. I should be sorry if *they* resort to violence. They would then have shown, in my opinion, not regard for religion but ignorance of and contempt for religion.

18. Do you advocate that all should become equal, without any distinction of caste, race, creed or avocation?

Such should be the case in the eye of the law in the matter of elementary human rights, even as, irrespective of caste, race, creed or colour, we have certain things in common, e.g., hunger, thirst, etc.

19. Would that supreme philosophical truth be of any use in the field of practical politics, to the average *grihastha* or householder, seeing that only great souls, who have come to the end of their cycle of karma, could realize and practise that supreme philosophical truth, and not the ordinary *grihastha*, who has only to follow what the *rishis*² have ordained, and in that following, get discipline which consequently leads to release from birth and death?

Not much “supreme philosophical truth” is involved in the recognition of the simple truth that no human being is to be regarded as untouchable by reason of his birth. The truth is so simple that it is

¹ Streets occupied by Brahmins

² Sages

recognized all over the world except by orthodox Hindus. I have questioned the statement that the *rishis* taught the doctrine of untouchability as we practise it.

Young India, 5-2-1925

96. ON ANOTHER'S LAND

A friend says :

You ask us at every turn to yield to Mussalmans, you ask us to resort to law-courts on any account. Have you fully considered the consequences of what you are saying? Have you taken into the account human nature? What are we to do when mosques are being put up on our ground without our permission? What are we to do when unscrupulous men bring suits against us for monies we do not owe or when they actually rob us of our possessions. In giving your answers you must take our poor selves into consideration. You dare not say you do not know us. Or if you give your *fatwas*¹ in utter obliviousness of us, you must not blame us if we do not respond to your counsels of perfection. Let me tell you that you are sometimes impossible.

I sympathize with the friends who talk to me in this strain. I am prepared to recognize the limitations of human nature for the very simple reason that I recognise my own. But precisely as recognizing my own limitations, I do not deceive myself by refusing to distinguish between what I ought to do and what I fail to do. I must not deceive others by refusing to notice the same distinction and telling them that what they propose to do is not only perhaps defensible but also right. Many things are impossible and yet are the only things right. A reformer's business is to make the impossible possible by giving an ocular demonstration of the possibility in his own conduct. Whoever thought it possible before Edison to speak to people hundreds of miles away from us. Marconi went a step further and made wireless communication possible. We are daily witnessing the phenomenon of the impossible of yesterday becoming the possible of today. As in physical science so in psychological.

Now for the concrete questions. The question of mosques built on another's land without his permission is incredibly simple. If A is in possession of his land and someone comes to build some things on it, be it even a mosque. A has the right at the first opportunity of

¹ Decrees of Muslim divines.

pulling down the structure. Any building of the shape of a mosque is not a mosque. A building to be a mosque must be duly consecrated. A building put up on another's land without his permission is a pure robbery. Robbery cannot be consecrated. If A has not the will or the capacity to destroy the building miscalled mosque, he has the right of going to a law court to have the building pulled down. Law-courts are forbidden to convinced non-co-operators but not to those who require such conviction. Moreover, full non-co-operation we have never practised. A practice has a flaw in it when it is not only inconvenient but clearly defeats the end it was designed to serve. So long as I own property I must defend it whether by the force of law-courts or by the force of my own strong arms. The act is in essence the same. Our national non-co-operation is or was with a system. It presupposed co-operation among ourselves in a general way. But when we non-co-operate among ourselves, national non-co-operation is a mirage. Individual non-co-operation is possible when we own not a clod of earth. It is possible only for *sannyasin*. The highest fulfilment of religion therefore requires a giving up of all possession. Having ascertained the law of our being, we must set about reducing it to practice to the extent of our capacity and no further. That is the middle way. When a robber comes to take away A's property he can deliver the property to him, if he recognizes in him a blood brother. If he does not feel like one but dreads the robber and would wish that someone was near to knock him down, he must try to knock him down and take the consequence. If he has the desire but not the ability to fight the robber, he must allow himself to be robbed and then call in the assistance of law-courts to regain the lost property. In both the cases he has as good a chance of losing his property as of regaining it. If he is a sane man like me, he would reach with me the conclusion that to be really happy he must not own anything or own things only so long as his neighbours permit him. In the last resort we live not by our physical strength but by sufferance. Hence the necessity of uttermost humility and absolute reliance on God. This is living by soul-force. This is highest self-expression.

Let us bear the law in mind not as an academic and attractive proposition when it is written on paper but as the law of our being to be continually realized and let us fashion our practice in accordance with the law *and* the measure of our ability to live up to it.

Young India, 5-2-1925

97. WELL DONE

The Secretary, Taluka Congress Committee, Haliyal, Karwar, writes:

Our Municipality here has a congress majority. We are therefore trying to carry out the Congress programme through it. Spinning has been made compulsory in the municipal schools. Municipal employees have khaddar costumes given to them. Primary education of the children of depressed classes has been made free and compulsory. Their children sit side by side with other children. They are permitted to make use of the common tank. We have no Hindu-Muslim or Brahmin-non-Brahmin differences. We are organizing a temperance campaign.

This is all good and substantial work. I congratulate the Haliyal Taluka Congress Committee on its solid constructive work and wish that other will follow them.

Young India , 5-2-1925

98. NOTES

TOWARDS UNITY

The All-Party Committee met to consider the questions referred to it by the Conference. It appointed a sub-committee of nearly fifty to consider the question. The sub-committee appointed a smaller committee to consider all possible swaraj schemes and report to the sub-committee the results of its deliberations. Dr. Besant is labouring at this smaller committee with her usual application and energy which put to shame younger men and women. But naturally the attention centred round the Hindu-Muslim problem; not that it is intrinsically more important except for individuals like me but because it blocks all progress towards swaraj. The sub-committee proved too formal for the task. It was necessary to avoid the reserve and the stiffness even of a committee and to be absolutely informal and to have a still smaller number of persons. This was done and a few of each community met at Hakim Saheb's house. The result has been succinctly given to the Press by Pandit Motilalji Nehru. I agree that there is no cause for anxiety or disappointment. For all want a solution. Some want it at once, some regard the time not to be seasonable, some would sacrifice everything to get a solution, others would be cautious and would wait till they have secured what to them is an indispensable minimum. But all agreed that a solution of the problem was essential to swaraj. And

as all want swaraj, a solution must not be beyond the reach of those who are engaged in finding it. The prospect was never so bright as when we parted to meet again on 28th February. Meanwhile everyone is to explore fresh avenues to a settlement.

The public will want to know my view of communal representation. I am opposed to it with all my heart but I would agree to anything so long as it ensures peace and is honourable to both the parties. In the absence of agreement on the plans suggested by either party I have presented a solution which might answer the purpose. But I need not discuss it at the present stage. I hope that the responsible members of both the communities will leave no stone unturned whether by means of private, quiet talks or by means of a public expression of their opinions. I hope too that newspapermen will write nothing to irritate any party but will observe discreet silence where they cannot usefully assist.

INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Viceregal answer to the Deputation that waited on His Excellency was sympathetic but non-committal. It betrays unnecessary consideration for the difficulties of the Union Government. It is just for one Government to appreciate the difficulties of another but the performance might easily be overdone. The Union Government observed no delicacy when it had to make its choice. The Indian Government has had many an occasion to make such a choice. Each time, except once, it has surrendered. The exception was made by Lord Hardinge¹ who hurled defiance at the Government of South Africa and ranged himself on the side of Indians in South Africa. There were reasons for it. The Indians were fighting by direct action. The method was new. They had proved their capacity for resistance and suffering and yet they were demonstrably and wholly non-violent. But at the present moment Indians of South Africa are leaderless. With Sorabji², Kachalia³, P.K.Naidu⁴ and now Rustomji gone, they do not know what they should do or can do. There is ample scope for nonviolent action. But it requires thinking out and

¹ Viceroy of India, 1910-16

² Sorabji Shapurji Adajania; Parsi public worker and passive resister who suffered imprisonment and deportation during the satyagraha campaign in South Africa

³ A. M. Cachalia, Chairman, Transvaal, British Indian Association

⁴ Secretary of the British Indian Association, Transvaal

vigorous working out. That seems hardly possible at the present moment. I have, however, great hope of one or two young men who are resident in South Africa. Not the least among them in Sorabji, the brave son of the brave Rustomji. Young Sorabji is himself a seasoned soldier in satyagraha. He has been to prison. He organized the wonderful receptions that were given in Natal to Sarojini Devi¹. Let our countrymen in South Africa realize that they must work out their own salvation. Even heaven helps only those who help themselves. They will find that if they show their original grit and spirit and sacrifice, they will have the people of India, the Government of India and the world helping and fighting for them.

There is a passage in the Viceregal pronouncement which needs supplementing. His Excellency says,

It is stated in your address that “the Municipal Franchise was solemnly assured to Indians by the Natal Government when in 1896 Indians were deprived of the Parliamentary Franchise.” But you have not indicated the exact source or the nature of the assurance. My Government are making the necessary enquiries to verify the position.

The statement made by the Deputation is substantially correct. It was, however, not in 1896 but probably in 1894 that the assurance was given. I am writing from memory. The facts are these. It was in 1894 that the first disfranchising bill was passed by the Natal Assembly. Whilst it was passing through that assembly a petition was presented to it on behalf of Indians wherein it was stated that the Indians enjoyed in India the Municipal and indirectly even the political franchise. Fear was also expressed that the deprivation of the political franchise was likely to be a prelude to that of the Municipal Franchise. It was in answer to this petition that the late Sir John Robinson, the Premier of Natal, and the late Mr. Escombe, the Attorney General, gave the assurance that there was no intention to go further and deprive the Indians of the Municipal Franchise at a future date. The disfranchising bill was disallowed by the superior Government but another non-racial in character was passed. The assurance referred to by me was several times repeated by Mr. Escombe who had charge of all the bills and who was virtually the dictator of Natal’s policy whilst

¹ Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949), poet, patriot, congress leader and a close associate of Gandhiji. She visited South Africa in 1924.

he was in office.

IS A SWARAJIST A CONGRESSMAN ?

I have before me a curious letter in which the writer says, a distinction is being made by Congressmen in Sind between Swarajists and Congressmen, and the former are obstructed by the latter. I should have hoped that such a thing would be impossible after the Belgaum Congress which recognizes the Swaraj Party as an integral party of the Congress and which suspends the non-co-operation programme. Every Swarajist who subscribes to the Congress creed and conforms to the new franchise is as much a Congressman as the one who is not a Swarajist, that is to say, who does not believe in Council-entry. Let it be also remembered that the Swaraj Party has itself altered its constitution to make it obligatory on every member of that party to accept the Congress franchise. There should therefore not only be no obstruction by one of the other but each should help the other wherever the help is not inconsistent with one's conscience.

FROM VYKOM

The following from the Satyagraha Ashram at Vykom cannot fail to be of general interest.

I hope you have got our telegram about the spinning competition. Two volunteers took 578 yards and 508 yds., each yarn being of 8 counts. Our weaving is not up to the mark now since some of the boys who knew weaving have left the Ashram on leave. We have, according to the directions of Vinobaji,¹ reduced our number to barely fifty. But this has proved troublesome since the climate here is very bad and many of the resident volunteers become incapacitated to offer satyagraha for six hours. So it has become necessary to go in for some ten to fifteen volunteers more, so that we have to keep a permanent strength of 60 volunteers. I hope you will agree that this is necessary.

Of the 24 hours 8 hours for sleep, 6 hours for satyagraha, 2 hours for spinning, 1 hour for Hindi, 2 hours for Ashram work (sweeping, washing, etc.), 2 hours for meals, bath, and other bodily wants, 1 hour for reading-room and 2 hours for daily prayer and meetings in which usually some good subjects are dealt with either by me or by some of the prominent guests who usually attend the Ashram.

Our treasurer is now exerting himself for building a school in memory of

¹ Acharya Vinoba Bhave (b.1895); Gandhiji's greatest disciple; founder, Bhoodan and Gramdan movements; author of *Talks on the Gita*, etc..

the satyagraha campaign under orders from Sri Narayana Guru.¹ All of us are anxiously waiting for your coming here. It has become almost an obsession with most people here to consider what they should do to expedite your coming. I hope that God will grant you the health and time to proceed here shortly.

The scrupulous care with which things are being managed by the Vykom satyagrahis is the surest assurance of success. It may seemingly take long, but it is my deliberate conviction that it is none the less the quickest way. It is the only true way. The fight against untouchability is a religious fight. It is a fight for the recognition of human dignity. It is a fight for a mighty reform in Hinduism. It is a fight against the entrenched citadels of orthodoxy. Victory which is a certainly is worth the patience and the sacrifice, the band of devoted young Hindus is giving to it. The process of waiting is a process of self-purification for the young men engaged in the fight. If they persist they will be ranked among the makers of India of the future.

As for the satyagrahis longing that I should go to Vykom I can only give them the assurance that I am longing to be with them. I am looking for a chance. But the choice becomes difficult when there are so many calls upon my time. My heart and my prayers are with them; who knows that they are not more than my bodily presence in their midst.

BEWARE

The Ganjam District Congress Committee has sent me a postcard from a dealer asking for quotations for hanks of 2,000 yards of yarn for the purpose of sale on the market. It is not possible to object to such an open trade. But those who do not want to spin but want to buy yarn and to give it as their subscription, should beware of buying yarn in the bazaar. They should try to get their quota spun in their own families. If that be not possible they should engage a reliable spinner and get him to supply the yarn. The Akola Congre-ssmen who do not want to spin themselves have solved their difficulty by getting Mr. Mashruwala² who is an enthusiastic believer in hand-spinning to supply them with the required quantity. This ensures the kind and the quality of yarn. No province should import hand-spun yarn from

¹ Spiritual leader of the untouchables

² Kishorelal Mashruwala; constructive worker and associate of Gandhiji; editor of Gandhiji's weekly, *Harijan*, author of *Gandhi and Marx*

another province.

WASTE OF YARN

A friend from Kumbakonam writes:

Perhaps you are aware of a custom, now prevalent in the country, to honour political leaders with hand-spun yarn garlands. Such garlands are invariably used on every political occasion and I may add that an enormous quantity of hand-spun yarn is wasted since none takes care of it. As an example of such waste, I have sent per separate post, a parcel of yarn which I was able to pick up at the Tamil Nadu Khilafat Conference held recently at Kumbakonam under the Presidency of Maulana Shaukat Ali¹. But for my interest in the yarn 960 yards of yarn would have gone to waste. I am sure that at the said Conference alone, much larger quantity of yarn had been wasted. Hence I would like to suggest to you to instruct our countrymen through *Young India* to prepare garlands in hanks of uniform length, say 2,000 yards, so that at every meeting garlands of 2,000 yards may be collected and utilized according as the garlanded leaders propose.

I can endorse the correspondent's complaint as to waste. It is a good custom to present leaders with yarn garlands but they should be prettily made and not much yarn should be used in them. If the idea be to present yarn to leaders and not to garland them, the correspondent's suggestion should be adopted and uniform size hanks should be given. For, if the habit of presenting yarn garlands becomes universal and care is not taken, there might be an enormous waste of good yarn which might otherwise have been utilized for making cheap khaddar for poor people.

“HABITUAL WEARING”

A Bengal school teacher writes:

I am a teacher of a national school. The resolution about national schools passed at Belgaum has given rise to considerable stir amongst the teachers and students of national schools. Some are trying to interpret the resolution as it suits their own interest. The words “habitual wearing of khaddar by students” is being interpreted by some as not meaning compulsory wearing and hence they say that those, who are attending school without khadi on, need not be debarred. All that the teachers should do is always to ask them to put on khadi and gradually initiate them into wearing it. They say, even if they have to wait indefinitely to see their students clad in khadi they can continue calling their

¹ 1873-1938; Muslim politician who along with his brother Mahomed Ali took a leading part in the Khilafat movement

institutions “national” without transgressing the resolution of Belgaum. They say, even if 60 p.c. of the students come to school with mill cloth they can claim to call their schools national if only the school teachers continued teaching the utility and propriety of using khaddar, hoping that they would take to it in due course which may be six months, one year or even more.

In our opinion the resolution does not admit of this interpretation. It means that the schools should not tolerate anybody’s coming to school without khaddar but in cases of emergency or helplessness resulting from unavoidable causes over which one has no control a student may be allowed to join school on rare occasions. We think the resolution debar everybody from attending who systematically comes to school without khaddar. We have been trying to run the institutions in our area on this line.

I therefore appeal to you to write to me, and in the pages of *Young India* if you think it necessary, the real meaning and sense of the resolution in clear unequivocal language so that your idea about the point may be known to all concerned.

I have no doubt about the meaning of the word “habitual”. My correspondent’s meaning is the only possible meaning. A school cannot be called national, in terms of the Congress resolution, whose scholars do not wear khaddar as a rule. But in seeking to know the meaning of words, the safest rule is “go to the dictionary”. Here is the meaning given in the Concise Oxford Dictionary of the word “habitual”: “customary, constant, continual”.

SHOULD THEY AFFILIATE

The question then arises: are the schools which cannot fulfil the test then to become affiliated as Government institutions? Surely such is not the only alternative or for that matter any, for a school that has non-co-operated. There is room enough for schools independent both of the Congress and the Government. There may be schools whose conductors do not believe in Government patronage, control or interference and yet may not believe for instance in khadi or in teaching the vernacular or Hindustani. There is no reason why such schools should not continue if they receive public support or the conductors are themselves rich enough to carry them on themselves. All that the Congress has done is to prescribe the limits within which it can recognize or support educational institutions. And what can be more natural than that the Congress should insist on Congress institutions conforming to conditions which in the opinion of Congressmen promote the interest of the country?

TILAK MAHARASHTRA UNIVERSITY

Mr. Gharpure, the Registrar of the Tilak Maharashtra University, writes:

Many friends and colleagues have drawn my attention to a sentence in your presidential address on page 25, last two lines. "Many provinces have their national schools and colleges. *Gujarat alone* has a *National University* maintained at an annual cost of Rs. 1,00,000/- and having control of three colleges and 70 schools with 9,000 pupils."

This gives rise to a misunderstanding. You are right if you mean that no other Province has a University maintained at an annual cost of one lakh. But people are liable to interpret it in another way, viz., that no other Province has a University. The cost is regarded only as an adjectival clause.

I shall be glad if you will be kind enough to remove this misunderstanding through the pages of *Young India* as early as you can.

The Tilak Maharashtra University is maintained at an annual cost of Rs. 6,000, with three colleges, 30 schools and 2,000 students. The annual cost is less simply because each college and school takes care of its own self and no charges are made to the University.

The National Medical College is not yet recognized though it is on the way to it. Still the Tilak Mahavidyalaya maintains 75 students with an annual cost of Rs. 15,000.

I had thought that I knew English fairly well and that read in its context the sentence, referred to by Mr. Gharpure, was capable of bearing only one meaning, i.e., that not to mention the other provinces, Gujarat alone underwent so much expense and trained so many scholars. But I see that friends at least as conversant with English as myself have put a different construction upon the sentence. My only consolation is that both they and I are judging the meaning of a sentence written in a language foreign to us. I therefore derive the very poor consolation from the thought that they are as likely to be wrong in their interpretation as I in mine. But I can give them the assurance that I used Gujarat as merely an illustration and I mention Gujarat rather than any other province because I had the figures relating to Gujarat at hand. The emphasis was not meant for the University as distinguished from schools and colleges. I was aware at the time of writing my address, not only of the Gujarat National University but also of the Muslim National University at Aligarh and the Punjab National University at Lahore and the Bihar National University at Patna and the Kashi Vidyapith at Banaras besides the

Tilak Maharashtra University. I do not know the expenses of the Punjab and the Bihar Universities and the Kashi Vidyapith. But I know that the Muslim University cost last year nearly Rs. 75,000.

VOLUNTEERS

I have been asked to give my impressions of the volunteers' work at Belgaum during the Congress week. I thought that I had already dealt with it in my Belgaum impressions. But I gladly respond. Their work will bear a fuller and separate treatment. In my opinion the volunteers reached at Belgaum comparatively the highest watermark in efficiency within my experience of four Congresses. They were hardworking, efficient and willing. I heard no complaint from the delegates about them. Physically too they appeared to me to be fit. Dr. Hardikar¹ was good enough to take me through their camp which had a businesslike appearance and was fairly tidy. I say fairly tidy for in my opinion a volunteer camp must be a model of tidiness, not a thing being out of its place and everything being not only in its own place but being in its place in a neat manner. For instance, a volunteer may have his bedding in its place and yet may have put it in a heap instead of having properly and neatly folded it in the prescribed manner. In point of sanitation too a volunteer camp must be perfect, not a scrap of paper or dirt should be found anywhere. I understand that Dr. Hardikar specially restricted the number of volunteers. They had therefore more than a fair share of work to do. During the time that the Congress was in session they had to work over sixteen hours per day, being on their legs practically the whole of that time. I must not omit to mention the lady volunteers. They were most helpful and attentive. They too had undergone previous training. Though we cannot manage a Congress session without the efficient help of volunteers, let me say that work is the least part of a volunteer's training. Volunteers must be our greatest asset in winning swaraj. This they can only be, if in addition to having a spotless character and the necessary training in drilling, sanitation and first aid to the injured, they know how to organize the nation for swaraj. For this purpose therefore every volunteer must be an expert carder and spinner, and must be able in addition to doing his share of spinning, necessary for the franchise, to organize carding and spinning in his own district. It should be remembered that hand-spinning has been

¹ Organizer of the Hindustani Seva Dal which later became volunteer organization of the Congress

part of a volunteer's training since 1921.

STRIKING, IF TRUE

A correspondent writes severely criticizing the cry of Mussalman deficiency in the matter of education and says that I am being deceived. In order to enlighten me he has sent me some striking figures showing the proportion of literates among the two communities. I reproduce them below.

Province	Mussalmans per thousand	Hindus per thousand
MEN		
Burma	302	288
Central Provinces and Berar	225	89
Madras	201	170
U.P.	73	71
Baroda	309	234
C.P.	169	59
Mysore	238	133
Sikkim	833	91
Gwalior	142	60
Hyderabad	140	47
Rajputana	66	57
WOMEN		
Burma	87	86
Delhi	31	26
C.P. and Berar	27	8
Ajmer, Marwar	18	16
Bihar	8	6
U.P.	8	6
Mysore	62	16
Baroda	48	42
Hyderabad	35	4
Gwalior	26	6
C.I.	19	4
Rajputana	9	3

I must confess that I did not know that the figures were so favourable to the Mussalmans. Nevertheless my statement stands. The real rivalry is not between the rank and file—the merely literate—but

between the highly educated among both. And I suppose it is an undeniable fact that the so-called higher education is not so common among the Mussalmans as among the Hindus. I should like my correspondent to examine the figures as to higher education and say whether I am not right. Meanwhile let the students of statistics analyse the returns reproduced above and inform me of any inaccuracy in them. I have taken it for granted that the absence of figures for the provinces not mentioned by the correspondent shows that the figures in respect of them were not favourable to the charge brought by him. So far as literacy among women is concerned, I am glad to find that the percentage among Mussalman sisters in so many provinces is higher than among Hindu women. It shows that the *pardah* is no bar to literacy. This is no defence of the *pardah* for I am totally opposed to it. I note the fact as a pleasant surprise. For whilst I knew that many Mussalman sisters though remaining in seclusion were learned, I did not know that literacy among them was higher than among Hindu sisters.

EASONABLE FIGURES

Whilst the Hindu-Muslim question is occupying the attention of the country, the readers will appreciate the following table¹ prepared by a friend and giving the percentage of population according to religion in India as a whole and also in the various provinces. The figures have been taken from the census of 1921.

Young India, 5-2-1925

99. TELEGRAM TO SURENDRANATH BISWAS

February 5, 1925

SURENDRANATH BISWAS²

16-A GOVINDGOSHEL³ LANE

CALCUTTA

IMPOSSIBLE FIX TIME BEFORE BEGINNING NEXT MONTH. SUGGEST
YOUR FIXING DATE⁴ WITHOUT REFERENCE ME.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

¹ Not reproduced here

² Chairman, Reception Committee, Bengal Provincial Conference

³ Govind Ghosal

⁴ Presumably for the Bengal Provincial Conference; *vide* "Telegram to Surendranath Biswas", on or before January 15, 1925.

100. SPEECH AT RAWALPINDI¹

February 5, 1925

I was present here last December and held some talks with you.² At that time I assured you that if you all had not returned to Kohat, I would come back and would talk to you; and if some Muslim brothers came by then from Kohat, I would make some inquiries also.

Some Muslim brothers have come from Kohat and I am talking things over with them. As a result of these discussions I am in no position to advise you to go back to Kohat. I was hoping that by holding talks with them something good might turn up. I am not without hope but today I do not have a single reason for asking you to return to Kohat. In fact I feel like advising you to the contrary. It is possible that I may not succeed in my task with the Muslim brethren. Moreover those Muslims who have got a hold over Kohat have not come here. On the other hand they have sent a telegram saying, "A compromise has already been reached here and the Hindus are returning to Kohat. Why do you call us then? Why do you again throw all people into panic?"

The implication is that Shaukat Ali and myself should not interfere in this matter. But while talking to the Muslims who have come here I asked them, "Do you take the responsibility of taking Hindus to Kohat?" One of the gentlemen frankly replied, "If the Hindus want to return to Kohat, let them do so but we can take no responsibility. We are not even in a position to invite them, the reason being that those who are there at present are hated." So I cannot advise you to go back to Kohat.

There is yet another matter. If you want to return there relying on the strength of the Government and if the talks with the Government have inspired some faith in you, you are free to go back. But even now I hold firm to the belief that we are not going to benefit by working with or through the Government. And therefore I do not advise you to go there under the protection of the Government. Wherever you stay you have to rely on your own strength.

¹ Addressed to Hindus who had left Kohat owing to Hindu-Muslim riots there in September 1924.

² *Vide* "Speech at Rawalpindi", December 9, 1924.

If there is need for holding talks with anyone before returning to Kohat it is with the Muslims. In the first place their number is large. Even if they were equal in number it would not be good to return without holding talks with them since we have run away from there in fear. It is a different thing if someone goes there and sacrifices ones honour for the sake of money or for saving one's life. To me it is not a life worth living, it is veritable death.

I learnt something very distressing yesterday namely, that many among you embraced Islam to save your lives and then you came here. In my view such people have not truly embraced Islam but have done so under fear and in order to save their lives. If it were not so why should they say, Cut off my tuft "or Make me read the *Kalama*"? If we do so the *Gayatri*¹ would have no meaning and our Hinduism too would be deemed meaningless. This is true of Sikhs and Arya Samajists as well. What I mean to say is that we should be prepared to lose our lives but not to change our faith. Our true wealth is not money, land or gold. They can be pillaged. But our true wealth is religion. When we abandon that we can be said to have pillaged our own homes. Ever since I heard these things I feel there is nothing to be gained in your going and staying there. You are losing much through love of wealth and life.

Sometimes Muslims kidnap a woman and make her embrace Islam. I do not understand how, in this manner, she can become a Muslim. She does not know the Koran. She does not know the *Kalama*. Alas, she knows very little even of her own religion. I cannot understand how she can become a Muslim. If someone abducts my wife and she reads the *Kalama*, then I can no more live in this world. Either I would seek your help [in defending her] or beg you to take her back into the Hindu fold. I would be a coward if I did not act in this manner. I cannot claim to be her husband. If you are men and wish to live like men, then make a solemn declaration that as long as conditions do not change, you will not return to Kohat.

I am told that if Kohat Hindus do not return, other Hindus also may well flee from the Frontier Province. I think it would be right if that happened. I ask you to live there in your own strength or in friendship with Muslims. I do not wish that Hindus should become cowards. I wish to make both Hindus and Muslims brave. I want that

¹ The credo of Islam

they should grow together in strength. I cannot bear it if Hindus grow in strength by destroying Muslims or the other way about. Hinduism does not teach us to destroy other religions.

I could not swallow that argument yesterday about the possibility of a Hindu woman being converted to Islam. I wish to have this point further clarified by Muslim friends— does Islam teach them to abduct my wife? My wife might not even know what Islam and Christianity are about. She was born in a Hindu family, she chants the name of Rama, and reads the *Ramayana* and *Bhagavata*¹. She cannot use her intellect in embracing Islam. She continues to stick to her own dharma and that too with complete faith. What should one make of it if someone comes and tells one that such a woman has embraced Islam? She has not embraced Islam in full knowledge and therefore she is not prepared to regard herself as a Muslim. I want to ask Muslim friends: Does their religion teach them to abduct anyone's wife and make her a Muslim? It is unbearable for me if any woman living in the Frontier Province is forcibly violated. If it is argued that she has embraced Islam, I am not prepared to believe it. That is why I want to tell you that if you hold your religion dear, then do not go back as long as Muslims there do not say, "Come back with honour"; you should not go till then. If you go back you might make money but if you forsake your dharma and live there, that life is not worth living.

So far you have not died of hunger. In December I told you that I couldn't bear any able-bodied man living by alms, i.e., by begging for food. If I advise you to do that, I would be doing a wrong thing. Even today I am firm in this. That is why I have not asked for a single pie for Kohat. I would collect funds only when I know the purpose for which they are collected. I have made no list. It is true that if someone has sent something to me [for the relief of Kohat Hindus], I redirect that there. But if you act on my advice and those who are able-bodied live on their own labour, I pledge you my full help.

I am even prepared to take you to Sabarmati. There I shall give you whatever you need as food and shelter. I shall share my food with you. First I shall see you eat and then eat myself. But I will take full eight hours' work daily. If you intend to do manual labour, I am

¹ A poem dealing with the avatars of Vishnu

prepared to help you in every way. But if some of you say “we are lawyers and get us a practice”, that I can’t do. I can’t get you a brief by getting two persons to quarrel. Similarly if some businessmen demand rupees ten or twenty lakhs or ten thousand, I certainly can't give them that. I can only provide you some kind of work. With this end in view I tell the people of India that everyone should ply the charkha at least for an hour daily. The charkha is a symbol of labour. One who plies the charkha can do other work also. I can't offer you work on land. But there is plenty of work by way of spinning, ginning and weaving from which lakhs [of people] can earn their livelihood. I read in the newspapers that the Maharaja of Mysore has also started spinning on the charkha. If those among you who are artisans want implements for their vocation, such as gold-smiths’ implements,— it will be my job to provide them. It is my duty to make arrangements for each man to pursue his vocation. I am prepared to beg on their behalf. So I ask you again to prepare lists from which we can know how many can pursue a particular vocation and how many members of their families can work and what kind of work they can do. Even a sick or infirm person can do some work. I get work out of my widowed sister and only then do I feed her. She says, “we are children of a Diwan”, but I do not believe in these [distinctions]. We are only labourers in the service of India; so I cannot but exact work from those whom I feed. I keep a clear account with my sister and wife and so I shall even with a widow.

There is something I have heard and which has pained me. I have heard that some of the Kohat Hindus gamble; some, having taken their ration once, ask for it again and make a row if they do not get it; if they have one quilt they ask for a second and make money by selling it. This distresses me much. I can bear what has happened in Kohat but if these things are true I cannot bear that. If you want to live like this then you may return to Kohat and drown your religion. In my view religion does not mean that one becomes a Hindu simply because one reads the *Gayatri*. According to me, he alone is a Hindu in whose heart the *Gayatri* is inscribed. A man does not become a Sikh by merely reciting the *Granth Sahib*. He alone is a true Sikh who cherishes the *Granth Sahib* in his heart with genuine pride. One does not become an Arya Samajist because one chants Vedic *mantras* well. But one who shapes his life in accordance with those *mantras* is a true Arya Samajist. I will ask Muslims also whether I become a Muslim because I read the *Kalama*. Thus, ever since I have heard this about

you I have been greatly perturbed.

This is *Kaliyuga*¹ and only because of such incidents are we in a fallen state. I request you not to put me to shame by behaving in such manner. If you want to act in this way then keep me away from you, because I would not be fit for your service.

Malaviyaji² agrees with me that you should not go to Kohat in this kind of atmosphere. I would not put him to the trouble of coming here, because in the Central Assembly a decision is being taken on the Bengal Ordinance and he is busy there. He was ready to come here but I told him that I would not trouble him this time. Lalaji also arrived here today. He had telephoned from Lahore. I invited him here but unfortunately he fell ill and could not be with us today. I gave him the trouble of coming here—Rawalpindi—because if we two are not of one mind, then you would be deceived. We three hold the same opinion. They do not know what I told you about Islam. But in view of what has happened in Kohat, they have come to the identical view that it would be wrong for you to return under the existing conditons. What I said over and above that was that without effecting a settlement with the Muslims it would be wrong for you to return.

I do not even wish that the free food being given to you now should be continued. It is written in the *Gita* that he who eats without performing *yajna*³ is in fact a thief. *Yajna* has many meanings and physical labour is one of them. So it is a sin to eat without labour. I have come to talk things over with you. If you want to know anything else, you can question me. I want that you should tell those working here to make a list of persons having food here and also tell them that whatever you take from here, you would return through your labour. You must find some work for yourselves. If you come to Sabarmati with me I am prepared to give you some work. I feel like staying here with you and doing some manual work. At present, I have also other work to do. That is why I cannot stay with you. Sit down together, all of you, and think it over. If my proposal is acceptable to you, then rent a house, set up a loom and start work. I am prepared to get funds for that. There is nothing to be ashamed of in asking me for money

¹ The age of strife.

² Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946); founder of the Benares Hindu University; twice President of the Indian National Congress

³ Sacrifice

for this purpose.

I have thus made the request I had wanted to. I am ready to reply to your questions. Let me also know if what I have heard about you is wrong. To those who have given you shelter you owe a duty and that is to take up some work for yourselves.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini *Diary*, Vol. VII, pp. 126-32

101. EXAMINATION OF KAMAL JAILANE ON KOHAT RIOT¹

[RAWALPINDI]

February 6, 1925

Q. Do you live near Kohat?

A. I live quite close by.

Q. Are you a zamindar?

A. I am a zamindar. I own several villages in. . . .² Besides these our ancestors were given shares in lands in almost all the villages (here).

Q. Are you on good terms with the Hindus?

A. I can confidently claim that my relations with the Hindus are very good.

Q. Do you ever live in Kohat itself?

A. I come and go to and from that place daily, as my dwelling place is only 500 yards away from it.

Q. What do you think is the cause of the disturbance between the Hindus and Mussalmans?

A. I think it was due to several causes that existed already. The pamphlet³ affair proved to be the last drop. It occasioned the outbreak, but the hearts of the parties had been poisoned already.

Q. Will you please briefly explain yourself on this point?

¹ Referring to the examinations of Kamal Jailane and Ahmad Gul, Gandhiji is reported to have remarked: "Today, I have done one of the most valuable jobs during the year. . . . I have undertaken such cross-examination after many years. This time, it seems, I have exhausted all my skill in cross-examination. The witnesses never realized that they were being cross-examined." *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. VII, p. 133

² The source has a blank here.

³ Published by Jivandas, Secretary of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha of Kohat. It contained a poem with some objectionable references to Islam.

A. For the last few years the Hindus have been persecuting such persons as became converts to Islam, by starting law-suits against them, thus giving vent to their resentment.

Q. Since when ?

A. The practice commenced some four or five years ago and some recent instances are: (1) a photographer's wife in Kohat, a Hindu woman in Tal, and a Hindu in Bhago, who were converted to Islam. (2) Then there was a case of a Hindu embracing Islam, or becoming a Sheikh and marrying a Mussalman woman, his subsequent reconversion to Hinduism, and institution of a law-suit in connection with the woman. (3) The filing of a suit by the Mussalmans in connection with a Mussalman girl, their failure to obtain the desired sentence against the accused, the whole thing being followed by (a campaign of) litigation (against each other). (4) The securing by the Mussalmans of more than their due share of representation in social and political life and the starting of some Hindu organizations by some Hindu young men, etc. (are some other causes.)

Q. Is this (the last thing) also four or five years old?

A. It happened within the last four or five years.

Q. Before the Khilafat movement or after?

A. It commenced a year after the inauguration of the Khilafat movement.

Q. Are conversions to Islam very frequent in Kohat district?

A. Yes. There is a very large number of conversions in the district.

Q. What would be their approximate number?

A. Some conversion does take place in every *Juma*¹ mosque. The total number of these conversions comes up to about one hundred or one hundred fifty every year, though all the cases do not necessarily belong to Kohat proper. On every Friday there are one or two cases of conversion.

Q. Are all the persons converted Hindus?

A. They are all Hindus. Sometimes they are Sikhs also.

Q. Did anything else also happen before this, besides the pamphlet incident ?

A. There were some minor incidents relating to tanks, etc., but nothing happened affecting any large number of people except the incidents mentioned already. The affairs relating to the tanks, etc., were of a very restricted nature, but they gathered head and permeated the public outside.

Q. Did the interference of the Hindus, in the matter of conversions, cause any resentment among the Mussalmans ?

¹ Friday

A. Yes, it did cause resentment. There have been conversions of Hindus to Islam always, but the Hindus never took any notice of them. But Heaven knows what has happened today. They are raising a storm over it. After all, these people embrace Islam of their free will and for the love of it.

Q. Are all these people who are converted to Islam of full age?

A. In cases where the parents accompany the children, the latter are also converted. All the rest have attained maturity.

Q. Did ever any Mussalman tell the Hindus that they ought not to behave like this ?

A. Yes. They (the Hindus) were told so. I myself told them. But none of those to whom I spoke was a person of distinction or otherwise taking interest in public affairs.

Q. Was this started before the *shuddhi*¹ movement or after ?

A. This happened after the *shuddhi* movement. All these instances that I have mentioned happened after the *shuddhi* and *sangathan*² movements were started.

Q. Do you believe that this has any bearing on the disturbances ?

A. There was ill will in the hearts already. This served as an additional excuse.

Q. Is this Muslim girl to whom you have referred the same as the one mentioned in connection with Sardar Makhan Singh's son ?

A. Yes. She is the same.

Q. What is your opinion about the pamphlet, what share had the general Hindu public in it ?

A. The pamphlet was sent for and sold here with the knowledge of the members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha.

Q. Are many Hindus members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha ?

A. I do not know their exact number.

Q. Are Hindus in general, members of this Sabha ?

A. So far as I can think, there must be numerous (non-*Sanatani*) Hindus as its members. About fifteen or sixteen members, whose names are often mentioned here for their fanaticism, belong to this class.

Q. Have you read the whole of this pamphlet ?

A. I have read it through.

Q. Are all the poems in this pamphlet bad ?

A. The poem coming just before the objectionable poem is very good. The

¹ Literally, purification; a movement of reconversion to Hindusim

² A movement for organizing Hindus

remaining religious poems also are good, but song No. 11 is highly objectionable and calculated to severely shock the Muslim sentiment.

Q. Were many copies of this poem sold ?

A. Copies of the pamphlet were seen in the hands of quite a large number of people, both Hindus and Mussalmans. The first copy which I saw was with Maulvi Ahmad Gul¹. The second copy was with another Mussalman.

Q. The Hindus say that not more than 30 or 35 copies were sold. Is it true ?

A. Maybe it is true, but I cannot say exactly.

Q. The members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha apologized for the objectionable poem that was published. Was it not sufficient ?

A. I knew nothing about the apology till the deputation² returned from Peshawar. Nor have I even now seen the terms of that apology. I have heard that it was deemed insufficient by the Mussalmans.

Q. Do you know in what respect it fell short?

A. I have not seen its contents, so I can say nothing.

Q. Do you know that the page containing that poem was torn out or an the copies of the pamphlet?

A. I have no knowledge of it.

Q. Do you know that the remaining copies were sent by the Sanatan Dharma Sabha to the Deputy Commissioner and were burnt there?

A. Yes. The remaining copies were sent to the court and burnt there.

Q. Was Jivandas, the publisher of the pamphlet, arrested ?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Was the arrest of Jivandas not sufficient ?

A. So far as I am concerned, it was quite enough. When Jivandas was committed to custody, a promise regarding his prosecution was given and the remaining copies of the pamphlet were burnt.

Q. Did this leave any room for complaint on the part of the Mussalmans ?

A. It ought not to have left any.

Q. Do you know when these copies were burnt ?

¹ Khilafat Secretary

² The Khilafat delegation of Peshawar which tried to pacify the parties but failed

- A. On September 3rd 1924.
- Q. Do you know also that Jivandas was let off on bail ?
- A. I heard that Jivandas was let off; whether on bail or otherwise I do not know.
- Q. Was he sent out of Kohat and afterwards he was let off ?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Did this make the Mussalmans indignant ?
- A. Yes. The release of Jivandas, after the promise made by the Mussalman Deputy Commissioner that he would be prosecuted, inflamed the Mussalmans.
- Q. Was any meeting of the Mussalmans held on account of this ?
- A. I heard that the meeting was held on the night of September 8.
- Q. Did the Mussalmans assemble in a large force and go to the Deputy Commissioner on the night of the 9th ?
- A. Yes Sir.
- Q. Were you present at this meeting ?
- A. I was given no notice of it.
- Q. Did you come to know the facts about it only from hearsay reports ?
- A. Yes Sir, I saw the crowd passing through the bazaar both on its way to and back from the Deputy Commissioner's place. I saw it near the Town Hall as I was going to the bazaar.
- Q. What was the strength of the crowd ?
- A. There must be about 1,500 men in crowd. There was hartal in the bazaar on September 9. The shops of the Hindus and Mussalmans were closed. Here and there some Sikhs were standing in front of their shops, having been compelled to open their shops.
- Q. When did this happen ?
- A. I went to the town at 9 o'clock; when I returned at 11-30, all the shops were closed.
- Q. Did you see the crowd both the times, *i.e.*, when it was going to and when it was returning from D.C.'s place ?
- A. I saw it both the times inside the Chhavani Darwaza¹ when it was returning and near the Town Hall when it was going out.
- Q. In which direction was the crowd proceeding ?
- A. It was going towards the Town Hall at 9 o'clock.
- Q. Did you talk to anyone from the crowd ?

¹ The source has "Darwaha".

A. Yes. I had some talk with some persons, while I was returning from the town.

Q. What was the nature of your conversations and what replies did you receive ?

A. I asked what the matter was and where they were going. They said that they were going to D.C. to ask why Jivandas had been released, and why he had betrayed his promise to them inasmuch as he had fixed the 11th as the date for the hearing of the case.

Q. Was this all the talk you had ?

A. There were some other things also but they were more or less of this very nature.

Q. Did you try to prevent them from this, and did your efforts have any effect ?

A. I told them that at least we (Hindus and the Mussalmans) ought not to behave like this. By quarrelling among ourselves we give the third party (the Government) chance of interfering in our affairs. But my words had no effect upon them.

Q. Have you any knowledge of the happenings on the 9th ?

A. I was in my house that day. I heard that there had been firing in the bazaar as a result of which a Mohammedan had been killed and that arson was going on.

Q. Did you come to know all this from hearsay or did you see these things yourself ?

A. I only heard about it but the flames and smoke could be seen and the reports of the firing could be heard.

Q. When you were in Kohat at about half past eleven and saw the crowd there, were any people from the villages present there ?

A. No outsiders from the vilages were present in the town.

Q. Were there any people from the villages in the crowd at the Town Hall ?

A. About 1/3 part consisted of the villagers.

Q. Did you visit Kohat on the 10th September ?

A. On the evening of the 9th I sent a man of mine to the town to fetch some things for my friends and relatives. He brought back the news that peace had been restored in the city, that losses in lives of Mussalmans were heavier than those of the Hindus and that the fire in the bazaar was going on as before.

On the 10th I motored through the school gate in my car. The Military had thrown a double cordon round the city wall. I obtained permission from the European Officer (in-charge) to enter the city. On reaching there, I found that perfect order prevailed. I saw several breaches in the city wall. As my motor reached the tahsil

gate, I again heard the reports of firing. That day was an image of the doomsday (*Kayamat ka namuna*). This state of things continued from 10 o'clock to one o'clock.

Q. What do you mean by the image of the doomsday (*Kayamat ka namuna*) ?

A. I mean that anybody who fell into the hands of the mob was robbed and killed, the houses of the people were set on fire. The houses of both the Hindus and Mussalmans were burnt. The opportunity was seized upon for paying off all ancient grudges. All gentlemen took shelter behind closed doors for fear of their lives.

Q. Did you return at one o'clock ?

A. I returned at 10.30. But I was witnessing this spectacle from the top of a hillock near my village.

Q. You said you witnessed some horrible sights on the 9th ?

A. Yes, on the 9th I witnessed one or two incidents of unarmed Hindus being murdered.

Q. Where did these murders take place ?

A. One of these incidents took place on the Shahi Road, i.e., Bhagi Kohat Road, the other on the Charouda side.

Q. Were these people pedestrians ?

A. I afterwards learnt that one of them was proceeding in the direction of Peshawar in a motor car and that he was taken out of this car and killed. I saw the corpse lying there.

Q. Who killed him ?

A. I think it was the villagers from outside, who did not live in the vicinity of Kohat, because in the same car besides the Hindu gentleman there were two other Mussalmans one of whom was a nephew of Khan Bhadur Gulli Khan who had been in Kohat as an E. A. for several years. Had these people come from Kohat or the neighbouring villages they would have recognized the nephew of the Khan Bahadur or the nephew of the Khan Bahadur would have recognized them.

Q. Who was the other Mussalman besides the Khan Bahadur's nephew ?

A. The other person was a professor of the Islamia College. Besides him, there was a driver, that is to say, there were three men in the car besides the driver, one of them being a Hindu who was killed.

Q. Were the three Mussalmans who were in the car with the Hindu gentleman unable to save him ?

A. These three could not save the Hindu because the assailants were so many.

Q. You mentioned another Hindu who was killed. Can you say

anything about him ?

A. I only saw his corpse lying in a field. I could not identify him.

Q. Could you recognize the other Hindu who was killed first ?

A. As I had seen his corpse lying on the road, I inquired the facts about him on my way. I do not know how many hours his corpse had been lying there before I passed by.

Q. Did you see any temples also that were burnt ?

A. After the Hindus had left for Rawalpindi I saw some portions of some temples burnt. One of these was the temple in *mandi* (market). The building adjoining it in which we sat for peace negotiations was also burnt.

Q. Did you see any burnt Gurdwara also ?

A. We saw that the Gurdwara overlooking the springs was burnt. A few months ago, dispute between the Hindus and Mussalmans had arisen over this Gurdwara. The Hindus claimed it as a temple of theirs while the Sikhs contended that it was a Gurdwara and belonged to them. Some Hindu sadhus used to sit in this Gurdwara and smoke *charas* to which the Sikhs took strong objection. The Sikhs then came to the Gurdwara in force and ejected the sadhus from that place and took possession of it. As a result, a Sub-Inspector of Police with some sergeants and a full body of police remained camped there for several weeks to prevent a disturbance as the Gurdwara was situated outside the city.

Respectable leaders of both the communities were also made to deposit securities and bound over for peace and good behaviour. I myself gave a piece of land belonging to me opposite our cemetery to that sadhu. This sadhu declared that he would not leave that place till he had burnt that Gurdwara. During the riots this sadhu along with two respectable Hindu leaders who had taken refuge with him remained there for two days and besides risking his own life, protected the lives of two other Hindus. Afterwards I learnt that some Sikh gentlemen had reported to the police that the burning of the Gurdwara had been instigated by that sadhu. So the police expelled him from that place and sent him out of the district.

Q. Did you see any other temples or Gurdwaras besides this Gurdwara that were burnt ?

A. I do not know (on being reminded, the witness admitted that Khan Jogran which was built mostly of wood had also been burnt).

Q. Do you know how many Hindus and how many Mussalmans were killed on the 9th and 10th ?

A. I do not know of any Hindu who was killed in the city on the night. Of Mussalmans, three were killed and three or four wounded. These included those boys also.

Q. Do you know the age of the child ?

A. I have heard that that child was about 10 or 11 years old.

Q. Was anyone of them a child or were both of them children ?

A. Both were children—one of them was 10 or 11 years, the other one was a bit older.

Q. Have you any knowledge of the casualties on the 10th September ?

A. All the rest of the casualties took place on the 10th September. Eight Mussalmans were killed. The number of wounded was greater. But the number of dead and wounded among the Hindus exceeded that of Mussalmans.

Q. When did the Hindus from Kohat arrive in Rawalpindi ?

A. On the eleventh Rai Bahadur Mathuradas and Rai Bahadur Isherdas sent me word that they were putting up in the Commercial House and that I should take them to the railway station. I went there with two motor cars and in seven trips brought them and their relatives to the railway station. The Hindus lying in the Commercial House and by the roadside were in very sore straits. Their women folk also were sitting by the roadside in a very sad plight. The Government had made no arrangement whatever either for their accommodation or for removing them to the railway station.

Q. When did they remove to the Commercial House ?

A. I learnt from them that they shifted to the Commercial House on the 10th September.

Q. The Hindus state that between 9th and 10th September several Hindus were forcibly converted to Islam. Do you know anything about it ?

A. I think no Hindu was forcibly converted to Islam. But some Hindus who had taken shelter with the Mussalmans, feeling that their lives were in danger, themselves requested that their tuft of hair, etc., might be removed and their protectors, feeling that the lives of Hindus were really in danger, removed their *choti*¹ & c., and gave out that they had become Mussalmans.

Q. You had mentioned another procedure also ?

A. Something like that might have happened. Only I have no knowledge of any case when a Mussalman in order to save the life of a Hindu advised him to become a Mussalman and removed his *choti*. I can, however, believe an incident like this taking place.

Q. Why do you believe it to be possible that some Mussalmans might have advised some Hindus to become Mussalmans to save their lives ?

¹ Tuft of hair

A. Simply because the people from the villages were uneducated and protection of life was a serious matter.

Q. Would you regard a person who has been converted to Islam in this manner as a Mussalman ?

A. So long as such a person does not of his own free will declare himself to be a Mussalman in circumstances of peace, he cannot be regarded as a Mussalman.

From the typewritten office copy: S.N. 10530

102. EXAMINATION OF AHMAD GUL ON KOHAT RIOT¹

[RAWALPINDI]

February 6, 1925

Q. Your name, Maulvi Saheb?

A. My name is Ahmad Gul.

Q. What work are you employed in?

A. I am a dentist.

Q. Since when are you the Secretary of Khilafat?

A. Since 1922.

Q. Since when do you live in Kohat?

A. I was born there.

Q. In your opinion what is the cause of the Kohat troubles?

A. In some respects I agree with Pir Kamal Saheb, but in others I differ. In my opinion the cause of the disturbances was the pamphlet.

Q. Any other cause, apart from the pamphlet?

A. There was another incident. In my life there were only two such occasions when the Mohammedans went to the Government in large numbers. One was the case of S. Makhan Singh's son and the other of the pamphlet. Besides these occasions never has such excitement prevailed. Neither they collected nor was there any such disturbance.

Q. Do you take only these two incidents as the cause of disturbances?

A. There were some mutual dissensions also.

Q. What was the matter regarding S. Makhan Singh's son?

A. There was a general rumour among the people that S. Makhan Singh's son had

¹ The source was defective and has been slightly edited, where absolutely necessary.

illegitimate connection with the wife of his gardener. He went away to Lahore and the *malan*¹ also followed him and this was followed with a great stir among the people. The Pathans as a community look upon this kind of action with hatred even if it is done by a Mussalman. Therefore the Government also treats the accused severely and the people are disturbed thereby even if the case is between two Mussalmans. In the case of S. Makhan Singh's son the Government did not pay heed although a deputation waited. I mean to say that the Sardar's son was not convicted and the gardener did not get justice. It was a great shock to the Mussal-mans when a Hindu or a Sikh dared to do so. It was also rumoured that S. Makhan Singh pacified the gardener by giving some money. It was also broadcast that S. Makhan Singh saved himself on other occasion also by payments.

Q. When did this occur?

A. It was about one year ago, i.e., one year before the pamphlet incident. When Jivandas was arrested and put into lock-up, S. Makhan Singh went to the jail in the capacity of a non-official visitor. The Jail Superintendent also complained against his conduct as a visitor as he interfered in jail arrangements. The Superintendent kept Jivandas in a solitary cell but the Sardar Saheb asked Jivandas to be taken out of it. There was a regular complaint about it as the daughter of Jivandas was betrothed to the Sardar's son. This rumour was also going round that Sardar Saheb would get Jivandas released in a few hours. After that when the first firing took place, the first thing that was heard was that the boys were killed before the house of Sardar Saheb. This was the past incident and again the release of Jivandas and the firing near Sardar Saheb's house excited the Mussalmans and in my opinion this is the reason of the disturbance.

Q. Who put out the rumour that Sardar Saheb and his son fired?

A. When I was in court and the crowd was being assured that Jivandas would be prosecuted, we had no complaint against other Hindus. The Mussalmans were satisfied when the court decided to proceed against the accused. The basis of the charge was being established, when the information reached there that firing took place in the bazaar. Ahmad Khan Saheb informed me and, taking me with him in motor car besides three other Mohammedans, proceeded to the scene of the occurrence. We entered the city by the Cantonment gate and were yet fifty paces from Sardar Saheb's place when we met a crowd of fifty or sixty which came to stop us and said that firing was going on and we should not proceed further. One boy was lying killed near Sardar Makhan Singh's *balakhana*² and one man was wounded. On this the motor car was brought back to Kotwali without being turned as the space was not adequate. The Kotwali might be a hundred paces distance from there.

¹ Gardener's wife

² Upper apartment

Q. Did you go there where the firing took place.

A. No, I did not. My companion and myself got down from the motor car and Ahmad Khan Saheb went back. When I was going to my house from Kotwali, shots were being fired from all sides at that time and some people

also began to enter the city. In this fearful condition I went home as I was also indisposed. But later on I heard that the bazaar was being burnt and that three of the Mussalmans were killed and three were wounded.

Q. Did you hear of any Hindus being killed or wounded at that time?

A. I inquired about the Hindus also but no such case was reported to me. The night passed quietly.

Q. When did it happen ?

A. It was on the 9th September.

Q. When you were in the motor car and were informed of the firing, did Ahmad Khan Saheb also go there?

A. Ahmad Khan Saheb did not go to the place of firing and went back.

Q. When did you go to the bazaar?

A. When I went with Ahmad Khan Saheb to the bazaar it was about half past one.

Q. You were mentioning some other matter besides this and before the Sardar Saheb's case?

A. Those are ordinary things and are not worth mentioning here.

Q. Pir Saheb said that since four or five years ago the Hindus were taking some steps in the cases of those converted to Islam and resorting to law-courts. This had shocked the Muslims. Do you also agree?

A. The village people might be of this idea as Pir Saheb has connection with people of the interior. He may be of that opinion but to my mind it cannot be so.

Q. Pir Saheb said that more than four years earlier the Hindus did not care for those Hindus who were converted to Islam, and it was since then that they were resorting to courts. What is your opinion in the matter?

A. In this respect I differ from him. It happened only in the cases of converted women and not of men. It is a different thing where a Hindu becomes a Muslim and the Hindus try to take him back. All have religious liberty. As the Muslims are in majority in the Frontier, the Government cares exceptionally for the religious feelings of the Muslims. For instance, in other districts the meat prohibited for Muslims is sold in bazaars or it is openly taken in the bazaar but such has not been

the case in Kohat up till now. But on the contrary the meat prohibited for Hindus is openly sold and used in the bazaar in the Frontier especially in Kohat.

Q. When did you hear about the pamphlet?

A. I came to know of it on Friday the 29th August, when I was in the mosque.

Q. Who informed you ?

A. One volunteer named Gulam Ayub gave me the pamphlet after he had entered the mosque with a big crowd. He had with him such people also who did not enter the mosque on account of their clothes being unfit for entering and stayed out.

Q. What did the volunteer do?

A. He told me that there was a great row in the bazaar on account of this pamphlet and these people wished to consult the general Muslim public about it and take such steps by which people may be subdued.

Q. What did you do again?

A. I took that book in my hand and from all sides people were asking me to read the poem in Pushtu which they had already heard; they wished to be acquainted with its subject-matter. I translated it before the crowd and also looking to their excitement and intention which I could guess I kept them back from resorting to any kind of disturbance and reminded them of the bad consequences of the riots in Malabar, Multan, Saharanpur and in other places and advised them that in case they could not control themselves they should go to the Government in this case also, as they were doing about other matters.

Q. You said that people wanted to hear what they had heard before; why was it so when they had already heard?

A. The crowd in the mosque said so, as some knew about it and others did not.

Q. But did it hear about it for the first time in the mosque?

A. Yes.

Q. What happened later on?

A. They were whispering to each other after that and were plotting against the Khilafatists and were complaining that these people were lagging behind even in religious matters. "They took thousands of rupees from us in subscriptions but when the time for the service of Islam has come, they hesitate." They also said that on a previous occasion Pir Kamal Saheb and myself degraded the Mussalmans by taking bribe from S. Makhani Singh.

Q. What happened over the pamphlet after that ?

A. After that a letter from Sanatan Dharma Sabha came to me on 2nd September after *Isha* prayer, i.e., at about 9.30 p.m. in which Hindus had shown their excuse on behalf of the Hindus regarding the publication of the pamphlet. I took that letter with

me on 3rd September to the *mahalla*¹ of Parachgan where I had gone for condolence and where were collected people of different communities and read it to them and said that the members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha convey their apology in those words. When I read the letter to them, instead of being satisfied with it, they felt the tone and method of the letter was . . .²; one of them expressed it thus, that when the soldiers were killed in the Great War and the King expressed his sorrow, this letter resembled the same. Neither there was any word of apology nor any such subject. After this the whole assembly went to the Superintendent of Police and the Assistant Commissioner so that the accused could be proceeded against. The Deputy Commissioner was at Usmana at that time. The Assistant Commissioner directed us to go to the court and he himself also went. The constables were sent to fetch Jivandas and he was brought into the room in our presence. After this the pamphlets were also sent for and Jivandas was put up in lock-up and the pamphlets were burnt there in the presence of the A.C.

Q. You said you went for condolence and there you read the letter and this was not liked by them. Did the Hindus do anything also?

A. I came to know there that some people had decided with Hindus without my knowledge that according to the custom of this place the members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha should come to a meeting to be held for this purpose as a jirga so that the matter be decided in consultation with the Ulemas.

Q. When the people said that the letter was not satisfactory, did you agree?

A. Looking to their attitude at that time, I did not think it advisable to give any kind of opinion and did not interfere.

Q. But what was your opinion?

A. My opinion was also the same. The letter did not smell of any apology.

Q. When Jivandas was arrested and the pamphlets were burnt, what was their number?

A. I could not say, there might have been more than 500.

Q. Were you told that the objectionable poem had been taken out of it?

A. Some such plea was put forward.

Q. The copies sent to the court were without that page?

A. Some leaves were shown separately.

¹ Locality

² There is a gap here in the source.

Q. Was there a portrait of Krishnaji on that book?

A. Yes Sir.

Q. Did any Hindu object to it?

A. No.

Q. Had anybody said so?

A. I would have been the first man to try to take out that leaf as there was no poem on it.

Q. What about the Peshawar Deputation ?

A. On 4th September a deputation from Peshawar met me; after that Sayid Sikandar Shah Saheb came up fortunately. We were going to Pir Kamal Saheb, he met us on the way and we all went to a place near my house and talked about the matter. The Peshawar deputation and these two gentlemen tried to hush up the matter as far as they could, but the public excitement went high and everyone who tried to impose mild conditions or took up a mild attitude in this matter was suspected by the people.

Q. Did you meet in the presence of the public?

A. The public had come at that time and they troubled me so much that no occasion of a private talk with the deputation was given to me. Had I done anything against their opinion the same condition would have been created as the people had created against other national leaders. I was forced to be with them, because had I also been cut off from them there was great danger of the situation being serious, but I can say this much that, on account of my being with them, the Muslims heard my advice and did not take the lead in the disturbances.

Q. Were there Hindus also in that crowd at that time?

A. No, none. It is a different thing if there were any Sikhs standing there, as the Muslims had good opinion about them on account of their joining the Muslims on occasions of processions, etc. They could join in any meeting without any hindrance.

Q. What did the people want and what did the Peshawar Deputation do?

A. The public wanted that the Government should punish the accused in such a way that in future no Hindu should dare to publish such . . .¹ pamphlet. And the deputation wanted to decide the matter amongst ourselves as we were non-co-operators and did not like to take the matters to the Government. The conditions which were arrived at with the deputation were these:

¹ There is a gap here in the source.

That the matter be decided according to *shrah*¹ or according to the custom of the country; the members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha could come to the Muslims as a jirga. The deputation including Saiyid Pir Kamal Saheb talked to the Hindus but when these gentlemen met me afterwards they expressed their failure on [*sic*] behalf of the Hindus.

Q. Was Pandit Amir Chand² also there at that time?

A. Yes Sir. He was also there. When the deputation was talking to me about this matter in the presence of the public, he was hissed very much and Khilafatists also were cursed and it was rumoured about them that the Kohat Hindus had given ten thousand rupees as a bribe, therefore, these people not caring for our religious feelings were advising us to keep quiet on such an important matter.

Q. Pir Sahib said that the matter of jirga was not brought up in his presence?

(The previous statement of Maulvi Ahmad Gul was read to him and Saiyid Pir Kamal and others also explained the matter.)

Q. When the deputation, the Sayid Sahib and the Pir Sahib talked together, what conditions did they decide to present to the Hindus?

A. We had ceased even talking with the Hindus as the Muslims felt annoyed. I asked the deputation to appease the public who were in religious colour [*sic*] at that time.

Q. What did you all think about the matter?

A. We were in that house for about an hour and a half. It was on the 5th September and not on the 4th. On the 4th I met only the Peshawar deputation who were my guests.

Q. When you gathered on the 5th, what did you decide about the advice being given to the Hindus?

A. I decided that the case be handed over to the Government but the deputation did not wish it. At that time when the deputation and these two gentlemen met together nothing was decided.

Q. What did the people want?

A. The people wanted that the matter be handed over to the Government. The matter of *shrah* was also talked to the people. They would be very happy over it if the Hindus accepted.

¹ Injunctions of Koran

² A member of the Khilafat delegation of Peshawar

Q. If the people were ready for both the alternatives, then what was the necessity of appeasing them?

A. It was on account of this, that they wish to take revenge themselves. I made them understand not to take the law into their own hands.

Q. Who brought the people there?

A. The people came thems/ elves and suspected the deputation. When the matter of jirga came up Pir Saheb was not present at that time.

Q. Were the Hindus told of the *shrah* and jirga?

A. I was not present there. Only the deputation talked to the Hindus and it came back with the reply that the Hindus did not accept either of the terms. A third term was also suggested by the deputation that the matter be handed over to the Khilafat, to which I replied that the Khilafat could not decide the matter as it had gone into the hands of the general public.

Q. What happened after 5th September?

A. The deputation went back to Peshawar on the 6th September. We all were under the impression that Jivandas was in lock-up and that he would be proceeded against.

Q. Was there any excitement in Kohat on the 6th and 7th September?

A. There was nothing of the kind on those days. Ordinary business was going on normally.

Q. At what time was Jivandas released on the 8th September?

A. On that day I had gone to Churqota and was away from 4 p.m. when Mian Fazal Shah and Mian Rahmat Ullah were with me. I returned from there after the prayers of *Magrab*¹. On my way to Kohat, I met some village people bringing their necessaries. They told me, "You are here. Jivandas has been released and there is so much uneasiness prevailing in the city. People are gathering in the mosque of Hazrat Haji Bahadur." On this I went to the mosque. It was about 8.45 p.m. at that time. I saw a crowd in and outside the mosque which went protesting against the action of the D.C. in releasing Jivandas before the fixed date, the 11th September. I went inside the mosque and inquired what they wanted. They replied, "The Government does not care for our religious feelings." We also protested against those who advised the release of Jivandas. This charge was against some of my friends also. This I contradicted and advised the crowd that we will go to the D.C. on the 9th September and would inquire from him what good he thought would come by releasing Jivandas before time, and I asked the people to go to their homes and they went away. It was about half past ten or eleven that they left. Some time we spent in prayer also.

¹ West

Q. Was there much excitement among the crowd?

A. Yes.

Q. You said that they were so very angry that they did not listen to you and then you said that you argued with them and made them understand that they would have justice and said, "If we failed, then you could do anything you liked."

A. Yes. Once the Hindus boycotted the Muslims and did not buy meat and vegetables from them. On this I posted pickets for two days on Hindu shops, which resulted in Hindu *halwais*,¹ sweets being left unsold. It was about two years ago. In fact I did boycott the Hindus. Had the Hindus not given up this attitude I would have recommended this method to the Muslims.

Q. Did the Muslims take oath of boycott in the meeting?

A. It is altogether wrong.

Q. And was there no talk of burning and looting?

A. Not at all.

Q. What happened on 9th September?

A. I approached the D.C. at the ground near the Town Hall with the people.

Q. What was the number of people with you?

A. About 2,000.

Q. Were there village people in the crowd?

A. People of the village within the Municipality were there.

Q. Were not the people of far off places there?

A. Not of very far off places.

Q. What did you do then?

A. We gathered in the open and the D.C. went inside the Town Hall. The officers, etc., were also there. They called me inside, but the people in the crowd said that they would hear the talk in the open.

Q. Were you the leader of the deputation?

A. Yes. I was the leader. And according to their wishes I also said that we should talk in the open. At last the D.C. with other officers came out and addressing the crowd asked who would talk with him. All unanimously proposed my name. I talked to the D.C. and asked why he released Jivandas before time. "This has excited the people, now you should talk to them and subdue their excitement." He replied that he

¹ Sweetmeat sellers

had released him on bail with this idea that perhaps a large number of people would come on the appointed date, and the accused might be put to trouble. I said, "You did what you were to do, but now the demand of the people is that the one guilty of the pamphlet be hauled up and this can be only if some proceedings commenced in their presence to satisfy them." This was consented to by the D.C. and he told the Assistant Commissioner to take Jivandas's case in his own hands and commence the proceedings. After this the whole crowd reached the court as I have said before.

Q. Was the order for the D.C. conveyed to the crowd?

A. Whatever was being told by the D. C. in reply to my talk, I conveyed to the crowd at the same time. At the end I told the crowd, "The D.C. has accepted your demand." After this some dispersed and those from outside went to their homes. By outside, I mean villages nearby in municipal area; and some went to the court.

Q. Were there bamboos or axes in the hands of these people?

A. Some people had hand-sticks and some had bamboo-sticks. One or two of them had axes according to the custom of that place. The people use this in the Frontier as a pleasure.

Q. Was there no gun with anybody?

A. No gun. Had there been any, the D.C. would not come into the crowd.

Q. When did it end?

A. This ended at 12 noon.

Q. You went in motor car at half past one.

A. Yes.

Q. Is the garden of S. Makhan Singh outside the city?

A. It is near the court.

Q. Was it burnt on that date?

A. I came to know later on that on the first day the children plucked the fruits of the garden and destroyed much of it and spoiled small plants also. On the second or third day, it was also heard by me that the house in the garden was burnt.

Q. The Hindus say that this house was burnt on the 9th?

A. To my knowledge this house was not burnt on the 9th. I am fully satisfied.

Q. Was looting and burning commenced in Kohat on the 9th?

A. It was commenced in the bazaar. It was all right when I left. The houses of Hindus and Muslims were burnt and looted.

Q. Did you remain within your house on the 9th?

A. I did not stir out. People were coming to me and giving news.

Q. Up to what time did looting and burning go on on the 9th?

A. I believe the bazaar was burnt within two hours on the 9th. The flames were coming up in the night. Even on the second day the smoke was coming out. On the same occasion I heard looting was going on.

Q. When did the fire commence?

A. I was told that the flames of fire were seen at half past two.

—Ended at 12:30 p.m.

Commenced at 6-30 p.m.

Q. You said that you heard the news of firing in the court on the 9th and on this you came in motor car? Did you see yourself or did you hear from where the shot came?

A. I did not see. Neither did I see the children killed. I was told at that time that the shot came from the upper storey of Sardar Saheb as a result of which one child died and one man was wounded.

Q. Did you make any investigation about it?

A. No.

Q. Do you still believe that Sardar Saheb fired?

A. People told me so, that Sardar Saheb fired. Some said that a man was killed near the tahsil. Others said that it was he who died first.

Q. Did he die by Sardar Makhan Singh's shot?

A. I heard this.

Q. It was such a big thing and yet you did not make inquiries?

A. I did not inquire about anything. Nothing occurred to me. I was in such a condition of mind at that time that I was not able to form any opinion.

Q. What kind of relations were there between you and Sardar Sahib?

A. My relations with all Hindus have been friendly and with Sardar Saheb also.

Q. Was it not your duty to inquire from Sardar Saheb?

A. The condition was such that I could not reach him; I could neither form an opinion nor make any inquiry.

Q. When your relations with the Hindus have been good, did you think over the matter why all the Hindus whom I have seen think that you are the cause of all these troubles?

A. I myself have not been able to solve this mystery why they have formed such an opinion about me. There are some people to whom I went and for whose protection I arranged and I tried to bring about peace. Even then I have not been able to

understand the cause and even now I fail to find out the cause of being blamed.

Q. Did you protect their womenfolk?

A. Many of them came into a compound. There was one beggar woman or whose *purdah* I arranged. Men were taken to *Hujra* and all the women to a big house with some men. This is what happened on 10th September at 3 p.m. The Muslims in my *mahalla* secured certificates from the Hindus whom they protected but I did not do even that.

Q. Can you recognize the Hindus whom you helped?

A. I helped many people including women. I recognize L. Ramji Mal. There was one Ladha Ram and also Pir Sahib of Than.

Question was put to L. Ramji Mal if he was there. He answered that B. Ahmad Khan was a friend of his father. "There were other Mussalmans also with whom we had good relations. I asked Maulvi Ahmed Gul if he could make some arrangements. He kept silent, but other Muslims said to him, 'Maulvi, let bygones be bygones, and the matter be ended now.' Other Mussalmans asked us what we wanted. They took out our children and we lived in the house of B. Ahmad Khan. On my return I said to M. Ahmad Gul, 'The Muslims are looting our houses because there is no one there.' On this, he replied, 'You should go to the Deputy Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner who would make arrangement.'

Q. You say that other Muslim brethren gave refuge on the 10th ?

A. Yes. In Jungle Khel, in Gari Muwaz Khan, Mahalla Mian Badshi Mian Khelan, Mahalla Pir Sayat-ul-Am, also Dr. Gulam Sadiq.

Question was put by S. Gurdit Singh: "When Maulana Saheb came in Kotwali on the 10th I told him how much ruin has taken place, to which he replied that that was the scene of Vishnu's temple. Was it so?"

A. Yes, I said so.

Q. Did all the Hindus go to cantonment on the 10th?

A. Some went because I myself went with three or four groups. The volunteers were sent for protection to all places. There may be one or two instances in which Hindus suffered. I could not say. The Hindus were taken, out from their houses and brought to *Thana* and handed over to the Government.

Q. What do you mean by handing over to the Government?

A. The authorities ordered that those who stayed behind and were safe be gathered in *Thana*. D. C. told me and the police also. I said that there were some in my house.

Q. Did the D. C. leave the management in your hands?

A. There was no particular management in my hands which the authorities could do, excepting that I would give them men, so that when people would enter the city from outside they could be recognized or if anybody would go out, it would be known

that the man was not a suspicious character. There was Police and border [*sic*] with the volunteers also.

Q. Were you working with the D. C. or the Government?

A. I co-operated with them so far as by not doing so there would have been not much trouble to the people [*sic*].

Q. Are you a member of the Working Committee?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there Khilafatists on the Working Committee?

A. Four or five Khilafat workers are there.

Q. Who is the Chairman of the W. C.?

A. Nawabzada Bag Mohd. Khan, *rais*¹ of Tiri.

Q. Those who are with you here, are any of them members of the W. C.?

A. Now there are two sections of the W. C. The Khans of the city who belong to Kohat Tahsil form one party, whom the other party of city people do not recognize. There is one of my companions a member of the W. C. My connection is with the city people.

Q. What connection has the W. C. got with the Government?

A. It has no special connection with the Government. It was founded only to give relief to distressed Muslims and to arrange for the conduct of cases. In fact it was formed to arrange for a reconciliation with the Hindus. But if it could not be effected, then the Muslims would be helped in their cases.

Q. The settlement arrived at now, was it done by W. C.?

A. The members went to Peshawar many times but there was no settlement. When the Hindus went to Kohat, at that time open talk took place and terms of settlement were reached and both the parties signed them. The signatures were put down by those also who were outsiders, which means those who had gone out of the W.C.

Q. When negotiations were going on at Peshawar, were you there?

A. I always went to Peshawar with the W. C.

Q. How many members of the deputation were present at Peshawar?

A. Sometimes six, at other times 12 or 15.

Q. Were you the spokesman there?

¹ Man of wealth

A. Either Nawab Sahib or Pir Sahib worked as spokesman as occasion arose, and sometimes I also talked. As I did not know English, I could not take more part in it.

Q. Who is the Secretary of the W. C.?

A. Now Sheikh Abdul Rahman is the Secretary.

Q. Do you consider the last settlement a forced choice?

A. I could not say it was such. The officials described it as one beneficial for both the Hindus and the Muslims.

Q. Do you consider it a settlement free from all kinds of pressure?

A. I would have considered it as free if there had been no hand of any Government man. It was a settlement made under fear.

Q. Were the Muslims also put in jail before they were made to sign the settlement?

A. No, but the members of the Hindu deputation were put in jail and then their signatures were taken on the settlement. The conditions arrived at would not have been better between the Hindus and Muslims in my opinion whoever would have done it, as these were settled after full discussion. The discussion took place between the members of the Hindu and Muslim deputations and [the terms] were agreed upon unanimously.

Q. Why do you say so, that there could not be better terms?

A. Because conditions were such. Jivandas was released and we felt helpless. Because of the way in which he approached the people we could not say anything in his favour; he was guilty before God. When he did not obey the *Shariat*¹ he was handed over to the court as we could not help it; we feared the Ulemas.

Q. Had all the Muslims demanded the release of Jivandas, would the Government still detain him?

A. The Government said that they would take up the case against him. I could not say the Government would let him go if the Muslims agreed.

Q. Why was such a restriction placed regarding the Gurdwara? Could not the Sikhs expect something better from the Muslims?

A. They could not expect anything better as there were many mosques nearby. According to old records, the Sikhs could not construct it. It would have demolished itself. One mosque was erected near it and it fell of itself. I agreed on their behalf that the Sikhs must be given the same status as before the 9th. The condition of the cutcha wall was made because the public did not like the first condition.

Q. What became of looting and burning after the 10th?

A. Firing was going on the 10th but no looting and burning took place after that.

¹ Divine law of the Muslims

- Q. Could you give any estimate of proportion of losses of Hindus?
- A. I could not tell.
- Q. Was the loss of the Hindus greater?
- A. Surely the Hindus suffered more.
- Q. Is the booty or loot to be found in the villages or Kohat?
- A. I could not say about it that some goods like cloth were recovered and they are deposited in the Tahsil by the authorities. I could not say if the goods were in Kohat. They must have gone into villages.
- Q. Do you agree with Pir Saheb regarding the change of faith? Was there any such incident on the 9th and 10th?
- A. I agree with him. It took place in those days as Pir Saheb said.
- Q. Are you of the same opinion that every year 100 or 150 conversions take place?
- A. I do not agree with the number. To my mind the number is 40 in a year on the average and in this people from outside are also included.
- Q. Are you of the same opinion as Pir Saheb regarding conversion of women?
- A. If no pressure has been used in the case of a woman. If she accepts Islam under pressure, the Muslims are forced to let her go to her Hindu husband.
- Q. If the court decides in favour of the Hindu husband, would the Muslims still not return the woman?
- A. No, the Muslims would not agree to it and will consider her connection with her Hindu husband illegitimate.
- Q. Can the Muslims conceal the woman or adopt some other method about it?
- A. It will be the duty of the Muslims not to let the woman go to her Hindu husband, as her bond with her Hindu husband is broken as soon as she accepts Islam.
- Q. How can the Hindus go back to Kohat?
- A. When they would agree to two conditions. First they would not publish such a pamphlet and they would not fire as they fired. If they would accept [these terms] they could go at any time they liked; there is no danger. I see no reason for any disturbance in future if they would give up such injurious methods. The Muslims' attitude will be all right if these people are careful.
- Q. Should they accept both of these conditions?
- A. We did not fix any conditions before nor do we now.
- Q. I would therefore ask you what they should do?

A. I don't fix any condition. They can come without any conditions.

Q. If I would seek your advice, what would you suggest?

A. I would advise them to go to their places, but they should take the Frontier into account and mind the temperament of the Pathans.

Q. Is the atmosphere of Kohat such that Hindus cannot live in Kohat honourably?

A. I have not seen such conditions nor heard it that their living there honourably is difficult.

(At this stage S. Makhan Singh said that the treatment meted out to Hindus was not the same as before.)

Q. To Hindus! Why so much said against the Maulvi Sahib?

A. Individually there is no complaint against him.

Q. (by S. Gurdit Singh) Was the apology considered in your presence when the apology was thought over by the Santan Dharma Sabha on the 2nd September? Were you there at that time?

A. I was not there, I came to know only when I got the letter. There was no mention of apology.

Q. (by M. Shaukat Ali) Did you come to know or try to know if any invitation for looting was given to the Muslims of the city or of outside on the 8th or before that?

A. No.

Q. Had there been any such movement or others would have done so, was it possible that the matter would not have come to your notice?

A. Had there been any such plot or movement, I would have got the news anyhow.

Q. Was the incident of 9th a pre-arranged one or accidental?

A. There was no arrangement by the Muslims, at least I had no idea at all.

Q. Do you know that any Khilafat worker or volunteer took part in burning or looting of Hindu houses?

A. No.

Q. Did they put fire to any bazaar or take part in looting or in exciting the people for it?

A. No, I don't think.

Q. How many volunteers are there?

A. There are 14 or 15 volunteers nowadays.

Q. Did any of them take part in it?

A. It was put into my ears, but I could not say that they did it.

Q. You non-co-operated when the Khilafat declared it; when did you commence co-operating?

A. I worked with my volunteers only [in some things] in which the Government authorities took part, so that people be not put to trouble.

Q. Did you go to the D. C. before that and ask his help?

A. Once when I joined the Anjuman one year ago, I had to go to the D.C. about the Anjuman School. Since the Khilafat commenced, besides this occasion I did not go to the D.C.

Q. What troubles arose that you gave up your principle?

A. People were suspecting the workers that they would not hear anybody. They trusted me alone. If I had gone out then, such people would have entered the field and it would have been more troublesome.

Q. Since when did you begin to mix with the officials?

A. I commenced since the pamphlet matter and it was not officially. Since I joined the Khilafat I had given up co-operation.

Q. Do your enquiries make you believe the Muslim lad was killed by the first shot?

A. Yes, on hearing of the same shot I went to bazaar.

Q. Had there been no such accident, the disturbances would not have occurred. Do you believe it?

A. Certainly not.

Q. (by Maulana Shaukat Ali) Did the volunteers take part in looting?

A. I could not swear about it that no volunteers took part.

Q. Did you hear anything about it?

A. I heard much about it, I don't think that any Muslim took part in loot.

Q. Did the Khilafatists take part in looting and burning the shops and troubling the Hindus?

A. I could not swear about it. I have heard complaints that the Muslims did so. (Pir Sahib said none was free from it. Khilafat volunteers were also in it.)

Q. Did you hear that the Khilafat volunteers took part in looting ?

A. Yes, I heard.

Q. Were the Khilafat volunteers sent out with a message to bring outsiders for loot?

A. I have no knowledge.

—Ended at 8.30 p.m.

From the typewritten office copy: S.N. 10531

103. TELEGRAM TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA¹

February 7, 1925

PANDIT MALAVIYAJI

BIRLA HOUSE

DELHI

REACHING DELHI TOMORROW MORNING BHATINDA MAIL.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

104. TO KATHIAWARIS

In a few days I shall be again in Kathiawar, and that, too, in Rajkot this time. Shri Bharucha has been so much impressed by Kathiawar that he has asked for permission to prolong his stay there and propagate the spinning-wheel movement. I hope that the usual remark about our being enthusiastic merely in the beginning will not be proved true in this case. If the political leaders of Rajkot decide, they can infuse new life in Rajkot as also in other parts of Kathiawar. "In other parts", because Rajkot is the central place and, as it is the headquarters of the (Political) Agency also, political workers foregather there. No one can say that politicians are pressed for time, and they have sufficient influence over the people. They can make the whole of Kathiawar khadi-minded, revitalize it and check the exodus of Kathiawaris for a few pounds of *bajri*². We shall not understand how the problem will be solved in this way, by asking the question what a person can earn through the spinning-wheel; we shall be convinced that it can be, if we calculate how much money the people will save. If we only think how much everyone will suffer by the increase of a pie in a rupee in the salt tax, we shall see no reason to be seriously upset. But when we calculate the total revenue yielded by this impost, we shall be astounded by the figures. Loss of this kind is like a prick by the cobbler's needle. It is felt by the society as a whole. We can deduce from this the effect on every individual.

Similar is the case with the spinning-wheel. Suppose that in

¹ This telegram was also sent to Motilal Nehru, Delhi and Khwaja Abdul Majid, Aligarh.

² Coarse millet

every home spinning brings half an anna every day. That will amount to twelve rupees at the end of a year. And if we assume that there are five persons in every home, then, $2,600,000 \div 5 = 520,000 \times 12 = 6,240,000$, that will be the figure of rupees saved for Kathiawar. Let us do another calculation. Assuming that for every person in the population of 2,600,000 on the average five rupee are spent every year on cloth, Kathiawar uses cloth worth Rs. 13,000,000. If we deduct from this sum one-third as representing the cost of cotton, then Kathiawar will be saving Rs. 9,000,000.

What a glow of fresh life would the people of Kathiawar feel if they found that they were exempted to the tune of nine million rupees from the levy which they have to pay to the Bombay Government annually! If we give up counting the benefit to each of us individually, we would understand the invisible gains or losses in which we share. I expect the people of Kathiawar to count the collective gain or loss. If Kathiawar does that today, the rest of India will follow suit. If we merely ask, "What will it profit to me?" Our conclusion will be absurd and ruinous. Activities beneficial to society will be undertaken when we learn to ask: "How will this benefit the people?" If every person thought of his own gain, all would be ruined. When all seek the benefit of all, that is, collective welfare, the whole society and every members of it would benefit.

If the Kathiawaris think on these lines, they will realize the miracle which the spinning-wheel can work. And I hope to receive from them a balance—sheet drawn on these lines of work done in this month. Did those who took the pledge to spin do the spinning every day? Have those who did not know spinning learnt it? Has the cotton for which an appeal was addressed to the people been collected? If it has been, has any plan been drawn up regarding its disposal? The Executive Committee and the individual workers will have to answer these and many other similar questions.

I expect of Rajkot, too, a similar—balance sheet of work done. Preparations are under way there for honouring me. What need is there to honour me? If the people think, however, that they ought to honour me, they can do so by raising a pile of yarn before me and by every person adorning himself in Khadi. I can take no pleasure in high—sounding epithets. I shall be undertaking this my second visit to Kathiawar in the hope of being able to propagate the cause of Khadi and spinning, for serving the *Antyajias*, the people and the

Rulers.

I shall be opening a national school at Rajkot. I believe that sincere workers have been giving their services for it. The Gujarat Provincial Committee has donated liberally towards its establishment. His Highness the Thakore Saheb has given land at a low price. I wish that the citizens of Rajkot should take interest in this school. They should watch it, correct any mistakes it may be making and, if it has men of character on its staff, help it by sending their children to it. It is but proper the Rajkot itself should shoulder the burden of its expenses.

This time my tour of Kathiawar will include a visit to Wadhawan. I shall give a few hours to the town for the sake of the national school there. Great sacrifices have been made for its sake. I have heard of much criticism against it, too. Clouds have gathered over it, and cleared. Some Khadi work has been done in the town. It is, again, a town which claims Motilal as its citizen. It has enjoyed the benefit of Shivalal's enterprising spirit and wealth. I will expect many things from this town. I am sure it will not disappoint me.

I wish that, instead of wasting their time and resources on honouring me, people at every place which I visit should think of utilizing my services. I request the workers to see that my time and that of the public is not wasted in useless speeches. May I claim a right to beg that, wherever a meeting is organized as being unavoidable, every man and woman attending it will be clad in khadi?

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 8-2-1925

105. MAHARAJA OF MYSORE

His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore has taken up spinning. This news cannot but gladden the hearts of those who look upon it as a sacred duty? The correspondent reporting this news also adds that this development has followed Sir Prabhashanker Pattani taking up spinning. We need not get elated on hearing of these instances. Even so, they draw attention to the nature and extent of the power which lies in spinning. Moreover, the example of eminent men is bound to have an effect on the common people. I congratulate the Maharaja of Mysore and hope that he will not give up till the end of his life this activity which he has taken up. It will do immense good to him and

his subjects. Its immediate benefit may seem insignificant, but I have no doubt that it will ultimately grow into an impressive giant tree. The work of spinning will become a golden link binding the Maharaja and his subject. This will revive the rule that princes should engage themselves in useful work which is calculated to benefit the subjects, the knowledge that even the work done by the poorest among the subjects has a place in the palace of the Maharaja will always act as an inspiration to the people, and it will be established that in reality there is no distinction of class between the prince and the poor. Such results do not follow from a few days' work. They require continuous and regular work, done with complete faith.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 8-2-1925

106. TRUE EDUCATION

The following letter of Dr. Sumant Mehta came into my hands only during my recent journey to Delhi. For one thing, during tours I do not receive my post regularly and, for another, even if letters are received in time my secretary cannot look into them immediately. After he has seen them, he passes on to me those needing immediate attention, and I can look into them as and when I find time. This naturally entails delays. Had I received Dr. Sumant Mehta's letter in proper time, I would have made use of it during the convocation.¹ That occasion was missed. I, therefore, discuss the letter here. It reads as follows:²

I welcome this letter. In fact, Acharya Gidwani³ had acted on the idea underlying the main suggestion made in it. That is, *snatakas*⁴ were posted at various places for special service and contact was maintained with them. This practice was not a part of the curriculum but was followed in individual cases and on an experimental basis.

¹ Of the Gujarat Vidyapith

² The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had expressed dissatisfaction with the education programme of the Gujarat Vidyapith and, emphasizing the need for training political and social workers, offered some concrete suggestions.

³ A. T. Gidwani, principal of the Gujarat Mahavidyalaya, Ahmedabad

⁴ Graduates of Gujarat Vidyapith

The doctor proposes, and rightly, that it should be made a permanent feature and included in the curriculum itself. The letter seems to imply that the doctor intends his scheme to be adopted in place of the present scheme of studies.

Personally, I might like even that; there is, however, no need to completely replace the present scheme, and even if there be, it is not possible to do so. We had in mind the students' inclinations when framing it. In comparison with other provinces, Gujarat felt the spirit of service a little late. Every student, therefore, will not be eager for a course of studies essential for training in service. Moreover, along with the needs of social service we have to pay attention to the problem of livelihood. The prevailing idea is that education is intended to equip the student with the means of livelihood. If the aim were no more than this, it could be excused, but there is also the idea that education should help the student to make money or to get appointed to a position of authority. As long as this attitude does not change, our curriculum is bound to remain defective from a theoretical point of view. I think it impossible to change it immediately. But it is essential, and quite possible, gradually to reduce the idea of career to secondary importance.

The Vidyapith also will have to create for the students fields of social service which can offer them means of livelihood. Livelihood may not be the aim of education, but the ability to earn it must be one of the fruits of education. The aim of education is spiritual development, and where this is achieved, the ability to make a living is bound to follow.

It is also noted that students are not happy unless they acquire a knowledge of English. They also crave for a knowledge of literature. There can be no harm at all in either. We have only to guard against making a fetish of them, against making the study of English and of literature the sole aims of education and forms of self-indulgence. In their right place, which they occupy at present, they are of great value.

It cannot be maintained that the curriculum of the Government colleges is in every respect harmful. I do not feel that all of it deserves to be kept out. Its features of parrot-learning, prohibition of the use of the mother tongue, grand display of the knowledge of English, one-sided study of history, almost complete indifference to our ancient culture, absence of training in self-control, all these and similar features must be guarded against.

I, therefore, believe that there is considerable room for improvement in the present curriculum of the Vidyapith. But this is sooner said than done. Who will effect the improvement? There is none among its workers who is rich in the experience of life. Those who are in charge of formulating the curriculum are products of Government colleges. Some of them may have been disillusioned about those colleges, but how can we expect them to have a new vision and experience of new methods? Hence the defects in the curriculum of national education. The heads of all institutions have tried to effect what improvements they could and their efforts have met with some measure of success.

Now a word about Dr. Sumant Mehta's suggestion. I agree that the programme of studies embodied in his proposal deserves to be implemented. Some of the subjects suggested therein can be introduced in the early stages of the course in the Mahavidyalaya. Some others can be taught even in the pre-Mahavidyalaya stage. Yet some others seem to be such as might be taught after the general studies are completed. I invite Dr. Sumant Mehta to prepare his plan of study in detail. I could have done this even by writing a letter to him. The reason for writing about the subject here is to induce the teachers and the students to think about it, discuss it and also help Dr. Sumant Mehta. We have very few persons who can think. And even those we have are busy each in his own field of work. This position is becoming normal day by day, as is proper that it should. If everyone were to dabble in every subject, he would do justice neither to the subject nor to himself. Unless each one of us selects his own field of work and works with single-minded devotion in that, we shall never achieve our goal. The task of implementing the plan will have to be accepted by the Doctor himself. Thoughtful teachers and social workers who take interest in academic matters may assist him. My role was to bring them and him together and, to an extent, express my own views. The doctor has retired to Petlad for one year, and he has an opportunity there of experimenting with his scheme. It will be easy for him, therefore, to elaborate it.

When it is fully developed, the scheme will require teachers who can implement it, but that is a separate problem. I am sure that we shall get them when the need for them arises.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 8-2-1925

107. KOHAT HINDUS

[February 9, 1925]

I know that the pages of this week's *Young India* will be searched for the finding of Maulana Shaukat Ali and myself on the tragedy of last September. I am sorry to disappoint the curious. For Maulana Shaukat Ali is not with me and I must not publish anything without his first seeing it. I may, however, tell the reader that I have already discussed my impressions with Pandit Motilalji, then Pandit Malaviyaji and lastly with Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan¹, Dr. Ansari and the Ali brothers, and I have just² finished writing them out during my journey to Sabarmati. My notes will be immediately forwarded to Maulana Shaukat Ali and I shall hope to publish them³ together with Maulana Shaukat Ali's endorsement, addition, or amendment as the case may be. But apart from the finding, I am in a position to reiterate my advice to the Hindus that in their place I should not return to Kohat unless there is an honourable peace with the Mussalmans without the Government Intervention. This is not possible at the present moment. For unfortunately, the Muslim Working Committee which is at present guiding the Mussalmans of Kohat was not and would not be represented before us. I can appreciate the delicate position of the Hindus. They do not want to lose their property. The Maulana Saheb and I have failed to bring about peace. We have failed even to draw the principal Mussalmans for a discussion. Nor am I in a position to say that we should succeed in our attempt in the near future. In the circumstances the Hindus are at liberty to take any course they may consider advisable. In spite of our failure, I can only advise one course. "Don't return till the Mussalmans take you to Kohat with self-respect and dignity." But I know that this is cold comfort except for those who are able to stand on their own legs and are in need of no advice from any quarter whatsoever. Such is not the position of the Kohat refugees. I have conveyed my views to Pandit Malaviyaji. He has been their guide from the beginning and they must act as he advises them. Lalaji came to Pindi but he was unfortunately laid up in bed. My own considered opinion is given in the statement

¹ 1865-1927; physician and politician; President, Indian National Congress, 1921

² On February 9

³ Vide "Kohat", 19-3-1925.

sent to Maulana Shaukat Ali. But I confess in advance that it will bring no solace to them. I am but a broken reed not worth relying upon.

But there is no hesitation about my advice regarding what the refugees should do whilst they are outside Kohat. I cannot help remarking that it is demoralizing for men and women who have strong arms and legs and who are otherwise physically fit, to subsist on charity. They must find out some occupation for themselves or with the aid of the local men. I have suggested carding, spinning and even weaving. But they may do any other useful work they choose or that may be chosen for them. The idea is that no person, man or woman, who is physically fit should live on charity. There must be always enough occupation in a well-ordered State for all who are willing to work. The refugees must be able to give a good account of every minute of their time whilst they are being supported by the nation. "Idle hands some mischief still will ever find to do" is not a mere schoolboy rhyme. It contains a profound truth which can be verified by everyone for himself. Let there be no distinction between rich and poor, high and low. They are all bed-fellows in adversity. And the rich and the well-to-do should set an example to the others by labouring usefully even though they may not be drawing rations.

What an incalculable good it must be to a nation whose members know an occupation which can stand them in good stead in distress. The refugees' life would have taken a nobler turn if they had all been spinners or carders or weavers. The refugees' camp would then have presented the appearance of a busy hive and could have been kept up indefinitely. If the men do not decide to return at once, it is not yet too late to mend. It is a mistake to issue dry rations. It is no doubt less trouble to the committee of management but it means more waste and utter indiscipline among the refugees. They should place themselves under soldiers, discipline keeping regular hours for rising, washing, praying, feeding, working and retiring. There is no reason why there should not be *Ramayana* readings or such other readings for them. All this requires thought, care, attention and diligence. Given these the calamity could be turned into a blessing in disguise.

Young India, 12-2-1925

108. TELEGRAM TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

February 9, 1925

PANDIT MALAVIYA
BIRLA HOUSE
DELHI

WHAT ABOUT COW PROTECTION CONSTITUTION. HOPE YOU ARE
GOING RAWALPINDI TODAY.

GANDHI

From the handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

109. TELEGRAM TO JAIRAMDAS DAULTARAM¹

February 9, 1925

JAIRAMDAS²
C/O RAMPYARELAL VAKIL
RAWALPINDI

WIRE LALAJI'S HEALTH, POST NAMES AND OTHER PARTICULARS. TWO
PERSONS MURDERED NEAR KOHAT NINTH SEPTEMBER.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

110. LETTER TO CHAMANLAL VAISHNAV

Maha Vad 1 [February 9, 1925]³

BHAI CHAMANLAL⁴,

I write this on the train. I got your letter. It is impossible for me
to go there before the 16th. I am afraid I shall be able to do so only
about the 20th or 21st, or it may well be the visit is cancelled.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a copy of the Gujarati; C. W. 2869. Courtesy: Shardabehn Shah

¹ The addressee accompanied Gandhiji to Rawalpindi in connection with the
Kohat riots.

² b. 1892; Secretary, Sind Provincial Congress Committee; later became
Minister of Food and Agriculture, Government of India; Governor of Bihar and
Assam.

³ Gandhiji visited wadhwan on 21st February 1925 and performed the opening
ceremony of a children's school there.

⁴ A political worker of Wadhwan

111. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

Maha Vad 1 [February 9, 1925]¹

BHAI DEVCHAND,

I write this letter on the train. I am not spending money on a wire. I got your letter. I cannot have time enough to reach Wankaner on the 14th. All my time will be taken up by Borsad. But they can (if they come to Rajkot) have an hour more at Wankaner on the 15th.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

BHAI DEVCHAND PAREKH
BARRISTER
JETPUR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5712

112. TELEGRAM TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY

February 9, 1925²

P.S.V.
DELHI

DOES HIS EXCELLENCY NOW CONSIDER IT POSSIBLE TO PERMIT ME AND MY COLLEAGUES TO VISIT KOHAT DURING BEGINNING MARCH.³

GANDHI

From a hand written draft: S.N. 2456; also *Young India*, 26-2-1925

¹ The Postmark bears "Jetpur, 11 Feb. 25".

² February 10, as reproduced in *Young India*, 26-2-1925. It is likely that the telegram, though drafted on February 9, was sent on February 10.

³ On February 13, the Private Secretary to the Viceroy sent the following reply: "His Excellency the viceroy desires me to thank you for your telegram and the courtesy that prompted it. His Excellency would have been glad to be able to fall in with your wishes. But his attention has been called to the advice you have just given in *Young India* to the Kohat Hindus not to return to Kohat unless the Muslims make honourable peace with them without Government intervention. The only construction His Excellency can put on his article is that if you went to Kohat your influence would be directed towards the breakdown of the recent settlement, the effecting of which was a matter of great concern to His Excellency and from which he hopes and believes an enduring reconciliation will spring. His Excellency is sure therefore that you yourself will appreciate how impossible it is for him to fall in with your wishes."

113. LETTER TO SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

[Before February 10, 1925]¹

I have a letter charging you with adultery. I had heard the charge even at Bhavnagar when we were there. But I did not believe it. Now it has come from a man whom I cannot ignore. Can this be true? I was highly pleased at your straightforwardness and courage. But what to do if this is true?

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

114. TELEGRAM TO SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

SABARMATI,
February 10, 1925

SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI
BHAVNAGAR

DELIGHTED YOUR LETTER.² THANK YOU. HOPE YOU ARE RESTORED.

GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 3191. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

115. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

SABARMATI,
February 10, 1925

MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI
93 BAZAR GATE
BOMBAY

TELL SHUAIB³ JOIN ME KATHIAWAD TOUR FOURTEENTH.⁴

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

¹ The reply received on February 10, 1925 said: "There were some lapses in early youth, but I do not remember to have committed any such acts on the strength of my official position. You say you will destroy my letter; but why should you? My letters are opened by my secretary and my clerks. I am dictating this letter to Batuk, and Lady Pattani also has read this letter."

² *ibid*

³ Shuaib Qureshi

⁴ *Vide* the following item.

116. LETTER TO SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

Maha Vad 2 [February 10, 1925]

SUGNA BHAISHRI,

I returned from Rawalpindi yesterday. Today I got your letter for which I was waiting. I could not resist sending a telegram conveying my thanks. Please do not be angry with the person who wrote to me. I shall try to let you know his name also. On reading that you do not consider any letter as wholly confidential, I have begun to feel more proud of mankind. I feel humbled. I thought that I was perhaps the only persons who had nothing private of confidential. You have surpassed me, because you are living in an environment where it would be difficult to publicize one's private life. Had the writer been a schemer or a wicked man, I would have written nothing to you from his letter, nor would I have allowed it to influence me in the least. But he is a gentleman, discrimination, disciplined and learned. He cannot possibly have any malice towards you; but I can well understand how he came to commit this mistake. I am sending him a copy of your letter. It will do him good. He is such a pure-minded person that I wouldn't be surprised if he came to you and offered his apology. I did well in writing the letter to you. You recollect your past lapses; but who is free from these? I have been saved thrice from falling. It was not owing to my own strength but owing to my unlettered mother. She bound her son by the thread of a vow and he was saved.

I shall reach Rajkot on the 16th. Shall we meet there or any where else?

Vandemataram from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3196. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

117. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

Maha Vad 2 [February 10, 1925]¹

BHAISHRI FULCHAND,

Here is the outcome of your letter. I am keeping the original

¹ The letter seems to have been written on the same day as the preceding item.

with me. Tell me if you still have any doubt. Also let me know if your doubt is cleared. At the moment I do not have time for more.

Blessing from

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 2867. Courtesy: Shardabehn Shah

118. SPEECH AT SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, SABARMATI

February 10, 1925

I am in the predicament of a man who having come to know that there is a serpent under his mattress shakes the matters vigorously, sweeps the room and washes the floor with water. I have come to know what I did not know earlier about the situation in Kohat. I talk to you about it because it is a matter concerning religion. We all have to take this as a warning. It does not mean that we have to do something special and novel; but we have to prepare ourselves mentally and emotionally. We have to become purer.

At this stage Gandhiji referred to the number of conversions in Kohat and said:

That number may possibly be considered as small elsewhere. In an area where Muslims barely number 15,000, this is terrible. The Hindus there work up and the Muslims could not tolerate the awakening; those looking for a chance to wreak vengeance found it in the form of that booklet. If that was the only reason, the man concerned could have been arrested, he could have been crushed, and perhaps all those connected with the booklet could have been crushed. But here the whole community was persecuted. Its cause must be deep-seated. I found that cause quite by chance. The Muslims said many things frankly about proselytization. But that activity has hurt me very much. I would not mind it at all if 30 crores of Hindus became Muslims as a result of scriptural studies and rational arguments. Then I would be the single Hindu left and thereby I would add lustre to Hinduism. Or I would adduce proof of the immortality of Hinduism and say that the others became Muslims because they could not bear the brilliance of Hinduism. But if people turned Muslims out of greed or fear, as it happened there, I could not endure it. I am talking about this matter because I am to make you strong of mind, in order that you may be more attached to dharma. Despite this,

there will be no change in my non-violent behaviour, my attitude of love and in my behaviour towards Muslims. The more I see their weaknesses, the more shall I serve them. My love for them will certainly endure. But the language of love will change—it has become more firm and will become firmer still—just as my words to Englishmen are becoming stiffer. That will be the only difference. My sole object is to rouse you this morning and to caution you. I want to caution you because you may sometimes face a similar situation. If any little boy or girl in the Ashram is kidnapped, you should not just look on, interpreting my non-violence in a superficial way. The determination to be pure is itself a source of strength. A man having a pure and unsullied heart has no need to develop his body. His body automatically becomes strong. And thereafter mere resolve is enough. It is my resolve that I would utter the name of Rama before retiring, so that without chanting the name I can never get sleep. And if I do get it, I utter *Ramanama* while turning on my side and I do see my standing near me. The same true of every resolve.

Even a child in the Ashram is not afraid if he faces danger. If he does not have strength of soul, he surely has nails. We clip nails because dirt accumulates in them. When they grow big they get in the way and we clip them. In like manner, we should go on removing the dangerous elements in the body one by one.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 136-7.

119. LETTER TO MANEKLAL AMRITLAL GANDHI

ON THE TRAIN,
*Tuesday [February 10, 1925]*¹

CH. MANEKLAL,

I have your letter. I follow what you say about Babu. You did well in sending him. If he can afford to stay, it is well and good.

Prabhudas has improved a lot with the change of climate there. It would be nice if Mani did likewise. But she worries a lot. And worry kills one.

Blessing from
BAPU

¹ From the postmark

[PS.]

I hope to reach Porbunder on the 19th. Devchandbhai must be thinking what to do if the epidemic spreads.

CHI. MANEKLAL AMRITLAL GANDHI
RANAVAV
KATHIAWAR

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 890. Courtesy: Maneklal A. Gandhi.

120. LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS BIRLA

SABARMATI,
*Magh Krishna 4 [February 11, 1925]*¹

BHAI RAMESHWARDASJI,

Your letter. Jamnalalji² is here at present. He tells me that Rs. 10,000 have been received at his firm. I shall use the sum for the service of the *Antyajas*.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]

Glad to know that you are quite well.

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6104. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

121. SPEECH AT ANKLAV

February 11, 1925

Swaraj is there where the poorest of the poor can live happily. It is we who have not known hunger that are responsible for famine. A hundred years ago women of this village used to spin and men used to spin or else to weave.

The *Dharalas* have some bad habits. They drink liquor and commit thefts. As long as these things persist, religion is not safe. Unfortunately Hindus and Muslims here keep reviling each other. One's religion should be dear to oneself, but if untouchability is a

¹ The Vikram date appears to be incorrect as the postmark has "Anand 11-2-25."

² Jamnalal Bajaj (1889-1942); social worker and philanthropist, close associate of Gandhiji; treasurer, Indian National Congress for many years

part of Hinduism, I will have none of it. Even if a man has bathed and washed off his filth, we believe that still we cannot touch him—this attitude is sinful. The people of India are the *Dheds* and *Bhangis* of the world. A man has to answer for his deeds. It is not the fault of the British that we are slaves. The tree of slavery has grown from the seed of untouchability in our midst.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 138-9

122. SPEECH AT BORSAD

February 11, 1925

Borsad has become a place of pilgrimage, thanks to the satyagraha struggle. But the holy places in India are no longer holy, and I hope this has not become the fate of Borsad. Your struggle and the success you achieved in it were no ordinary ones. But to fight a battle is one thing, and to follow it up with constructive work is another. One discovers that to reap happy benefits from one's success is a difficult matter, and it often seems as if the struggle had never been fought. To return to the normal conditions after a struggle is as difficult as after a prolonged fast. We discovered this even after the Kheda agitation, and feel it after the present struggle. We saw the same thing, on a wider scale in Europe. There, a great War was fought between Britain and Germany; colossal sacrifices were made and we had expected to see a new Europe as a result of these, expected to see its people more moral and pure, wiser and more godfearing. But the evil ways which prevailed there persist even today, and the people who made the sacrifices are in an unhappy plight. Let us hope that the difference in the manner of fighting that War and our struggle will be reflected in their respective outcomes. In the War in Europe, the two sides fought to destroy each other. In a satyagraha struggle, neither side is destroyed, but on the contrary both benefit. How does it happen, then, that we do not see the desired result at the end of even such a pure struggle as satyagraha? The reason is just this, that we find excitement to be a common feature of the two kinds of fighting. We are not able to maintain an atmosphere of peace and show patience, as we should, and so we seem to lose the gain we have made. About Borsad, however, the Durbar Sahib had forewarned me that he would not be able to show me Khadinagar, that the struggle had not taught

the people the value of khadi. I did not, therefore, come here with any high hopes and so I am not very much disappointed either.

Even running a school requires considerable ability. The aphorism, as in one's body so in the universe, holds true on all occasions. If I can conduct the Satyagraha Ashram well, I can succeed even in Lord Reading's seat. The difficulties I have to face Ashram, the anxious thought I have to bestow and the number of problems I have to solve, I do not have to in a struggle like yours. What after all is to be done in running a campaign? I have to chalk out a programme and tell you what to do, merely give instructions to people; running an Ashram is much more difficult than this. I have no aspiration to be a Viceroy even in this life; I only wish to be a devoted servant of the country. But I beg leave to say that running an Ashram taxes one's spiritual resources more agonizingly than discharging the duties of a Viceroy ever does. You, too, I wish, should tax yourselves in like manner in running the Vidya Mandir, or the more one suffers the purer one becomes.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-2-1925

123. *SPEECH AT BHADRAN*¹

February 11, 1925

Before I thank you for your love and the address you have presented to me, I have one request to make. You have assembled here in such a large number at this late hour of the night. I would be guilty of a crime against you if I did not say that this makes me happy. But there is also something else which pains me. I do not know if the organizers of the meeting deliberately made the arrangements which we find here, but by now everyone who attends such meetings knows my idiosyncrasies. One of these is that I am extremely pained to see at a meeting a separate enclosure for *Antyajas*, and find it impossible to start my speech. But, as you have said, and many others besides you say, non-violence is the central creed guiding my life, and I am trying to act every moment in accordance with it. If what you have said is true, I can never wish to give you pain. I would not like you to do anything without knowing its implications, nor can I get angry with

¹ A village in Kaira District in Gujarat

you and force you to do anything. Whatever I wish you to do, I should persuade you to do by touching your heart and reason. I, therefore, appeal to you to join me in wishing, if you believe that the practice of untouchability is a blot on Hinduism, that the wall which separates our *Antyaja* brethren from us should be demolished.

I do not mean that you should demolish that wall this very moment, or do anything that may create a disturbance in this meeting. I only want to ask you whether you agree with me. Do you wish that this wall should disappear and that our *Antyaja* sisters and brothers should take their seats with us? It is only now that you have presented me an address. The manner in which you have framed your address and the fact of its being printed on [hand-made] paper or, maybe khadi, can have no value in my eyes, or only as much as you give by your daily conduct. The address, however, which you have presented to me this moment by removing the fencing [separating the *Antyajas* from the rest of the audience] will ever remain inscribed in my heart. I beg for another address like this from my Hindu sisters and brothers. I would not be pleased by your giving me a little yarn, or offering me flowers and fruits of various kinds and bringing an *Antyaja* girl to place a *tilak* on my forehead (as was done here). These I may have anywhere. But the gift you have made me just now should be accompanied with the chain of love; I want nothing less than that, for love is a part of non-violence, is comprehended in it.

My *Sanatani*² friends should not please believe that I wish to strike a blow at Hindu society. I count myself as a *sanatani*. I know that my claim will be accepted by few, but that is my claim and I will continue to make it. I have said again and again that people are sure to admit, if not today after my death, that Gandhi was a *sanatani* Hindu. *Sanatani* means that which goes back to ancient times. My ideals are of this kind, that is, I find them in the oldest of books and try to live up to them; I am, therefore, justified in claiming myself to be a *sanatani*. I would not accept people as *sanatanis* merely because they can recite the Shastras in a beautiful manner. Those alone deserve to be called *sanatani* who have the spirit of Hinduism in every fibre of their being. The revered Shankara summarized that spirit in

¹ Many hands were raised in support, and only one against. The *Antyajas* then came and took their seats with the rest.

² Orthodox Hindus

one sentence: *Brahma satyam jaganmithya*.¹ Another sage declared that there is no higher dharma than truth, and still another that Hinduism means perfect non-violence. You may accept any one of these three statements, and you will get the essence of Hinduism. They represent the very cream of the holy books of Hinduism, and I who claim to follow dharma as defined by them simply cannot wish to hurt anyone. I merely want you to mix with *Antyajas*, for they are also human beings. I want that we should serve them for they deserve our service. They render to society service which a mother gives to her child. To look upon them as untouchables and to despise them amounts to forgetting our humanity. Indians have become the pariahs of the world in this age because they look upon countless numbers of human beings as untouchables. This has resulted in the Muslims, too, being treated as untouchables, because of their association with us. What is the cause of this unhappy state of affairs? There is only one answer: “Reap as you sow” is a divine law. There is nothing mysterious in the fact that, through the world, God is dealing us this justice. It is perfect justice we are getting. “As men worship me, so I give myself to them”², so said Shri Krishna. If, therefore, you understand what I want from you, you will not be pained. I am not out to give pain to people. I am not asking too much from you. I have never asked you to enter into marriage ties with *Antyajas* or eat in their company. That is a matter of your own choice. But you cannot claim that to regard them as untouchables is also a matter of your choice. It cannot be a matter of your choice to avoid contact where you should not and not avoid if where you should. If you do not see the sufferings of *Antyajas*, how can you say *sarvam khalvidam Brahma*³? The author of that Upanishad was not hypocrite since he has ascertained that this entire universe in *Brahman*; we should be worse than brutes if we do not suffer when we see others suffer. Our dharma declares in the most emphatic terms that the brute, too, has a soul just as we have, but we have in this age distorted the teaching of that religion, Akha⁴ described this idea [of anyone being defiled by the touch of another human being] as a superfluous limb. You should discard it, cut it off. I want you to destroy this evil of untouchability

¹ The *Brahman* alone is real; the phenomenal world is but an illusion.

² *Bhagavad Gita*, IV. 11.

³ “Verily, all this is *Brahman*.”

⁴ A Gujarati poet of the 17th century, famed for his satire; vedantist and rationalist

by arousing in you compassion and love, or, if you would have it so, a sense of brotherhood. If we end it, we shall win glory for Hinduism and will have saved it. I do not mean that *Antyajās* will then stop embracing Islam or Christianity. No religion depends for its survival on the numerical strength of its followers. There has been no more fallacious idea than that the strength of a religion depends on the number of those who profess it. Even if but one person remains a true Hindu, Hinduism will not perish; if, on the other hand, the crores of Hindus in the country adopt the ways of hypocrisy and evil, Hinduism will not live long but is certain to be destroyed. When I say Hinduism will be saved, I mean that we shall have atoned for our errors, paid the debt of centuries and escaped bankruptcy.

There is no doubt that the practice of untouchability is inspired by hatred. If anyone claims that he bears love for *Antyajās* though treating them as untouchables, I will not believe him. I see no evidence of love whatsoever in this practice. If we bore love for them, we would not add-ress them insultingly, would not throw at them our left-overs; if we had love for them, we would hold them in reverence as we do our mothers, would provide them better wells and schools than what we ourselves have, and permit them to visit temples. All these would be indications of love. Love shines with the light of countless suns. If one little sun cannot be hidden, how can love remain so? Does a mother ever have to declare that she loves her child? An infant which cannot even speak looks at its mother's eyes and, as their eyes meet, we see something mysterious passing between them.

Because I say this, let no one believe that a Hindu returned from South Africa with reformist ideas wants to impose his ideas on Hinduism. I can truthfully say that I entertain no ambition of reforming other people. I am a selfish man, immersed in my own joy. I seek my own spiritual welfare, and that is why I have been able to detach myself from everything and can live in complete peace. But I want you to feel the joy which I do and, therefore, ask you to welcome contact with *Antyajās*, to serve them and experience the happiness which you will get by doing so.

We can but garland the bride and the bridegroom. What more can we desire than to see them bound with the chain of love? What more can a person wish for than that he or she should be united to another who will be his for her life's partner? Anyone who desires more than this has no right to marry. I would not like anyone to

marry in slavish obedience to rigid custom. If a girl faced with such a harsh necessity resolves to remain unmarried for her whole life and lead a life of self-sacrifice and voluntary suffering, if, like Uma, she takes a vow that she would marry only if she got a husband like Siva, she is bound to get such a husband, if not in this life in the next. Such a woman will be an ornament to her whole community. The purpose of marriage is not self-indulgence, but self-control. I want all people to understand this idea.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-2-1925

124. LEAVES FROM A DIARY¹

Misses Angus and Hindsley were sent from Adyar to the Ashram by Dr. Besant to learn carding, spinning, etc., so as to be able to train others at Adyar. They passed a month at the Ashram and kept a diary of their daily experiences. On their departure they left relevant notes from their diary for publication in these pages. On first reading I thought I could not well publish them as they appeared to me to be too personal. The next thought was to cut out the personal references and then publish them. But on re-reading, I have decided to present the notes without a single alteration. I have stood the strain of personal reference now for a long time. I can very well bear the additional strain. There is a merit in the notes which compels publication. The references to the Ashram are not wholly true. All is not so rosy as it has appeared to these friends. The Ashram has its jars, it has its trials and difficulties, it has to wear away many a rough edge. But it does try to live up to its name. There are certainly things about the Ashram which can be copied with safety. But I must warn the reader against being carried away by some of the flattering description, and applying for admission. There is a standing notice from the Manager to me that he has more inmates than he can take care of and more work than he can cope with. Let those who like the way of the life described by Misses Angus and Hindsley copy it wherever they may be.

Young India, 12-2-1925

¹ Only Gandhiji's introductory remarks are reproduced here. The Diary appeared in *Young India* between February 12 and March 5.

125. NOTES

A BIHAR FORECAST

I take the following from a Bihar correspondent's letter¹:

There was a meeting of the Bihar P.C.C. . . . The programme for the whole year is to secure at least 13,000 self-spinning members. . . . The P.C.C. proposes this year to produce khaddar worth at least five lacs of rupees. The present monthly production is Rs. 13,000. If they are to manufacture five lacs, the monthly production must be trebled. Rajendra Babu² is enthusiastic about it. . . . The people here are anxiously looking forward to your visit. If you can come, the work will certainly receive a great push.

I hope that the other provinces too will lose no time in preparing their programme of work. I should love to go to Bihar as early as I can. But I am not master of my own movements. I go where fate takes me. It is therefore futile for me to make promises in advance.

AT CAWNPORE

Dr. Abdussamad writes:³

Cawnpore was a scene of disturbance on the 2nd of this month and, as it is the venue of the next Congress, I think it is just proper that you may know the truth of the affair and if the statement is corroborated by Dr. Morarilal, the President of the local Congress Committee, I hope you will publish the whole or a part of it in your paper *Young India*. . . .

I have not written to Dr. Morarilal for confirmation of Dr. Abdussamad's statement as on the face of it, it appears to be colourless and innocent. If Dr. Morarilal has a different version of the incident related, I would gladly publish it. Quarrels will sometimes take place in best regulated societies but the spirit that prompted the parties after the incident seems to have been admirable. As for the charge against "a section of Arya Samajists" I do not know how far they will admit it. I can only hope that every section in Cawnpore will try its best to exercise the greatest self-restraint, keep under control the mischievous element and be ever ready to be charitable to rivals who may hold different political views or different faiths.

A SILENT WORKER

A Chittagong correspondent sends me the following story of a

¹ Only excerpts are reproduced here.

² Rajendra Prasad (1884-1963); statesman and scholar; chairman, Constituent Assembly of India, 1946-49; first President of India, 1950-62

³ Only an excerpt is reproduced here.

silent worker:

Sreejut Kalisanker Chakrabartee, a silent but indefatigable worker of Chittagong, has, of late, arranged practical demonstrations of charkha. He does not believe in wordy battles. He personally approaches four families every morning with his big charkha, spins before them by way of giving first lesson and begs of them their contributions. The process may seem futile to some, but the melodious sound and sweet music of the charkha, preceded by the recitation of a prayer in the early hours of the day, wonderfully conquers the sceptic who orders a good charkha and promises due contributions. Uncompromising unbelievers who sneered at the charkha are daily won over. The business-like promptitude with which Kalisanker Babu is progressing, ensures success. He has set an example to other workers who may if they choose copy it with profit to themselves and the country.

I have taken the liberty of condensing the letter and making its English readable. I commend the letter to the attention of all workers. There is no doubt that example is better than precept.

Young India, 12-2-1925

126. A REVOLUTIONARY'S DEFENCE

A correspondent, who has given his name but not his address, has sent me what he calls "an open letter". It is a letter in reply to my remarks¹ on the revolutionary movement in my address to the Belgaum Congress. The letter breathes love of the country, fervour and a spirit of self-sacrifice. It is moreover written under a sense of wrong, said to have been done by me to the revolutionaries. I therefore gladly print the letter without the name. The address of the writer is not given. The following is the unchanged full text of the letter:²

I think it my duty to remind you of the promise³ you made some time back that you would retire from the political field at the time when the revolutionaries will once more emerge from their silence and enter into the Indian political arena. The experiment with the non-violent non co-operation movement is now over. You wanted one complete year for your experiment, but the experiment lasted at least four complete years, if not five, and still do

¹ *Vide* "Presidential Address at Belgaum Congress", December 26, 1924.

² Only excerpts are reproduced here.

³ In 1921, to retire if swaraj was not received within a year; *vide* "One Year's Time-Limit", December 11, 1921.

you mean to say that the experiment was not tried long enough?

You are one of the greatest of personalities in the present age and under your direct guidance and inspiration, your programme was actually taken up for some reason or other by the best men in the land. Thousands of young men, the flower of the youth of our country, embraced your cult with all the enthusiasm they could gather. . . . Sacrifice and sincerity on the part of your followers were not wanting. . . . You wanted one crore of rupees and you got more than you wanted. . . . still do you mean to say that the experiment was not tried far enough? . . .

To say that non-violent non-co-operation failed because the people were not sufficiently non-violent is to argue like a lawyer and not like a prophet. The people could not be more non-violent than they were during the last few years. . . .

Non-violent non-co-operation movement failed not because there was sporadic outburst of suppressed feelings here and there but because the movement was lacking in a worthy ideal. The ideal that you preached was not in keeping with Indian culture and traditions. It savoured of imitation. . . . It was not the spirit of *kshama*¹ of the Indian *rishis*, it was not the spirit of ahimsa of the great Indian yogis. It was an imperfect physical mixture of Tolstoyism and Buddhism and not a chemical mixture of East and West. You adopted the Western methods of Congress and Conferences and tried to persuade the whole nation to accept the spirit of ahimsa, irrespective of *desh*², *kal*³ and *patra*⁴ like Tolstoy, but which was a matter of individual *sadhana*⁵ with the Indians. And above all, you were and are still vague as regards India's ultimate political goal. This is miserable. Your idea of independence is not in consistence with Indian ideals. India stands for *sarvam paravasham dukkham sarvam atmavasham sukham*⁶ and for the ideal that individual existence is solely for the purpose of humanity and through humanity serving God. *Jagat-hitaya Srikrishnaya cha*⁷. The non-violence that India preaches is not non-violence for the sake of non-violence, but non-violence for the good of humanity, and when this good for humanity will demand violence and bloodshed, India will not hesitate to shed blood just in the same way as a surgical operation necessitates the shedding of blood. To an ideal Indian,

¹ Forgiveness

² Place; environment

³ Time

⁴ Recipient; the other person concerned

⁵ Spiritual practice

⁶ "All dependence is sorrow, all self-reliance is joy."

⁷ "For the welfare of the world and for the sake of God." (*Pandava Gita*)

violence or non-violence has the same significance provided they ultimately do good to humanity. *Vinashaya cha dushkrita*¹ was not spoken in vain.

To my mind therefore, the ideal that you gave to the nation or the programme of action that you laid before it is neither consistent with Indian culture nor practicable as a political programme.

It is simply inconceivable and incomprehensible to think that you still dare to entertain the slightest hope that England can be just and generous out of her free will—this England “which believes in Jallianwala Bagh massacres as a legitimate means of self-defence”, this England which tried the O’Dwyer-Nair case and gave judgment in favour of barbarism. If you have an iota of faith left in you in the good sense of the British Government, then according to you where is the necessity of any programme at all? . . . A sovereign independent Indian Republic is alliance or in federation with the other independent nations of the earth is one thing, and self-governing India within this imperialistic British Empire is perfectly another thing. Your sentiment of remaining within the British Empire reminds one of the many Himalayan miscalcualtions that you have repeatedly committed. It seems to me that you have compromised a worthy ideal with the present needs of a false expediency and this is the reason that you have failed to capture the imagination of the youths of the country—youths who could dare and who are still daring to go against your wishes although they unhesitatingly recognize you as one of the greatest of personalities of the modern age. These are the Indian revolutionaries. They have now decided to remain silent no more and therefore they request you to retire from the political field or else to direct the political movement in a way so that it may be a help and not a hindrance to the revolutionary movement. . . . Further, I would like to point out that you have misjudged the revolutionaries in many respects when you blamed them in your recent presidential address in the 39th Congress. You said that the revolutionaries are retarding India’s progress. I do not know what you mean by this word “progress”. If you mean political progress then can you deny that every political progress that India has already made, however little that might be, has been made chiefly by the sacrifices and the efforts of the revolutionary party? Can you deny that the Bengal partition was annulled through the efforts of the Bengal revolutionaries? Can you doubt that the Morely-Minto reform was the outcome of the Indian revolutionary movement? Can you be blind to the forces of this revolutionary movement which was mainly though not wholly instrumental in bringing about the Montford reforms? . . .

If you mean that these reforms are no index to true progress, then I would

¹ “To destroy the wicked” (*Bhagavad Gita*, IV, 8)

venture to say that this revolutionary movement has achieved no mean progress in the moral advancement of India. Indians were miserably afraid of death and this revolutionary party once more made the Indians realize the grandeur and the beauty that lie in dying for a noble cause. The revolutionaries have once again demonstrated that death has a certain charm and is not always a dreadful thing. To die for one's own beliefs and convictions, to die in the consciousness that by so dying one is serving God in the nation, to accept death or to risk one's life when there is every probability of death, for a cause which one honestly believes to be just and legitimate—is this no moral progress? . . .

You have said to the revolutionaries, “You may not care for your own lives, but you dare not disregard those of your countrymen who have no desire to die a martyr's death.” But the revolutionaries are at a sad loss to understand the meaning of this sentence. Do you mean to say that the revolutionaries are responsible for the deaths of 70 men who were condemned in the Chauri Chaura trial? Do you mean to say that the revolutionaries are responsible for the bombing and killing of innocent people at Jallianwala Bagh and Gujranwala? Did the revolutionaries during their struggle for the last twenty years, in the past or in the present, ever asked the starving millions to take part in the revolutionary struggle? The revolutionaries have perhaps a better knowledge of the mass psychology than most of the present leaders. And this was the reason that they never wanted to deal with the masses until they became sure of their own strength. They always believed that the masses of Northern India were ready for any emergency and they were also right in thinking the Northern India mass as a dense matter of high explosive, dangerous to be handled carelessly. It was you and your lieutenants who misjudged the sentiment of the masses and dragged them into the satyagraha movement, people who were groaning under a thousand oppressions from within and without, where the lightning of anger laid unperceived and you had to pay the penalty for it. But can you give any instance where the revolutionaries dragged unwilling souls into the valley of death?

But if you mean by the sentence that innocent people are being harassed, imprisoned and put to death due to the activities of the revolutionaries, then I would unhesitatingly and honestly admit, as far as my knowledge goes, that not a single individual was hanged who was innocent of any revolutionary activity, and about imprisonments and tortures, I may say that many innocent men were actually harassed and put to torture. But can the revolutionary party be made responsible for the atrocities committed by a foreign government? The foreign government determined to crush any manifestation of manhood in the nation, in any form whatsoever; but in so

crushing, the government is very liable to commit blunders and harass and imprison and put to torture cowards along with the heroes; but are the brave people to be blamed for the sufferings of the cowards? Moreover these sufferings cannot be termed as martyrs' death.

Lastly, I would like to say something about the remarks you have made in connection with the strength of the British Empire. You have said to the revolutionaries: "Those whom you seek to depose are better armed and infinitely better organized than you are." But is it not shameful that a handful of Englishmen are able to rule India, not by the free consent of the Indian people but by the force of the sword? And if the English can be well-armed and well-organized why can the Indians be not better armed and better organized still—Indians who are saturated with the high principles of spirituality? Indians are men in the same sense as the Englishmen are. Then, what on earth makes the Indians so helpless as to think that they can never be better organized than their English masters? By what argument and logic of fact can you disprove the possibilities in which the revolutionaries have immense faith? And the spirit of non-violence that arises out of this sense of helplessness and despair can never be the non-violence of the strong, the non-violence of the Indian *rishis*. This is *tamas*¹ pure and simple?

Excuse me Mahatmaji, if I am severe in criticizing your philosophy and principles. You have criticized the revolutionaries most unsympathetically and even you went so far as to describe them as the enemies of the country, simply because they differ from your views and methods. You preach tolerance but you have been violently intolerant in your criticisms of the revolutionaries. The revolutionaries have risked their everything to serve their motherland, and if you cannot help them, at least be not intolerant towards them.

I never made any promise to anybody as to when and how I should retire from the political life of the country. But I did say and now repeat that I would certainly retire if I find that India does not imbibe my message *and* that India wants a bloody revolution. I should have no part in that movement because I do not believe in its utility either for India, or, which is the same thing, for the world.

I do believe that there was a wonderful response to the call of non-co-operation but I do also believe the success was more than proportionate to the measure of non-co-operation. The wonderful awakening of the masses is a standing demonstration of the fact.

¹ Darkness; here, inaction due to helplessness

I do believe too, that the country exercised great self-restraint; but I must reiterate my opinion that the observance of non-violence was far below the required standard.

I do not believe that “my philosophy” is an indifferent mixture of Tolstoy and Buddha. I do not know what it is except that it is what I feel to be true. It sustains me. I owe much to Tolstoy and much to Buddha. I still somehow or other fancy that “my philosophy” represents the true meaning of the teaching of the *Gita*. I may be totally mistaken. Such a mistake can do no harm either to me or to anybody. For the source of my inspiration is of no consequence if what I stand for be unadulterated truth.

Let the philosophy I represent be tested on its own merits. I hold that the world is sick of armed rebellions. I hold too that whatever may be true of other countries, a bloody revolution will not succeed in India. The masses will not respond. A movement in which masses have no active part can do no good to them. A successful bloody revolution can only mean further misery for the masses. For it would be still foreign rule for them. The non-violence I teach is active non-violence of the strongest. But the weakest can partake in it without becoming weaker. They can only be the stronger for having been in it. The masses are far bolder today than they ever were. A non violent struggle necessarily involves construction on a mass scale. It cannot therefore lead to *tamas* or darkness or inertia. It means a quickening of the national life. That movement is still going on silently, almost imperceptibly but none the less surely.

I do not deny the revolutionary’s heroism and sacrifice. But heroism and sacrifice in a bad cause are so much waste of splendid energy and hurt the good cause by drawing away attention from it by the glamour of the misused heroism and sacrifice in a bad cause.

I am not ashamed to stand erect before the heroic and self-sacrificing revolutionary because I am able to pit an equal measure of non-violent men’s heroism and sacrifice untarnished by the blood of the innocent. Self-sacrifice of one innocent man is a million times more potent than the sacrifice of million men who die in the act of killing others. The willing sacrifice of the innocent is the most powerful retort to insolent tyranny that has yet been conceived by

God or man.

I invite the attention of the revolutionaries to the three great hindrances to swaraj—the incomplete spread of the spinning-wheel, the discord between Hindus and Mussalmans and the inhuman ban upon the suppressed classes. I ask them patiently to take their due share in this work of patient construction. It may not be spectacular enough. But on that very account it requires all the heroic patience, silent and sustained effort and self-effacement of which the tallest among the revolutionaries is capable. Impatience will blur the revolutionary's vision and lead him astray. Slow and inglorious self-imposed starvation among the starving masses is every time more heroic than the death of the scaffold under false exaltation.

All criticism is not intolerance. I have criticized the revolutionary because I have felt for him. He has the same right to hold me to be in error as I believe him to be in error.

There are other points that are covered by the “open letter”. But I have omitted to refer to them because I think that they can be easily answered by the reader and in no case do they touch the vital issue.

Young India, 12-2-1925

127. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Maha Vad 4 [February 12, 1925]¹

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Give the enclosed papers to Maulana Shaukat Ali and convey his reply to me. Or he himself can send me the reply.

You must have received the message² I sent for Shuaib. I am leaving for Rajkot on the 14th night. It would be nice if he could be there at that time.

Blessings from

BAPU

¹ The addressee received the letter on February 13, 1925, in which year *Maha Vad 4* corresponded to February 12.

² *Vide* the preceding item.

[PS.]

Yes, that Englishman is none other than Polak.¹

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

128. *SPEECH IN REPLY TO SEVA MANDAL ADDRESS,*
BHADRAN

February 12, 1925

I have been asked to say something about *brahmacharya*². This is one of those subjects on which I write in *Navajivan* from time to time. I rarely speak on it, because I think that it is an extremely difficult subject to talk about and one cannot explain one's ideas about it in a speech. You wish to hear my views on ordinary *brahmacharya* and not on *brahmacharya* in the extended definition of the term which connotes the control of all organs of sense. Even ordinary *brahmacharya* is said by the Shastras to be very difficult to observe. Permit me to say that there is ninety-nine per cent truth in this view, but that it falls short of absolute truth by one per cent. The observance of this ordinary *brahmacharya* is felt to be difficult because we do not strive to control the other organs of sense. The most important of these is the palate. For him who has learnt to control the palate. The observance of *brahmacharya* will be easy enough. Students of zoology tell us that lower creatures observe *brahmacharya* better than man. What they say is true, and if we try to know the reason we shall discover that the lower creatures have the completest control over the palate, which is not the result of an effort of will but is instinctive. They feed on grass and plants, and eat only as much as would satisfy their hunger. They eat to live, and do not live to eat. We do quite the opposite of this. The mother feeds her child all manner of delicacies, believing that only so can she express her love. By acting in this way, we do not make our food more tasty, but rather less so. Food is made tasty by appetite. A plain *rotla*³ is more tasty to a hungry person than *ladu*⁴ can be to a person who has no appetite. We actually use all kinds of spices and prepare an endless variety of

¹ Presumably the reference is to the "English friend" mentioned in Gandhiji's article "Interrogatories Answered", January 29, 1925.

² Literally, living in the *brahman*, the absolute. In ordinary usage, the term has come to signify celibacy.

³ A round, thick, flat cake made of the flour of *bajri*, a coarse millet.

⁴ A sweet ball

dishes so that we may be able to load our stomachs to the full, and then we ask why we cannot observe *brahmacharya*. We let our eyes, which God has given us for seeing things, be tainted with lust, and do not learn to observe what we ought to. Why should a mother not learn the *Gayatri* and teach it to her child? It would be enough if, without going into its deeper meaning, she merely understands that it is an invocation to the Sun-god and teaches the child to worship the Sun. *Sanatanists* and *Arya Samajists*, both may worship the Sun. In explaining the *Gayatri* as worship of the Sun, I have given its most obvious meaning. What is the meaning of this worship? It means that, holding up our heads and looking at the Sun we should cleanse our eyes. The author of the *Gayatri* was a *rishi*, a seer. He tells us that nowhere shall we find anything to equal the drama of sunrise or see beauty and mystery like its. There is no *sutradhara*¹ as skilled as God and no stage grander than the sky. But which mother ever asks her child to look at the sky, for fear that the child might hurt its eyes? Her mind is filled with all manner of worldly thoughts; the education which they give in that big building, she perhaps tells herself, will make her child a well-paid officer. Does she ever ask herself, however, how much the child benefits from what it learns, consciously or unconsciously, from the atmosphere in the home? Parents paid their children with clothes till they feel suffocated, try to make them look smart and handsome, but do the children really look so? Clothes are meant to cover the body, not to beautify it; they are meant to protect us against heat and cold. We should ask a child shivering with cold to go and warm itself at the stove, or sun in the street or go and work on the farm; then alone can we help it build a body as strong as steel. Anyone who has observed *brahmacharya* ought to have a body of such strength. We, on the contrary, ruin children's bodies. We wish to keep them within the four walls of the home and make them comfortable. This produces a kind of artificial heat in their skin which we can only compare to eczema. We have ruined our bodies by pampering them overmuch, we have been playing with fire.

So much about clothes. Then, through the things we talk about in the home we produce harmful effects on a child's mind. We talk about marrying the boy or the girl, and the things which the child sees around it have much the same effect on its mind. What surprises me is that we have not yet become the most uncivilized people on the earth. Despite everything calculated to destroy decent social restraints, they have survived. God has so made man that, though placed again and

¹ The producer in Sanskrit drama, who appears as a character in the beginning of the play and introduces its theme.

again in circumstances which might tempt him to evil, he comes out safe—so profound is His mystery. If we eliminate all such factors which increase the difficulties in the way of *brahmacharya*, we would find it quite easy to observe.

Though this is our condition, we wish to oppose others with physical force. There are two ways in which we can make ourselves fit to do this, a lower and a higher. The lower way is to cultivate strength of body by any means whatever, by eating and drinking anything which may serve our purpose, training ourselves for physical fighting, eating beef, and so on. When I was a boy, a friend used to tell me that we ought to eat meat, that if we did not we would never be as strong and stout as Englishmen. The poet Narmadashanker¹ also gave this advice in a poem of his. The lines, “The Englishman rules and the Indian is content to submit” and “The foreigner is full six feet tall” are intended to suggest this very idea. Narmadashanker has rendered great service to Gujarat but there were two phases in his life, the first of self-indulgence and the second of self-control. This particular poem belongs to the period of self-indulgence. In Japan too, when they found it necessary to fight other countries beef eating became common. If, therefore, we wish to cultivate physical strength the lower way, we shall have to start eating such things.

But *brahmacharya* is the only means for us if we would cultivate physical strength the higher way. I feel pity for myself when I hear people describing me as a man of inviolate *brahmacharya*. I have been so described in the address presented to me. I must tell you, therefore, that the person who drafted the address does not know who may be called a man of inviolate *brahmacharya*. Didn't he ask himself how a man like me, married and having several children, could be so described? A man of inviolate *brahmacharya* would never get fever, not even so much as headache, he would never have an attack of bronchitis or appendicitis. Doctors say that appendicitis may even result from an orange seed sticking in the intestines. But the seed will never be retained inside if one's body is clean and healthy. When the intestines have lost their tone, they cannot eliminate such things in the natural course. My intestines also must have lost their tone and so I might have failed to assimilate something which I swallowed. Children often swallow similar things, but their mothers seldom take serious notice of that. The reason [why no harmful effects follow] is that their intestines have the natural strength to eliminate such things. I do not,

¹ Also called Narmad, the first poet of the new age in Gujarat

therefore, want anyone to become a hypocrite by attributing to me the observance of inviolate *brahmacharya* [and following my example]. The power and light of inviolate *brahmacharya* are far greater than what I can boast of. I am not perfect in my *brahmacharya*, though it is true that I strive to be so. I have only placed before you a few observations from my experience which indicate how one may erect a protecting hedge [to preserve one's *brahmacharya*]. Observing *brahmacharya* does not mean that one may not touch any woman, not even one's sister. It means that one's mental state must be such that touching a woman would disturb one no more than touching a piece of paper. If, in order to preserve my *brahmacharya*, I must guard against touching my sister to nurse her when she is ill, that *brahmacharya* is worth no more than the dust under our feet. We would be perfect in our *brahmacharya* if, even when touching a young and extremely beautiful woman, we are disturbed no more than when we touch a corpse. If you wish your children to be capable of such *brahmacharya*, you cannot prescribe their studies but should let a man like me, imperfect though he be in his *brahmacharya*, do that.

A man who observes *brahmacharya* is a sannyasi by nature. The stage of *brahmacharya* is superior to that of *sannyasa*¹, but we have corrupted it and in the result the stage of active life as a householder and that of retired life have lost their beauty, to speak nothing of the stage of *sannyasa*—such is our plight.

If we follow the lower path indicated above, we shall not, even after five hundred years, be strong enough to fight the Pathans. If we can follow the higher path today, then we can meet them this very day, for the inward change required by that path can take place in no time, whereas change in our physical constitution will require ages to bring about. We shall be able to follow that higher path only if we have earned holy merit in our previous lives and if our parents equip us for the purpose.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 1-3-1925

129. SPEECH AT VIRSAD

February 12, 1925

Look at the marvel that is God! What for was I invited and what for have I come? Kashibhai¹ has decided that no unnecessary

¹ Complete renunciation, the last stage of life

² Dahyabhai's father-in-law

expenses should be incurred on the wedding of Dahyabhai¹ and Yashoda. For that he has brought down on himself the anger of his relatives. Let me serve notice on all the rich men who have fortunes to spend on weddings that they should send all that money to me, I will put it to good use. Money spent on ostentation is not well spent. We are going the wrong way. As a result, for one in the *Patidar* community to have a daughter has become a torture hard to bear. When Kashibhai said that he would have an inexpensive wedding, we all agreed. I seek your approval also. Pray silently within yourself that you should have the strength to perform weddings with simplicity and in a religious spirit.

I need not thank you for your address. Nor would you expect it. You have mentioned khadi and charkha in your address. If it is true that khadi has divine power, if the charkha has the power to win us swaraj and if it is a true *sudarshan chakra*², then all of you should have made khadi your own. Otherwise presenting such addresses, praising khadi and the charkha and making girls sing on the occasion, serve no purpose.

Why are the *Antyajas* in the meeting sitting at the back? I bow to them. I take pride in calling myself an *Antyaja*. I have often said that if I am born again, I wish to be born an *Antyaja*. At present I do not serve them—but I am making atonement and purifying myself. I wish to ask of Hindu society “Do you want to cast me out just as you cast out the *Antyajas*?” Even though I am a non-*Antyaja* at present, I cannot say that I follow all the injunctions in thought, word and action. My prayer is that if I be reborn I should be a *punrapurusha*³ and that in an *Antyaja* family. It is not the mark of a Kshatriya to make them sit at the back. *Patidars* are a brave community. They have many good qualities as well as a few bad ones. But there is none in this world who is without good qualities and none without bad. None of us is a true *Purushottama*⁴. That would be most unlikely in the *Kaliyug*. I can’t therefore think of the *Antyajas* as low. It is much better to live among them and be untouchable than to live with you and be touchable. I have to seek forgiveness in the court of God. He will tell me that, if I consider them untouchables, they will

¹ Sardar Patel’s son

² The celebrated discus of Krishna.

³ The perfect person in Vedanta.

⁴ Supreme Being; a name of Krishna; here, a perfect man

give me a slap on my face; because I am guilty of the sin of treating my brothers as beasts. Kshatriyas do not retrace their steps. Keeping the *Antyajas* backward is retracing one's steps. I tell you this lest you should do wrong by keeping the *Antyajas* backward. I tell you this because attempts are being made to hide the *adharma*¹.

Patidars tyrannize over lower communities, beat them and exact forced labour from them. I know that this is true. Dread such conduct. If you persist in it, your courage would ebb away. One who is happy should try to make others happy. It is our duty to bear hardships and make the world happy. It is devilish to make others unhappy while we enjoy our pleasures. It is not your address I want. I want rather that you should make your *Antyaja* brothers happy and by so doing be happy yourselves.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 158-60

130. TELEGRAM TO SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

PETLAD,
February 13, 1925

SIR PRABHASHANKER
BHAVNAGAR,

YOUR LETTER, RAJKOT SUNDAY TO WEDNESDAY, PROGRAMME THEREAFTER TO BE FIXED RAJKOT, REACHING ASHRAM TONIGHT.

From a photostat: C.W. 3192. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

131. SPEECH AT PALEJ

February 13, 1925

We must develop fearlessness at the end of a war and, by doing constructive work, acquire the capacity to plan and execute. If we do not have the latter, our independence cannot be preserved. If we secure swaraj through non-violence, it can be preserved through service. If we want swaraj for the sake of power it can be retained only through violence. It is worthwhile to foster the strength of non-violence and give up the strength that comes from power. As long as we do not have the strength to live together, swaraj cannot be won through non-violence. That is why I placed before the public a

¹ Opposite of dharma.

threefold programme.

We can do anything in the name of religion but, when we realize that it is *adharmā*, we cannot persist in doing that. To me untouchability is more unethical than slavery. When the movement for ending untouchability was going on here, there was a suggestion that Christians should take part in it. But I objected to it. An honest Christian like George Joseph¹ wanted to enrol himself for this work in Vykom but I had said “No” to him. If we go to the whole world for help, our work may become more complicated.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, p. 160

132. ABOUT STUDENTS

A friend writes:²

I have often acknowledged the sacrifices made by students. But it is a universal rule admitting of no exception that the world does not take note of the sacrifices of those who themselves proclaim their sacrifices, for that is no sacrifice which has to be proclaimed by the person making it. Sacrifice speaks for itself. Would it not be better if the students thought of what they had gained, rather than of what they had sacrificed?

Anyone who does not know that national education is of value in itself does not know what it is. *Snatakas* need not believe that the value of the graduates of national universities has now gone down. Why should they themselves reduce their value by believing so? I would expect these graduates to have full confidence in themselves. Let them not behave as baggars without self-respect. They should have faith in God. Do they want me to beg before the Rulers of Indian States? Why should they not enhance their value by their own knowledge and strength of character? We should hope for a time when employers themselves would demand graduates of national universities. It is for *snatakas* to hasten such a time. A diamond lying among pieces of glass cannot long remain undetected. That should be

¹ Barrister of Madurai; edited *Young India* and *The Independent* for some time

² The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had referred to the sacrifices made by students of the Gujarat Vidyapith and the hardships they suffered for want of employment, and requested Gandhiji to persuade Indian States to give preference to *snatakas* in their services.

the condition of national graduates. In my speeches in Kathiawar, I do not wish to utter a single word about *snatakas*. I am going there in the hope of being able to spread the use of khadi and the spinning-wheel, to convert the Rulers and the authorities of the States to love of khadi. I am going there so that I may request the Rulers to think of their duty. If the value of khadi and the spinning-wheel comes to be better recognized, that of national graduates is bound to rise, for those among them who have not fully mastered the science of spinning do not deserve to be called national graduates. I am going to Kathiawar in the hope of being able to create an atmosphere in which people would require the services of experts in spinning in the same way that State officers formerly required the services of secretaries proficient in English.

Having said this, I beg leave of my correspondent to correct a few of his errors. It is not true, as he believes, that a non-co-operating student cannot suspend non-co-operation as others have done. The painful and humiliating truth is that thousands of students who had joined non-co-operation have returned, and more are returning, to co-operation, that some *snatakas*, whom we had taken to be non-co-operators, have appeared at examinations controlled by the Government though they had obtained national diplomas. As against this, some lawyers had their *sanads*¹ cancelled by the courts and are forced to be among non-co-operators. Some others, moreover, who were in Government service and resigned their posts are truly in a pitiable condition, but they do not feel that way and are as happy as kings, for though enjoying the benefits of Government service they were slaves then, and are free now though without those benefits. For this reason, they regard themselves as fortunate.

I, therefore, ask those students who are overcome with despair to see that they have no reason to lose heart; on the contrary, they have brighter prospects before them. Of course, this is subject to one condition. The general impression about non-co-operating students is that they should be upright, fearless, self-controlled, hardworking and patriotic. Students who possess these qualities will have no reason any time to lose heart. The salvation of the country depends on them. They will be the foundation on which the golden temple of the Goddess of Freedom will be raised.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-2-1925

¹ Practising licences

133. MY NOTES

A CORRECTION

I said in the last issue that I would declare open a national school at Rajkot. The auspicious ceremony, however, is to be performed by the Thakore Saheb. That had always been the intention of the workers and in case the Thakore Saheb was not available I would be there to perform the ceremony. Having had no telegram or definite information on this point, I assumed that I would have to do the job. I was in Delhi, touring, and I wrote the note in question from there. I was happy to find, on my return to Ahmedabad, that the opening ceremony would be performed by the Thakore Saheb. This, of course, is the most proper arrangement.

AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

Hulyal is a town in Karnatak. The Secretary of the taluk [Congress] Committee there writes as follows:¹

This Municipality deserves compliments. If, besides doing the work described above, it pays attention to the civic needs of the town, keeps the public tank clean and sees to it that cattle do not wallow in it while quenching their thirst, and men and women do not bathe and wash clothes in the very same tank, and if it provides pure and cheap milk for children, then it must be regarded as a model municipality. If its example is followed by all other municipalities it requires no effort to see that our problems would be solved and the level of public life would rise very high.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-2-1925

134. SPEECH IN REPLY TO WELCOME ADDRESS, RAJKOT

[February 15, 1925]³

As I entered the Darbargadh today my memory went back to an

¹ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had given details of the measures taken by the Municipality of the town, which had a majority of nationalist councillors, to promote the constructive programme.

² This was Mahadev Desai's summary of Gandhiji's speech delivered in reply to an address given to him by the Representative Assembly of Rajkot and handed over by the Thakore Saheb. The address eulogized Gandhiji's services in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity.

³ From *Navajivan*, 22-2-1925

incident of my childhood which happened on this very spot and which I have treasured all these years. It was customary in those days, on the occasion of a royal wedding, to send a deputation to bridal States, before the wedding took place. The sons of the minister would form part of the deputation. My father who was then minister, however, had made it a point never to send his boys on such occasions. At the time which I am recalling today, deputations were to go to Kanpur and Dharampur. My father, of course, kept us back. My good mother, who was more worldly and did not want her children to be robbed of the prizes of position, pressed my brother and me to go to the late Thakore Saheb and cry before him. When he asked us what we were after, we were to tell him that we wanted to go to Dharampur. We followed the advice and we were sent not to Dharamapur but Kanpur. Today also I must cry to conquer. I shall cry not for name and fame or wealth and position. Fame, said the *shastris*¹ who blessed me, was ever a virgin inasmuch as she failed to find a suitable match for her, and they wished that that coy damsel should at last wed with me. May she ever remain "in single blessedness". For I am sure that were she to marry me I would be undone. I cry not, therefore, for fame, but one or two things you have withheld from me.

I am thankful for all the kind things you have said about me, and more for the kinder sentiment expressed by the Thakore Saheb. I wish I was worthy of them. I do not for a moment flatter myself with the belief that I am all I have been described to be. I am one of the people and want to continue as such. Let me pray that I may remain untouched by the honour you have done me.

Whilst, then, I thank you I must register my complaint about one or two things. You have omitted all mention of that in the address, whether purposely or not I do not know. You have rightly mentioned truth and non-violence as my guiding principles. I would indeed be a lifeless corpse without those two life-principles. But I am surprised that you have studiously omitted all reference to the two things, pursuit of which is inseparable from the practice of truth and non-violence. I refer to khaddar and removal of untouchability. These two things are in a manner more important than Hindu-Muslim unity, for that unity is impossible without them. So long as we have not rid

¹ Those well-versed in the scriptures

Hinduism of the stain of untouchability, it is impossible to achieve real Hindu-Muslim unity.

A very thoughtful Mussalman once told me that so long as there was untouchability in Hinduism it was difficult for Mussalmans to entertain any regard for that faith or its followers. I have repeated times without number that an “untouchable” community is unknown to the Shastras. The weaver and the scavenger are not classed as untouchables by the Shastras. I am both. My mother was certainly a scavenger inasmuch as she cleaned me when I was a child. But she did not, on that account, become an untouchable. Why then should a *Bhangi*, who renders similar necessary service, be regarded as untouchable? Even if the whole world of *shastris* were to be against me I would proclaim from the housetops that they are wrong in considering untouchability to be part of the Hindu religion.

And in this connection I take leave to mention one thing that both pleased and pained me. I was glad to notice that the *shastris*' blessings was the first item of today's programme. But I wondered whether there was a false ring about them. Their praise meant endorsement of my work on untouchability. Did they approve of my activity about it or did they merely obey the presumed or declared will of the Thakore Saheb that they should bless me? The benediction rang untrue because of the omission in your address of my campaign against untouchability. I beseech you, Thakore Saheb, to be kind to them, to befriend the depressed people of your State, even as Rama of old befriended Shabari and Guha, both presumably untouchables. I ask you to ensure them admission into schools, temples and all public places.

I was distressed to find the boy scouts clad in foreign khaki. I did expect that these at least would be clad in khaddar. If you have khaddar uniforms for your boy scouts and your Police you can relieve the misery of the poor, the untouchables and the indigent widow. I entreat you, therefore, Thakore Saheb and members of the Representative Assembly, to resolve to wear khaddar and to have khaddar uniforms for all the State employees. You have given me a rich casket. I have no strong-room nor safe to keep it in. Nor have I

men to keep charge of the strong-room or the safe, if I had them. I have thus to hand over all such costly presents to friends like Jamnalal Bajaj to take care of them for public use. But I have room enough to store khaddar and I therefore beg khaddar of everyone I meet; I would not hesitate to ask even Lord Reading to dress himself and his orderly in khaddar.

Your sword, worthy ruler, is a mighty symbol. Your path is like your sword's edge, you may not depart by even a hair's breadth from the straight and narrow path of truth. It is an eternal reminder of the fact that in your state there should be not a single drunkard, and no impure man or woman. It is your duty to put strength where there is weakness and cleanliness where there is dirt. Befriend the poor and the oppressed. Your sword is not meant for others' necks, it is meant for your own. You can tell your people that the moment you exceed the bounds of your authority they may put you to the sword. I speak in these terms to you as I owe a duty to you, Thakore Saheb. Your father made my father an unconditional gift of some land. I have thus eaten your salt and I should not be worth the salt, if I did not on this solemn occasion invite your attention to what are a prince's obvious duties. The honour you have done me lays me under a deep debt of gratitude. I prize the relief of the poor and the oppressed and the untouchables more than all that honour. Tell me that you have introduced numerous spinning-wheels in your villages and schools, that you have introduced khaddar in all your departments, and that all your public institutions and places are thrown open to the untouchables, and I shall feel doubly honoured and in reverence bow down my head to you. May God bless you with strength to serve your people.

Young India, 26-2-1925

135. SPEECH AT OPENING OF NATIONAL SCHOOL,
RAJKOT

February 15, 1925

This school, or rather the Vidyapith from which it has sprung, is a part of the great experiment which is at present being conducted in the country. Durbars and Indian States rarely undertake an experiment of this kind. Their general inclination is to follow the royal path. We shall hardly find any State which would think of abandoning this path and venturing upon experiments. It is for the people, not their rulers, to undertake experiments. Rulers are the protectors and representatives of their subjects. If I may go further, I would say that a real king is the servant of his subjects. He cannot, therefore, conduct experiments at their cost. From that point of view, the Thakore Saheb was right in what he said regarding teachers, but people like me who have spent their whole lives in making experiments cannot follow any other course. I would, therefore, pray to the Thakore Saheb to look kindly on us. If the rules intended for the teachers of a country which aspires to be free, that is, to be self-controlled, are not very strict, we shall find it difficult to get teachers of even moderate quality for the ordinary schools.

I would tell the teachers that they should always be ready to face difficulties, and should follow the path of dharma till the very end. No matter if the number of students goes down from 150 to 40, they should continue to serve the school. It is their faith which will give a magnetic quality to the school and attract more students in the future. It is said that we are always brave in the beginning, but, when difficulties come, instead of praying to the God of mercy we abandon the task, the egotists that we are. If we examine the history of nations, we shall see that among people who enjoy freedom there have been countless men and women who had remained loyal to their principles at the cost of their lives. It does not matter if the school makes no progress, not merely for five years but for twenty years. In the history of a school twenty years mean nothing. Whether or no we see any tangible results, if the teachers have faith in themselves they should follow what seems to them the most straightforward path; they are bound, in the end, to see the coast.

It is necessary to say a few words about the distinctive features of this school. One is that it has decided to admit *Antyajas* in the face

of many difficulties, and another that it has given the highest importance to bodily labour. Its teachers and pupils have had a share in the labour behind the greenery we see on its grounds. Such bodily labour is a form of *yajna*. In his age, however, the best *yajna* for this country consists in spinning. Every man and woman should give half an hour daily to the spinning-wheel for the sake of the country, for the sake of the *Antyajjas*, of the countless poor and the numberless widows. The parents should realize that their children ought to cultivate not only their intellect but also their bodies, should learn not merely to serve their own interests but also to work for public good. Those who see that the spinning-wheel advances public good, will never abandon it. I hear, on the contrary, that parents do not like their children to do bodily work, they do not like them to spin. True knowledge consists in a harmonious development of the body, the intellect and the soul. Our highest welfare lies in cultivating all the three. Ours is a country in which even self-sacrificing and hard-working teachers will lose heart. I pray to the Thakore Saheb that he should look kindly on teachers living in such an atmosphere.

Does the school violate any moral principles? If it does, the position of course would be different. Maybe some will think that the issue of untouchability involves a moral principle; those parents who think that contact with *Antyajjas* defiles us need not send their children to this school. I will then pray to God to open my eyes if I was in the wrong, or to vouchsafe that the parents should give up their obstinacy if they are in the wrong.

I shall say in conclusion that this school will not prosper through the sympathetic interest of the Thakore Saheb or through the efforts of the parents, nor will it prosper because of my efforts or Vallabhbai's or through the promise of help by the none too flourishing Vidyapith. Everything will depend on the teachers. I do not believe that money alone can help any institution. If it could, the Hardinge School in Calcutta would not have had to be closed. It did not succeed because it did not get sincere workers to breathe life into it, such as an institution of its kind requires. You should aspire to give life to this school and should start work with God's name on your lips. Those who regard themselves as weak as women and work with God's name on their lips, who turn to God with Draupadi's piteous cry¹ for help, will need neither the Thakore Saheb's support nor the

¹ An allusion to the incident in the *Mahabharata*, where Dusshasana attempted to disrobe Draupadi but her honour was saved by God providing her an endless sari

Vidyapith's assistance. If, therefore, it becomes necessary to close the school, the blame will be entirely the teachers'.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 1-3-1925

136. *SPEECH AT OPENING OF JAIN STUDENTS' HOSTEL,*
RAJKOT

February 15, 1925

The Thakore Saheb expounded fine ideas about education, but was pessimistic about being able to put them into effect in a small State like this. But there is no justification for his pessimism. In fact a State enjoys many advantages in being small. The people of Rajkot are such that it should be easy to win their co-operation. The smaller countries of Europe, like Sweden, Norway and Switzerland—countries about which the world has not heard much because they were not involved in the last War—boast a civilization in no way inferior to that of the bigger countries; they have carried out many successful experiments in the field of education. The problems of big countries are also big. I can well understand what difficulties a person in the position of Lord Reading generally has to contend with. With so many parties and interests to consider, and the field of work so large, what effective work can be done? It is, therefore, only in small countries that promising plans can be easily implemented. The Gujarat Vidyapith has been, in a way, doing what the Thakore Saheb explained. If we run one model institution with ideal students, many more institutions of the same kind will grow out of it. A zero can produce nothing, for it cannot be multiplied, whereas one can grow into many. There is, therefore, no cause for despair. The cause of despair generally lies in the man himself. The *atman* is its own friend and its own enemy.¹ We may not put any limits to what human effort can achieve. There can be any such limits only if we can see above us any obstruction to upward flight. For rising the sky is the only limit. There is a limit to how low we can fall. God Himself has created such limit in the form of land, rock, water, etc. Hence we need not despair. I advise the people to take the fullest advantage of the Ruler, and should like to say to the latter that he has done much, but much more needs to be done.

¹ A reference to the *Bhagavad Gita*, VI. 5

The Ruler and the subjects should develop the completest mutual understanding and confidence. If it is true to say “As the Ruler, so the subjects”, it is equally true to say “As the subjects, so the Ruler”. If you yourselves do nothing, however much the Ruler may wish to help, he, too, can do nothing. If you let hypocrisy, flattery and wickedness govern your lives, the Ruler’s life is bound to mirror those evils. I have to mention this because the saying, “Salt is better even than honey”, is still true.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 1-3-1925

137. TELEGRAM TO C. F. ANDREWS

JETPUR,
February 16, 1925

ANDREWS
CARE JEHANGIR PETIT
MOUNT PETIT
PEDDAR ROAD
BOMBAY

UP TO EIGHTEENTH RAJKOT, NINETEENTH PORBUNDER. TWENTY-FIRST
WADHWAN. TWENTY SECOND ASHRAM. LOVE.

MOHAN

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

138. TELEGRAM TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

JETPUR,
February 16, 1925

MALAVIYAJI
BIRLA HOUSE
DELHI

GETTING COPIES FOR YOU. HOPE YOU HAVE BEEN RAWALPINDI.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

139. VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

Here is a letter from a Vykom satyagrahi:

Your kind card to hand. The Travancore Legislative Council yesterday voted by 22 against 21 against the right of entry to the Vykom temple road for which purpose satyagraha is now being offered. Naturally people here are very much agitated and feel aggrieved all the more, because the voting was gained by the direct pressure brought by the Government on the voters. I am ashamed to say, one member of the depressed and prohibited classes himself voted against the entry and sided with the Government. The situation hereafter is fraught with all kinds of difficulties. There is very little enthusiasm now for the peaceful methods of satyagraha. Some have already begun to advocate "direct action" and even forcible entry into temples. Small-pox has broken out in the Satyagraha Camp itself and with the growing heat of the advancing summer it may attack more and more. We are carrying the struggle with faith in your leadership and gospel of non-violence. But I am afraid the Provincial Congress Committee of Kerala is waning in its enthusiasm. They have collected very little money during the last many months by their own efforts. For everything we depend on your own esteemed help and advice. We are hard up for money. All satyagrahis are anxiously awaiting your forthcoming visit which would, it is needless to say, be of inestimable help to our cause.

It is a good letter because it is a frank letter. I am unable to congratulate the Travancore Government, if the facts are as stated. But I do not know them. I therefore suspend my judgment till I know them first hand. I am eager to visit Vykom at the earliest possible date. I hope that it will not be long.

Meanwhile, satyagrahis must not be dejected. They dare not give way to despair. Of all my Tamil lessons one proverb at least abides with me as an evergreen. Its literal meaning is, "God is the only Help for the helpless". The grand theory of satyagraha is built upon a belief in that truth. Hindu religious literature, indeed all religious literature, is full of illustrations to prove the truth. The Travancore Durbar may have failed them. I may fail them. But God will never fail them, if they have faith in Him. Let them know that they are leaning on a broken reed if they are relying on me. I am living at a safe distance from them. I may wipe their tears, but suffering is their sole privilege. And victory will surely come out of their sufferings provided they are pure. God tries His votaries through and through, but never beyond endurance. He gives them strength enough to go through the ordeal He prescribes for them. For the satyagrahis of Vykom their satyagraha is not a mere experiment to be given up if it does not succeed within a prescribed time or after a prescribed force

of suffering. There is no time limit for a satyagrahi nor is there a limit to his capacity for suffering. Hence there is no such thing as defeat in satyagraha. Their so-called defeat may be the dawn of victory. It may be the agony of birth.

The Vykom satyagrahis are fighting a battle of no less consequence than that of swaraj. They are fighting against an age long wrong and prejudice. It is supported by orthodoxy, superstition, custom and authority. Theirs is only one among the many battles that must be fought in the holy war against irreligion masquerading as religion, ignorance appearing in the guise of learning. If their battle is to be bloodless, they must be patient under the severest trials. They must not quail before a raging fire.

The Congress Committee may give them no help. They may get no pecuniary help, they may have to starve. Their faith must shine through all these dark trials.

Theirs is "direct action". They dare not be irritated against their opponents. They know no better. They are not all dishonest men as satyagrahis are not all honest men. They are resisting what they honestly believe to be an encroachment upon their religion. The Vykom satyagraha is the argument of suffering. The hardest heart and the grossest ignorance must disappear before the rising sun of suffering without anger and without malice.

I am alarmed at the appearance of small-pox in the satyagraha camp. It is a disease born of filth and yields to hygienic treatment. They must isolate small-pox patients and discover the cause of the disease. Is their camp in a perfectly sanitary condition? Doctors have no medicine for small-pox. Water cure is the best cure. Low diet or no diet is the safest. Let the patients have copious draughts of pure water. Above all neither the patients nor the others should lose nerve. The disease is also a course of suffering. Soldiers' camps are not free from disease. Indeed it has been ascertained that more soldiers die of disease than of bullet wounds.

For finance, they need not worry. Their faith will bring them all the pecuniary aid they may need. I know of no good cause that has died for want of funds.

Young India, 19-2-1925

140. HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION

A correspondent writes:

You have entertained in the columns of *Young India* an attempt made by one of your correspondents to show up the shibboleth of the Muslims' extreme backwardness in education. That emboldens me, if you will permit an humble worker in the country's cause, to put before you one more of these shibboleths which has been ruling our political life for long, but which is palpably more absurd than the one as regards Muslim backwardness to which I am glad your attention has at last been drawn.

"The Muslims are a minority in India." How often is such a statement made, and how many times more is it tacitly assumed in political argument! But are they really a minority? Even taking one sect of them, viz., the Sunni Henafi, for comparison, do we not find that it is numerically stronger by far than *any* single community amongst the Hindus, or even than each of the other religious groups in India, as the Christians, Parsis, Sikhs, Jains, Jews and Buddhists? And is it not the case that the Hindus are divided into communities and sects which are in most cases farther apart from one another socially than the Muslims are from the non-Muslims? Then, what about the Hindu untouchables? Is not their number equal to, if not greater than, that of the Muslim "minority"? If Muslims as "a minority" in India may claim separate and special treatment, protection and guarantees, how much stronger must the claim of this untouchable section of Hindus be allowed to be, since they not only are by their numbers as important a "minority"—and a claimant one too, since the date of the Lucknow Pact¹,—but have been suffering for ages from *actual present disabilities* with which no Muslim or any other touchable minority's *apprehensions for the future* may possibly bear comparison? As witness the Vykom satyagraha, the palghat dispute, the Bombay "lynchers". I leave alone the innumerable backward castes and the aborigines so far reckoned within the Hindu fold. Are the Muslims then the minority?

The italics and the black types are the writer's. I have given the letter for its undoubted earnestness. And yet to me, an observer untouched, I hope, by any bias one way or the other, the reasoning appears to be specious when it is used to demonstrate that the Mussalmans are not a minority in India. The writer forgets that the claim is that of all Mussalmans against all Hindus. The latter cannot

¹ The joint scheme of reforms adopted by the Indian National Congress and Muslim League at their sessions in Lucknow in 1916

both have the cake and eat it. Though divided among themselves, the Hindus do present a more or less united front not only to the Mussalmans but to all non-Hindus, even as the Mussalmans though divided among themselves present naturally a united front to all non-Muslims. We shall never solve the question by ignoring facts or rearranging them to suit our plans. The facts are that the Mussalmans are seven crores against twenty-two crores of Hindus. The latter have never denied it. Let us also know the issues. A minority does not always fear a majority because it is a majority. The Mussalmans fear the Hindu majority because the Hindus, they say, have not always treated them with justice, have not respected their religious prejudices and because, they say, the Hindus are superior to them in education and wealth. Whether these are facts or not is irrelevant for our purpose. It is enough that Mussalmans believe them and therefore are afraid of the Hindu majority. The Mussalmans expect to meet this fear only partially by means of separate electorates and special representation even in excess of their number in some cases. The Hindus admit the Mussalman minority but deny the Mussalman charge of injustice. This must therefore be verified. I have not known Hindus to deny the statement that they are superior to Mussalmans in education and wealth.

The Hindus on their part fear the Mussalmans because they (the Hindus) say that Mussalmans whenever they have held power have treated them with great harshness and contend that though they were in a majority they were non-plussed by a handful of Mussalman invaders, that the danger of a repetition of the experience is ever present before the Hindus, and that in spite of the sincerity of the leading Mussalmans the Mussalman masses are bound to make common cause with any Mussalman adventurer. The Hindus therefore reject the plea of weakness on the part of the Mussalmans and refuse to entertain the idea of extending the doctrine of the Lucknow Pact. It is again beside the question whether the Hindu fear is justified. The fear is a fact to be reckoned with. It would be wrong to impute motives to any community or leaders. To distrust Malaviyaji or Mian Fazl-i-Hussain is to postpone a proper solution. Both honestly state what they feel. Wisdom lies therefore in brushing aside all side issues and facing the situation as it is, not as we would like it to be.

In my opinion therefore the writer has tried, be it ever so unconsciously, to overprove his case. He is right in saying that Hindus

are divided into many antagonistic sects or parties each setting up a claim or separate treatment. He is right also in stating that the untouchables have even stronger case than the Mussalmans for separate representation. The writer has made out a case not against the fact of Mussalman minority but against communal representation and separate electorates. He has shown that any extension of the doctrine of the Lucknow Pact must inevitably lead to communal representation for innumerable sub-castes and other denominations, thus indefinitely postponing the early advent of swaraj.

To extend the Lucknow Pact doctrine or even to retain it is fraught with danger. To ignore the Mussalman grievance as if it was not felt is also to postpone swaraj. Lovers of swaraj cannot therefore rest till a solution is found which would allay Mussalman apprehensions and yet not endanger swaraj. Such a solution is not impossible.

Here is one.

In my opinion the Mussalman claim for majority in Bengal and the Punjab in accordance with their numbers is irresistible. That claim cannot be resisted for the fear from the north or the North West. Hindus, if they want swaraj, must take the chance. So long as we fear the outside world, we must cease to think of swaraj. But swaraj we must have. I would therefore rule out the Hindu fear in considering the just claim of the Mussalmans. We must dare to do justice even at the cost of future safety.

What the Mussalmans want is not separate electorate for its own sake but they want their own real representatives to be sent to the legislatures and other elective bodies. This can be done by private arrangement rather than legal imposition. There is flexibility about private arrangement. A legal imposition tends to become more and more rigid. Private arrangement will continually test the honour and good faith of each party. Legal imposition avoids the necessity of honour or good faith. Private arrangement means a domestic settlement of domestic quarrels and a solid wall of united opposition against a common enemy—the foreign rule. I am told that the law prevents the working of the private arrangement I have in view. If it is so, we must seek to remove the legal obstacle and not create and add a new one. My plan therefore is to do away with separate electorates but secure the election of the desired and agreed number of Mussalman and other candidates in a given constituency under a joint ticket, Mussalman candidates to be nominated by previously known Mussal-

man associations. I need not enter into the question of representation in excess of numbers at the present stage. It can be considered and all difficulties in that direction can be met when the principle of private arrangement is accepted by all.

No doubt my proposal presupposes a sincere desire on the part of all concerned to reach a solution in terms of swaraj. If communalism is the goal, then any private arrangement must break down. If, however, swaraj is the goal and the parties approach the question purely from a national standpoint, there need be no fear of a break-down. On the contrary every party will be interested in its faithful working.

What the law should, however, provide is a just franchise whereby every community can have, if it wished, voters on the roll in proportion to its numbers. Our voters' rolls should answer the number of representatives in proportion to its population. But that question requires a critical examination of the working of the existing franchise. For me the existing franchise is wholly untenable for any swaraj scheme.

Young India, 19-2-1925

141. TO S.D.N.

I have dealt with one part of your letter in the leading article.¹ I must, for want of time, postpone the consideration of the other part to another occasion, probably next week.

Young India, 19-2-1925

142. NOTES

REMEMBER 1ST MARCH

It will be remembered that many workers made promises at Belgaum just after the close of the session as to the number of self-spinning members they would register before the 1st March next. That day is soon coming upon us. I have before me the list of promised members. I hope the makers of these promises will prove as good as their word. Let me say for general information that the number promised for the whole of India was 6,803. All the workers

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

were not present at the time. Bihar and Gujarat have, for instance, resolved upon securing far more than the figures promised at Belgaum. I would like the Provincial Secretaries, if they kindly will, to telegraph to *Young India* the numbers of self-spinning and other members registered at the end of the month. Workers everywhere are finding the task of securing voluntary spinners far more difficult than getting four-anna members. To me the value of the spinning franchise consists in its difficulty due not to want of ability but want of application. For let it be noted that the difficulty is confined not merely to unbelievers, it is applicable also to believers. They readily make promises but equally if not more readily break them. Witness the falling off in spinning during the month of December. I hope therefore that there will be ceaseless effort on the part of those who made promises.

RE: PRIZE ESSAY

Some friends have suggested that the time for sending in the prize essay on hand-spinning and khaddar should be extended. One friend suggests the extension to as late as November. If I did so, it would defeat the purpose for which the essay is required. Mr. Revashanker has issued the prize with a view to stimulate thought and activity on the message of the spinning-wheel during this year of grace which is fast running out. The idea moreover of allowing a brief period is to concentrate the energy of the few searchers we have on the subject and to make it worthwhile even from a pecuniary standpoint for those khaddar students who may be in need, to devote their whole attention during the period to the essay. I do not expect an exhaustive treatise, but I do expect a classical introductory essay on the subject so as to serve as an infallible guide for more elaborate work. It should give an exhaustive bibliography on the subject and a scientific, brief, relevant, connected, summary of them.

There are many who question the facts often set forth in these columns and elsewhere to prove the economic value of the wheel. Many doubt the ability of the wheel to compete with the mills. Others regard it as a mere toy incapable even of producing an effect on the foreign cloth imports. The essay should contain incontestable statistics and argument in support of the value of the wheel unless the researches of impartial and truthful students make such presentation impossible. Such an effort is required during this year whilst the

spinning franchise¹ is being tested.

I am happy to be able to inform the reader that some brilliant young men are regularly at the work already and that too not for its monetary value but for the love of it. I have consulted two of them on the suggestion of extension and they would be glad if the time can be extended. I am therefore extending the period to 30th April next. That means six more weeks. I trust that the extension will be considered sufficient by all who are making the attempt to bring out an essay worthy of the occasion.

Another suggestion comes from another friend. He thinks that the examiners should include one or more mill-owners, such as Messrs Ambalal Sarabhai and Matubhai Kantawala. The names of examiners were selected by me and I must confess that the omission of a mill-owner's name was deliberate. I felt that the examiners to be just to the subject should be believers in khaddar but open to reason and able to judge. My correspondent, however, suggests that even experts like Mr. Maganlal Gandhi are likely to make mistakes for their want of an intimate knowledge of the mill industry. I recognize the force of the objection and will therefore gladly put myself in correspondence with the gentlemen concerned and seek their co-operation in the examination.

BENGAL UNTOUCHABLES

A Bengali correspondent asks:

1. In Bengal the untouchables are not allowed to draw water from the wells, nor are they allowed to enter the room where drinking water is kept. What should be done to remove this evil? If we dig separate wells for them or establish separate schools, that will be making allowance for this vice.
2. The mentality of the untouchables in Bengal is that the upper classes should take water from their hands, but they themselves refuse to take water from the hands of those who are below them. What should be done to wean them from the error?
3. The Hindu Mahasabha in Bengal and the Hindus in general tell the people that you do not like the idea of taking water from the hands of untouchables—?

My answers are:

1. One way of removing the evil is for us to take water from the hands of the untouchables. I do not think that digging of separate

¹ The Congress constitution was altered at Belgaum Congress, December 1924, making spinning a qualification instead of four annas per year.

wells for them will perpetuate the evil. It will take a long time to root out the effects of untouchability. It would be wrong to withhold help from the untouchables in the shape of providing them with separate wells for fear of others never letting them use public wells. My belief is that if we build good wells for the untouchables many people will use them. Reform among the untouchables must proceed side by side with breaking down of the prejudice against them by caste. Hindus realizing their duty towards them.

2. When the so-called “superior” Hindus begin to “touch” the untouchables, the untouchability among the untouchables themselves is bound to die a natural death. Our work must commence with the lowest among the untouchables.

3. I do not know what the Hindu Mahasabha of Bengal has been ascribing to me. My position is clear. Untouchables should be treated as and classed among Sudras. And since we do take water from the hands of Sudras, we should not hesitate to accept it from untouchables.

HOW IMPRISONMENT BENEFITS

I quote interesting extracts from Acharya Gidwani’s letter to his wife which I have been privileged to share with her:

How are the children? Do cure them and yourself of the tea habit and give them all the milk that they can get. How is your study progressing? You will not make further improvement soon unless you attend to your composition. I trust that you are not neglecting Hindi and spinning. Spend all the hours of daylight in sunshine and fresh air. Although the gain seems small, I feel distinctly better. By the time you come again, I hope to be quite presentable; thanks to Muller’s system to which Jawaharlal¹ had introduced me when he shared a cell with me here, the injury to my health is not irreparable. Throughout those nine months of confinement I kept up my breathing and muscular exercises. I have almost mastered the system. I wish I could persuade you also to start on it and bring up the children on it also. In any case tell Parvati that I want her to introduce it at once for young and old at home. The book is available at booksellers.

I have not read much since I wrote to you last. My Sanskrit study is interrupted for want of the books I asked you to send me.

¹ Jawaharlal Nehru; (1889-1964); statesmen and writer, India's first Prime Minister, 1947-64; “Bharat Ratna”; author of *Glipmses of World History* and *Autobiography*

I am taking lessons in carpentry now. I hope to start on weaving after some time.

As an ex-prisoner it is pleasant to compare notes with fellow prisoners. Acharya Gidwani is not alone in developing dislike of tea in his prison. I was myself a regular drinker of tea and coffee. But my first experience cured me of the habit. There was no tea allowed, and I began to like the idea of being free from the slavery of tea. For us in India it is a luxury we can ill-afford. But the worst of tea is that it replaces milk. Tea has only as much nutritive value as there are milk and sugar in it. The way we prepare tea in India counteracts the effect of milk and sugar because of the boiling of the leaves which sets free the injurious tanin contained in the leaf. If tea is to be drunk at all the leaves should never be boiled but they should be put in a strainer and boiling water poured gently over them. The water that thus trickles down into the kettle should be straw colour. But the safest thing to do is to follow Acharya Gidwani's prescription and to give up tea altogether. Those who want simply to drink, but not eat, may take boiling water with sugar and milk and add a little cinnamon powder to give the water a colouring. Acharya Gidwani's remarks on Muller's system will be read with interest. In my opinion the Acharya shares the weakness of new converts. All these systems promise much more than they can perform. There is nothing new in Muller's system. It is an indifferent and incomplete reproduction of some of the *Hatha Yoga*¹ practices. Considered purely from a health point of view *Hatha Yoga* practices are almost perfect. Only they share with everything Indian the disabilities of their origin. The secret consists in deep and well-regulated breathing and gently stretching the muscles. Muller attracts us because he has given physical reasons for the exercises he prescribes. His system has its use, no doubt, in that those who will not take the trouble to understand the intricacies of *Hatha Yoga* exercises can certainly profit by following the easy instructions prepared by Muller. What is more, we have not many accessible representatives of *Hatha Yoga* and the few there are naturally and rightly do not trouble about its physical consequences and therefore teach them only to those who are spiritually minded.

Lovers of spinning cannot but appreciate the Acharya's devotion to the wheel and to Hindi and Sanskrit. It is pleasure to me to be able to give after a long time a cheery letter from Acharya Gidwani

¹ A system of yoga based upon physical exercises and complicated postures

who is now keeping much better health than he did some time ago.

THE LATEST DISCOVERY

Since my return from Pindi I have visited nearly ten villages of Borsad taluk. It is a taluk of the successful and glorious satyagraha of 1923 under Mr. Vallabhbai Patel's leadership. It contains an intelligent, able and comparatively hard population. But even in this taluk I was pained to find in some villages squalor and degradation that were due purely to poverty. The crops were damaged by a severe frost. In certain villages the people were in constant danger of having their fields raided by cattle lot loose upon them at the instance practically of the principal landowner. It was not possible for them to feel settled in life or feel that they had a home of their own which they could take pride in. The result was despair and consequent indifference to effort. There was nothing but the charkha for such people. But even the charkha makes slow headway. They do not want to do anything. They want merely to eke out a living somehow. "We have gone on like this for years, let us close our lives like this", is the reply written in their blank and incredulous looks. It is the same thing to them even if one presented them with some other industry. They do not want to *work* because they have hither- to *slaved*. And having only done that, they believe in *slaving* but not in *working*. This is a sad discovery not made by me for the first time. It was the same thing in Champaran, worse in Orissa. But it came upon me in Borsad taluk with a strange and overwhelming force. I was ill-prepared for the discovery in this taluk. On the contrary I had expected to find well-ordered villages where I would see enthusiasm and brightness and hope. Not that all the villages were alike. Although they are so near one another, each has problems of its own and each has a distinct individually. For the villages I have described, the spinning-wheel is the only hope, if there is any. Cattle cannot raid it. Frost cannot bite it. It is man's protection against cruel nature's ravages and some protection against man's deprivations.

Ample work awaits those patriotic young men who do not mind the village life and who can derive pleasure from silent and sustained labour, not too taxing and yet taxing enough for its monotony. It requires sufficient application to be able to appreciate the monotony of life-giving industry. A beginner of music knows the dullness of the initial effort but the very monotony becomes a pleasure as soon as he has mastered the art. So it is with the village workers. As soon as they

have lived down the excitement of the intoxicating town life and settled down to work, the monotony of labour will give strength and hope because it is productive. Who is ever jaded by the monotonous and unfailing regularity with which the solar system works. Though as ancient as time, it has never ceased to excite wonder and praise. We know, too, that a disturbance in the even tenor of its working means destruction of our race. So it is with the village solar system whose centre is the wheel.

Young India, 19-2-1925

143. LETTER TO SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

Magh Vad 11 [February 19, 1925]¹

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I write this letter on the train to Porbunder and hence I am using a pencil.

I shall be at the Ashram from 22nd to 26th and shall leave for Delhi on the 27th. I shall be staying there till at least the 3rd March. The English gentleman can see me during that period. The programme after the 3rd will be decided at Delhi.

At the last minute, when I was about to leave Rajkot, Jayshanker Vaghji saw me on behalf of the Jam Saheb and said that he, the Jam Saheb, was eager to meet me. He wishes to meet me in Bombay after the 7th March. It has been decided that I should send a wire to Jayshanker when I go to Bombay.

I have received an unsatisfactory reply from the Dewan of Gondal in which he says that it is improper for me to interfere in the affairs of the Gondal State. Please let me know the result of your effort.

In Rajkot the Thakore Saheb showed many courtesies. I have told him my ideas.

Hope your spinning-wheel is working well.

Vandemataram from

MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3198. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

¹ On February 19 and 20, 1925, Gandhiji was at Porbunder.

144. TELEGRAM TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY

PORBUNDER,
February 19, 1925

P.S.V.

DELHI

THANKS TELEGRAM.¹ IN "YOUNG INDIA" MENTIONED YOUR TELEGRAM I HAVE STATED IDEAL BUT HAVE NO DESIRE DISTURB WITHDRAWAL PROSECUTION. MY PURPOSE IS ESTABLISH REAL PEACE WHICH I HOLD IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOVERNMENT INTER-VENTION, OR BETTER STILL WITHOUT PRIVATE AND SPONTANEOUS EFFORT [OR] INTERVENTION MY FRIENDS AND SELF CAN ONLY ASSIST GOVERNMENT EFFORT SO FAR AS IT PROMOTES SUBSTANTIAL PEACE. PLEASE REPLY SABARMATI.²

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456; also *Young India*, 26-2-1925

*145. SPEECH IN REPLY TO WELCOME ADDRESS,
PORBUNDER*

February 19, 1925

I am grateful to the citizens of Porbunder for arranging that this address should be presented to me by the Diwan Saheb, and compliment them on their good sense in giving me a cheque for Rs. 201 instead of presenting the address in a casket of silver or sandalwood. If the people of this place do not understand my wishes and fulfil them, where else in this wide world can I expect the people

¹ *Vide* footnote 2 to "Telegram to Private Secretary to Viceroy;" 9-2-1925.

² The Private Secretary to the Viceroy replied on February 22: "His Excellency desires me to thank you for your telegram. The agreement which has now been laboriously reached was only possible with the spontaneous help of private persons of both communities. It is of course of the nature of a compromise between the two communities and any alteration in its terms would upset the whole settlement. Moreover it is only on the basis of this settlement that His Excellency consented after much heart searching to a withdrawal of prosecutions. While, therefore, His Excellency appreciates that your own desire is also for peace, he feels that your proposed visit would lead to a reopening of the case and therefore however much he may regret it, he must abide by the previous decision."

to do so? I have said at so many places that I have no provision for the safe custody of articles of silver and other valuables. To make such provision is to invite trouble. I have been able to preserve my freedom only because I have refused to possess such articles. I have been, therefore, telling the country that those who wish to follow the path of satyagraha should be ready to live in poverty and embrace death at any moment. How can I spare space for preserving a silver casket? I am, therefore, glad that you gave me a cheque instead.

But, while on the one hand I offer compliments to you, on the other I pity myself for my avarice. My appetite is more than can be satisfied by this piece of paper. A sum of two hundred and one rupees is not good enough for me. I say this because I can assure you that you will get from me twice as much as what I take from you or even more. I do not receive a single pice which does not grow into a veritable tree raining coins—not through interest but through the manner of its use. It would be much better to perish than to live on interest. I put every pice to the best possible use and profit. I will use every pice I receive to help the country to preserve its purity and to clothe its naked. Every pie, more-over, will be accounted for. I have not come into contact with any person whom I might have told that he had given me enough. This is why my Memon friends always keep away from me. Were it not so, persons like Omar Haji Amod Zaveri¹ would be present in this meeting. They tell me that wherever I meet them I try to rob them. It is, thus, very risky to be a friend of mine in these hard times. Only such persons who, being Hindus, are ready to offer their money freely for the service of the *Bhangis*, or are ready to use all their strength and their money to win the country's freedom—only such persons can afford to be my friends in these hard times. The Thakore Saheb of Rajkot showered his love on me so much that I was almost drowned in the flood. But all the time I was trembling, wondering how long I would be able to retain his friendship. Why should I not feel happy at receiving an address from the hands of the Ruler of a State in which my father was a Diwan? My grandfather was the Diwan of the State during the rule of the present Maharana's grandfather, and my great grandfather was Diwan to the latter's father. The Rana Saheb's father was my friend and client. Having

¹ A merchant of Durban who liberally contributed money for the public activities of Indians in South Africa; a trustee of phoenix; *vide* "The Phoenix Trust Deed", September 14, 1912.

received material benefit from him, is it possible that I would also not be pleased by an invitation from the present Maharana Saheb? But it is difficult to retain all friendships, for instance, I have not been able to retain that of the British. The reason is that I think it necessary to preserve only one friendship in this life, namely, God's. God means the voice of conscience. If I hear it say that I must sacrifice the world's friendship; I would be ready to do so. I am eager for your friendship and would not feel satisfied even if I could take away all your money. I will always ask you for more and, should you send me away, I would seek a place in God's house. My field of work is India. So long as a fire is raging in the country, I cannot possibly think of leaving it to go anywhere else. South Africa would welcome me, but at present I would not like to go even there as the fire in South Africa can be put out only when the fire in India has been put out. I have been appealing to all Princes for help in extinguishing that fire. Is it unreasonable of me to expect most from Porbunder in this matter?

I expect similar help from the people too. I ask for co-operation from you all. If you give it, the result may be that all of us will resume co-operation with the British. I do not mean that we shall go running to them; rather, they will come running to us. They tell me that I am a good man, but that my co-workers are rogues, that incidents like the one at Chauri Chaura will betray me. But I believe in human nature. Everyone has a soul and can exercise soul-force as much as I. You can see the soul-force in me because I have ever kept my soul wide awake by humbly entreating it, or beating a drum or dancing before it. Yours may not be equally awake, but we are all equal in our innate capacities. The Rulers and their subjects, Hindus and Muslims, all are fighting one another but without God's help they cannot move even a blade of grass. If the subjects think that they will cultivate strength and harass the Rulers and the latter think that they can be strong enough to crush the subjects, if Hindus believe that it is no difficult matter for them to crush seven crores of Muslims and the latter think that they can easily crush the twenty-two crores of Hindus nourished on no strength-giving food, then the Rulers and the subjects, Hindus and Muslims, all are thoughtless. It is *khuda's*¹ injunction, it is said in the Vedas and in the Bible, that all men are brothers. All religions proclaim that the world is held together by the chain of love, and learned students of Shastras tell us that, without this chain, the atoms

¹ God's

would fall apart, that water would lack the property of existing as liquid and each drop would exist by itself. If the same chain, likewise, did not bind human beings to one another, we would all be dead. We should, therefore, have such a chain to bind us if we want swaraj or *Ramarajya*. That chain of love is no thing but the thread of hand-spun yarn. If the yarn is foreign, it would only serve as iron shackles on your feet. Your links should be with your villages, with the *Rabaris* and with the *Mers* of Barda. If, instead, you have your links with Lancashire or Ahmedabad, of what profit will that be to Porbunder? What the people really want is that we should have some use for their labour, that we should not force them to remain idle and so starve them. Is it right that instead of getting stone from Ranavav, you should order your requirements from Italy? How can you afford to order your cloth or ghee from Calcutta in preference to the cloth woven in your own villages and the ghee made from the milk of your own cows and buffaloes? If you do not use your own products but order your needs from elsewhere, I would say that you were chained with fetters. I have been a free man ever since I discovered this sacred principle of complete swadeshi and understood that my life should have a link with the poorest among the poor. Neither the Rana Saheb nor Lord Reading nor even King George can deprive me of my happiness.

I should like to tell the women that I will regard myself sanctified by their sight only when I see them adorned with khadi and know that they spin. You go to the temple regularly to preserve your dharma, but only those among you who spin will have hearts as holy as temples. I want to know from you whether you will listen to me only if I tell you about some miracles in the Himalayas. Will you say that I have lost my head because I tell you that you should have a spinning-wheel in each home as you have a stove? I am quite sane. I am wise, and have been proclaiming what I have known from experience.

Someone asked me what I hoped to gain by accepting an address in Porbunder, and advised me to ascertain first what class of persons here wear khadi. Instead of asking what class of persons wear khadi, I may ask whether anyone at all does so. You like to wear fine cloth. Some rich millionaires told me that even they could not afford to wear such cloth always. You will, however, get fine cloth to wear if you spin fine yarn with the same care with which you prepare thin

*shev*¹ in your homes.

So long as this problem of yarn is not solved, you will not be able to forge the chain of love with which to bind people together. If you wish to bind the whole world with such a chain, there is, assuredly, no way but this; nor is there any other way of bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity. When I went to Rajkot, I was accompanied by Shri Shuaib Qureshi². The local Muslims told him that I was deceiving him, that in asking the people to propagate khadi my motive was to ruin Muslim merchants. But Shuaib is not a man who can be misled in this manner. He knows that I would never concern myself about the handful of merchants engaged in the foreign cloth trade. He himself is a lover of khadi, and he knows that I have not been able to serve the cause of khadi or the country as well as I have served Islam. Our Muslim brethren should know that India is the land of their birth, and that they cannot hope to free the Islamic countries without first securing India's freedom.

This may turn out to be my last tour of Kathiawar. Perhaps I have only a few years to live. It was with the utmost reluctance that I accepted the Presidentship of the Congress, and also of the Kathiawar Political Conference. Only ten months remain now. I have, therefore, come here to tell you that if you look upon me more especially as your brother—though I regard myself as a brother of all living creatures—listen to my appeal and spin for half an hour daily. You will lose nothing thereby, and the country will have her problem of poverty solved. On how many things shall I pour out my heart to you? If you do not get rid of the evil of untouchability, our dharma will perish. True *Vaishnava dharma*³ is the most life-giving. At present, on the contrary, *Antyajjas* are being destroyed in the name of that dharma. The essence of Hinduism does not lie in the practice of untouchability. Eradication of untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity and khadi—these are the three sacred articles of my faith, and I appeal to both men and women, to the prince and the pauper, to work for them.

The evil of drink must go, and that through the people's own efforts. I have no doubt that people can end this evil by their own efforts. If some unthinking persons had not adopted methods of

¹ A thread-like preparation of wheat or other flour

² Editor of *New Era*

³ Religion of the worshippers of Vishnu, the preserver in the Hindu Trinity

coercion, this evil would have disappeared from the country long ago. I have heard that many sea-men in Porbunder have given up drinking, and also that the Rana Saheb approves of this movement and is ready to help. We cannot hope to be free till we are free from the evil of drink. The methods adopted in Europe for winning freedom will not help us. There is a world of difference between the temper of the people in Europe and the climate there, on the one hand, and on the other, the temper of our people and our climate. The people of Europe can harden their hearts against pity, our people cannot. Muslims of other countries tell me that Muslims of India are comparatively of a mild temper. Whether this is a good thing or not, only the Hindus and the Muslims, or the world, can say. Personally, I feel that we stand to lose nothing by their being mild. Being compassionate does not mean being timid or forsaking the use of arms; the really strong man is he who, though armed, does not strike the enemy but stands before him boldly, ready to be killed. It is the ruling principle of a brave man's life, and the essence of the Kshatriya spirit, that he never abandons his post of duty, never turns back. It is necessary for anyone who wants to cultivate these qualities to give up the use of intoxicants. I, therefore, would be happy to hear that the people of Porbunder had totally given up drinking. In Rajkot, the evil is spreading wide. The shopkeepers are competing with those in the civil station, with the result that liquor is sold at the same price as soda. But those who get liquor thus cheap shed tears of blood afterwards. Workers' wives come and ask me if I cannot persuade the Thakore Saheb [to close the liquor-booths]. The evil of drinking, they tell me, has ruined their homes and introduced discord in their families; their husbands have taken to immoral ways and their homes are sinking into poverty. If we want to earn the blessings of these poor women, we shall have to take courage in our hands in asking the Rulers to save the people from this terror. That the drink-trade is a source of income to the State or that drinking makes people happy for a while should be no consideration with them. If the evil spreads, the condition of the country will become so frightful that it will automatically perish; no one will have to try to destroy it. May God bless you and give you the good sense to listen to my words and understand what I say, so that the entire world may benefit through you.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 1-3-1925

146. SPEECH AT “ANTYAJA” MEETING, PORBUNDER

February 19, 1925

DIWAN SAHIB, “ANTYAJA” BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am very happy to see you all. I feel great happiness in meeting the *Antyajas* who have come here—the term denoting *Dheds*, *Bhangis* and *Chamars*¹ who are mistakenly treated as outcastes. You know that caste Hindus do not come into contact with *Antyajas*. They believe that they can offer to *Antyajas* the food left over by others. Thus all manner of injustice is done to them. Many amongst the Hindus are trying hard to set this right. In the Congress important discussions are going on and great efforts made [to end this].

But they cannot do much by themselves. Your help too is needed. Many Hindus tell me: “You take their side; but you should see for yourself how these people live. They eat carrion and they do not bathe or wash. One feels nausea at the sight. They have dirty habits. How then can we touch them?”

There is some truth in this. The truth is worth listening to. You should give up whatever is bad in you and should help in reforming yourselves. Even God does not help those who do not help themselves. So it is I tell you to help yourselves. Wash your face at dawn at four o’clock, clean your eyes of mucus, and pray to God. If you ask me how to do this, I would beg you to take the name of Rama. Krishna or Karsan, or whatever name we call Him by, signifies the same Being. But the name Rama is easiest of all. We must beg of Him, “Oh God, make us good”! Bathing once in several days is not good. You should bathe daily. Labourers should bathe at night after their work. You should not steal. You should keep your children clean. It is your fault if they are not clean. What can the poor school teacher do? The third thing is not to drink liquor. The man who drinks becomes Satan. You should not eat carrion,—in fact you should avoid meat. Won’t it do if you get only *roti* and milk? Those who know how to weave should keep up weaving. I can put up with it if you do not spin, but not with bad habits.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 183-4

¹ A community engaged in skinning dead cattle

147. TELEGRAM TO MOTILAL NEHRU

PORBUNDER,
February 20, 1925

PANDIT NEHRU
WESTERN HOSTEL
DELHI

THINK DR. BESANT MAY PUBLISH HER REPORT¹.

GANDHI

From a draft: S.N. 2456

148. LETTER TO REVASHANKER ZAVERI

[February 20, 1925]

RESPECTED REVASHANKERBHAI,

I return herewith the correspondence with Patwari. I have gone through it. I have seen the reply sent to him. I feel distressed at his behaviour. I had high hopes of him, but for the present at any rate they are vain.

Yesterday I had an interview with the Rana Saheb of Porbunder. He too has promised to give help for khadi work. We talked to our heart's content.

I reach Wankaner today.²

Respects from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1261

149. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

WANKANER,
Magh Krishna 13 [February 21, 1925]³

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I had spoken to you about the Muslims; the National Muslim University of Aligarh is at present in straitened circumstances. I have

¹ *Vide* "Notes", 26-2-1925, sub-title, "28th February".

² Gandhiji reached Wankaner of February 1925.

³ Gandhiji was at Wankaner on this date during his tour of Kathiawar.

told the workers there that I would try to get financial assistance for them. They are trying to collect a certain amount. I told them that I would try to get about Rs. 50,000 for them. Please give this matter your consideration and, if you feel inclined to give the entire amount, or even a part of it, please let me know. I am making a deep study of the Hindu-Muslim question. I am being more and more convinced of my own remedy, even though I see great difficulties in the way.

I am touring Kathiawar at present. My present journey will be over today.

Yours,

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]

I shall be in the Ashram from the 12th to the 26th and reach Delhi on the 28th.

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6105. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

150. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, WADHWAN CAMP

February 21, 1925

Today we feel keenly the absence of Shivalbhai¹. You have heard about the services he rendered to Kathiawar and to the country. It is India's misfortune that those worthy men who pass away are not replaced. Everyone is destined to pass away. Life and death form a pair and there should neither be happiness nor sorrow concerning them. Nevertheless we grieve when someone dies. But I feel that such grief springs from one's self-interest. The revered memory of Shivalbhai reminds me of the extent of our own loss. If we want his memory to live for ever, we should take his place. We should feel no shame in surpassing him in work. One should be ashamed only if one does not add to one's inheritance. One is considered a true descendant only if one adds to one's inheritance. Our duty is to add to Shivalbhai's legacy. I am sorry that this has not been done.

It is my ambition that khadi work should become every man's job and it should enter every village. As long as the wheel does not find a place in every single village and everyone does not wear khadi,

¹ Founder of a technical school in Wadhwan; *vide* "Reminiscences of Kathiawar-II", 8-3-1925.

we are not likely to attain pure swaraj. Hindus and Muslims have not united. If they want to do so they should begin spinning. Khadi also covers the problems of *Antyajias*. This problem has created commition in Wadhwan. I do not understand why. We will have to embrace the *Antyajias* if we want to make khadi every man's work. The good name of India depends on Muslim and *Antyaja* weavers. One cannot get khadi of one's liking without an organization among weavers. I have just come from Wankaner; there are three hundred Muslim weavers there whose work is beautiful. But there are only two or three who weave hand-spun yarn. If we want others to weave khadi, we must begin spinning. We do not want those women who spin for money to give up their other occupations and spin for us. We want to make those spin who do not get even two pice. In our country where one gets only *roti* and salt, the wheel is a *Kamadhenu*¹. This much of *yajna* is essential. It is good if it is performed system-atically.

While doing the work of spinning do not go over to weaving. If we want fine yarn we have to spin with our own hands, and without fine cloth what will our delicate brothers do? You will pay six annas or eight annas for weaving one seer of yarn. But no one will spin for you forty-count yarn for six annas.

If you want to preserve the memory of Shivilalbai, then keep his work alive. Khadi work was Shivilal's first and last love. He has given so much money for khadi work that we should be ashamed of ourselves if we failed to keep it up.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol, VII, pp. 188-90

151. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, WADHWAN

February 21, 1925

I am just returning from a visit to the *Antyaja* quarters. I felt happy as I sat among them, for I was doing my duty. For being with you here, god will certainly ask me whether I had come here to give you, the citizens of Wadhwan, any new thoughts. You have confined them to their locality and, therefore, I had much to tell them which they had never been told. I have no miracle to perform before you and dazzle you. I only beg you to understand your dharma and

¹ The mythical cow yielding all one wishes

follow it. I will tell you nothing more than that what you take to be dharma is, in fact, sin. Ponder over this carefully, accept it only if it appeals both to your heart and to your head and cease treating the *Antyajias* as untouchables.

On my returning to India [from Africa], I [first] went to Ahmedabad, consulted the citizens there, placed my views before them and established my Ashram there only after they had agreed to support and help me for one year. In my consultations with them I had also spoken of my views on the issue of *Antyajias*. I said that I did not discriminate even against those belonging to other faiths and would most certainly admit *Antyajias*. They told me that I would never get *Antyajias* of the type I had mentioned. Well, I decided to stay there, got utensils and others articles of household use. But there was no money. But I had faith [in God]. A few months passed and Dudabhai¹ arrived with a note from Thakkar². As soon as I took him in, the people of Ahmedabad decided to boycott me. The people who drew water from the same well as we also boycotted us. But I told them that I would bear everything they might do, but would not leave Ahmedabad. If it is God's will that I should live here, I told them, He will enable me to do so, otherwise I would go and live among *Antyajias*. I knew, I said, what my self-respect required, and would not feel insulted by their talking angrily with me. After five days, the people using the well melted and Dudabhai was permitted to draw water from it. But the problem of money remained. But on the day I had no money left, God came in person and gave me the money I needed. One fine day, a car drove up to the Ashram gate. A gentleman whom I had never met previously alighted from it, came up to me and told me that he wanted to donate Rs. 13,000, and asked me if I would accept the money. Next day he came with Rs. 13,000 in banknotes, gave the money to me and left. That Satyagraha Ashram still exists. I wanted to be loyal to my principles of satyagraha and stand my ground in Ahmedabad. The Ahmedabad people have not deserted me, they come to see me and I enjoy their goodwill. This is so simply because I had bound them with the chain of love and I was confident that I would get the reward of my love from Ahmedabad

¹ An untouchable teacher whose joining the Ashram caused a furore; *vide An Autobiography*, part V, Ch. X.

² A. V. Thakkar (1869-1950); Gandhiji's associate and a life-member of the Servants of India Society; devoted himself to the cause of tribals and untouchables

itself. Shri Fulchand is a man who will stick to his post as I did. Why should he run away from Wadhwan? He should not desert his post even if has to starve. If he does anything in anger or out of obstinacy, or says anything to hurt you, that would be sin. If, however, his words spring from love, they will touch your heart. God alone knows with what feelings he acts; the result will depend on what they are.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 8-3-1925

*152. SPEECH AT OPENING OF NURSERY SCHOOL,
WADHWAN*

February 21, 1925

I am supposed to take away with me this lock and key, as also this trowel which has not been soiled with earth at all. The gold coins which Shri Dhorajiwala has given to me, I will hand over to Fulchandbhai. Both these things have a meaning. A good many activities are going on in the country at present; who can say how many of them are genuine, or what self-sacrifice and sincerity of effort lie behind them? I, for one, do not know. All that I know is that of the innumerable institutions which are being run in the country at present, a few, we can say, have life in them. An English poet has said, describing Heaven, that St. Peter stands guard at its gate, and the key with which he opens the gate is of iron and not of gold.¹ Explaining this, another poet has said that it is not easy to open the gate of Heaven, that it cannot be opened with a key made of gold since gold is a rather soft metal, whereas iron is supposed to be one of the strongest metals. The gate, therefore, can be opened only with a key made of iron. Here in Kathiawar we say of a very difficult task that it is as difficult as chewing iron pellets. Running an institution like this is a task of that kind. For building the walls of a library, a trowel made of silver can be of no use. We need one made of iron. Likewise, we cannot use a silver padlock for locking its doors. We must have an iron one. There is, thus, an artificiality about the first steps we have taken in doing both these things. I laid the foundation by merely

¹ The lines from Lord Byron's *Vision of Judgment* are:

“Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate:

His keys were rusty, and the lock was dull.”

spreading some earth; the work of building will be done by the masons and the doors of the temple [of knowledge] will be opened by the teachers. A library does not mean a building containing books, or the books in it, or idle visitors who do not read the books. Were it otherwise, we would find many booksellers to be men of character. Because the building of the nursery school is a fine one, and much money has been spent on it, can we say that the school will flourish? It will do so only if it gets the services of men who can run it on sound lines, only if it has a soul in it. Ordinarily I do not like to perform the opening ceremony of such institutions, for how does it help me to do so? But I agreed to perform the opening ceremony of this because I have faith in the workers who are behind it. That is all. You should not suppose that any particular good will follow because I have performed the opening ceremony. I am a bird ever on the wing. Today I am here, tomorrow I may be in Ahmedabad and the day after in Delhi. However, I welcome your exploiting my name to do what good you can. The survival of this library will not depend on the support of the rich, or on the children using it or on anyone donating a hundred thousand gold coins. On the contrary, all that money may prove to be an obstacle. It has been my experience that whenever I received much help in money the cause suffered. At the time of the struggle in South Africa, as soon as money poured in from this country the movement lost its vigour, in the same way that Yudhishtira's chariot came down a little nearer the earth when he said: "Whether man or elephant I do not know." God has given only 24 hours to all of us, and all that we require for that length of time can be obtained by eight hours' work. Everyone should be satisfied with that. This is my reason for not wishing that this institution should prosper financially. It should have only enough to enable the workers to keep body and soul together while they serve it; they will lay down their lives for it if they find it necessary to do so.

I would describe an institution which had plenty of money but no more than five workers as one which had come up like a mushroom. It will survive for five days and then perish as the

¹ The story is told in the *Mahabharata* that when they found Dronacharya, leader of the Kaurava army, irresistible, Yudhishtira, who was reputed for his absolute truthfulness, was prevailed upon to say, in Drona's hearing, that Ashvatthama was killed, but he added in a whisper the words translated above. Ashvatthama was the name of Drona's son and, believing that he was killed, Drona laid down arms and was killed by Arjuna.

mushrooms do. The point of what I have been saying is that the workers who are attending this meeting and have pledged themselves to lay down their lives for it, should put their faith in god and, even when they feel that they are drowning, they should cling to their faith and keep swimming. If they do not act thus, you may be certain that they will invite upon themselves the curses of the country, for they will not have justified this imposing building. Such palatial buildings may be all right for Princes and Rulers, but this building may be all right for Princes and Rulers, but this building will become the poverty of the country, if we do not justify it by an appropriate return to the country by way of service and if the workers do not feel haunted by it as by a ghost so long as they have not been able to render such return. The establishment of this institution and my performing its opening ceremony will have been justified if Shri Fulchand and his co-workers live in it as men who had given up all attachment, even as king Janaka was known to have done though he lived in a palace. If, however, the spirit of renunciation vanishes and love of comfort comes to prevail in its place, the institution is bound to perish. That school alone is a national school which helps us to win swaraj and all whose teachers abide by the rules, are inspired by a spirit of self-sacrifice and lead an austere life.

I was pained to hear that the citizens of Wadhwan have boycotted this institution. Money should be available locally for an institution for as long as it is in need, and the workers who run it should also be able to win the goodwill of the local population. The position of public workers like us who are fighting for swaraj is difficult, for they are also reformers. A reformer finds himself in an anomalous position, for he is not able to enter the atmosphere of the locality and is content to receive that help he can get from outside. Otherwise, what connection can Dr. Mehta of Rangoon have with this school? Wadhwan contributed to the fund even though they knew Shri Fulchand's views about serving *Antyajias*; I do not understand, then, why the people have boycotted him now. I should like them to come and put their point of view to me, tell me what they feel.

A national institution means one which strengthens the nation's soul, and not merely one which is not connected with the Government in any way. A national institution flourishes on the foundation of character, it does not become national by having a large number of pupils and enabling them to make a living. They are indeed welcome to work for their livelihood; but it is not the aim of education to equip

them for that purpose. Its aim is to awaken the pupil's soul, to bring out his spiritual powers, to train his body, intellect and soul. I am told that such a large number of pupils are enrolled in the school at Wankaner because its results at examinations are one hundred per cent. This a narrow way of measuring its worth.

Probably it is true that the teachers there are good; however, the children are enrolled there not in the hope that they will learn from the teachers to live virtuous lives, but in the expectation that because of the teachers' efficiency they will pass the examinations. We must abandon this narrow criterion. The Vidyapith and the national schools exist in order that we may learn to do so. I urge the parents, therefore, to support such institutions, and urge the teachers to remain loyal to their ideals, to welcome suffering and to draw the pupils to them by the strength of their character. If they succeed in this, my coming here and performing the opening ceremony will have been fully rewarded.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 8-3-1925

153. MY NOTES

KHADI IN UTKAL

From Calcutta Shri Shankerlal Banker writes about Utkal, i.e., Orissa:¹

There is no other province as poor as Utkal. Khadi work, therefore, could progress better there than anywhere else. But the above letter tells us that the work done there is the poorest. The reason is well known. Where food is scarce, energy and enthusiasm for work disappear. If good workers are steadily forthcoming, Utkal can be trusted to overtake all other provinces.

YARN IN ADDITION TO KHADI

A gentleman writes: "Will it not be much better if, instead of purchasing hand-spun yarn and sending it to you, we send you the requisite amount for khadi and wear it?" There is a misunderstanding behind this question. The Congress has demanded not one of the two things, but both of them. First, everyone should send 2,000 yards of hand-spun yarn every month whether spun by oneself or someone

¹ The letter is not translated here. It gave details of khadi work in Orissa.

else. Secondly, everyone should wear khadi. And so there is no alternative, but the two together are obligatory. A mere spinner cannot become a Congress member nor can a mere khadi-wearer. And this is quite right. By making spinning universal we shall increase the production of khadi and by making the use of khadi universal we shall increase the consumption of khadi. That along will remove starvation from India.

A WOMAN'S OBJECTION

This gentleman further writes: "When I went to persuade a woman to wear khadi, she objected: 'If I wear khadi, my husband may be attracted by a woman using foreign or mill-cloth and thus lose his character.'" I cannot expect such a reply from any virtuous woman. But since the issue has been raised it should be considered. If any husband deviates from his moral course simply because his wife observes simplicity or performs her duty, then the virtuous wife should scarcely care for him. A man's character is not worth anything if he could be tempted merely by another woman's clothes. A husband who is seduced by a change in dress can also be seduced by a more beautiful woman.

My experience, however, is contrary to the statement of this woman. I know hundreds of husbands who have been delighted to find their wives in khadi clothes. Their household expenditure has been reduced and their love for their khadi-clad wives has grown. But it is also possible that this sister had no mind to use khadi and so unawares she might have raised this unworthy objection. I appeal to the sisters who think like her to take boldly to khadi and realize that beauty does not consist in dress but in purity of character, and clothes are not meant for adornment but for protecting the body from heat and cold.

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

Two residents of Jetpur had sent me the following letter¹ to my Jetpur address:

The description is correct. We can hardly emerge out of the enervating atmosphere without the strength of will. The class to which the above correspondents belong suffers from the ailment of idleness. Being accustomed to earn their wealth by means of cunning, they do

¹ Not translated here. It described practical difficulties of the semi-literate business classes in adopting spinning for their livelihood.

not like to earn it by physical labour. Wants have multiplied and so the meagre earnings from physical labour cannot satisfy them. Unwarranted expenses on such heads as marriages and deaths have all soared so high that they cannot be met without incurring debts or earning by unfair means. The body cannot undertake the tiller's toil; nor is there the requisite capital or skill. All that is left is the spinning-wheel. Here the wheel symbolizes not only spinning but all the processes of cloth production. This is an occupation that requires very little capital and also very little physical strength. This can offer a good livelihood if one gives up the prevalent pomp, simplifies living and sheds lethargy. If the correspondents cultivate a little more will-power, they can with moderate efforts learn spinning and weaving and thus earn their living.

The earnings from weaving are not enough yet, because khadi has not caught the fancy of the people. But with the spread of khadi many of us will take to weaving as a profession or earn our bread by honest trade in khadi. In short, if these gentlemen can promise some little effort they should seek admission to any khadi training centre. In Kathiawar, there is one such institution at Madhada. And the Political Conference has made spread of khadi its main activity in Kathiawar these days. The correspondents can consult its secretary and find a solution to their problem. They should remember that in this occupation there is no room for parasites.

KHADI EXHIBITION

In describing the Khadi Exhibition organized during the anniversary celebrations of the Supa Gurukul, the manager of its khadi section writes:¹

If such exhibitions are held occasionally, they will certainly result in the spread of khadi and the spinning-wheel.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 22-2-1925

154. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD,

February 22, 1925

Mr. Gandhi has arrived in his Satyagraha Ashram this morning after visiting Rajkot, Porbunder, Wankaner and Wadhwan in Kathiawar. He also visited on his way back Ganod Garashia centre. He met the Princes of all these States and was much

¹ The letter is not translated here.

struck by the solicitude they seemed to evince for the welfare of their subjects. People of all these States whom he met also spoke highly of their Princes. The experiment that His Highness the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot is making with a Representative Assembly he has founded, says Mr. Gandhi, is deeply interesting, though it is yet too early to give any definite opinion about it. From what he has come to know of it, however, makes him hopeful of success. Wankaner has made primary education compulsory in Wankaner itself and amongst the higher classes.

Mr. Gandhi remarked:

It is sign of the times that in all these places I noticed among the people the keenest desire for total prohibition. In Rajkot it is most keenly felt, because there an unhealthy an ugly competition is going on between the State liquor shops and the Civil Station liquor shops. The result is that the prices have considerably gone down and the lower classes are taking to liquor more than ever before. Their womenfolk are bitterly complaining about the havoc that is being played in their families owing to men returning day after day in a drunken state. People are urging the Thakore Saheb to abolish liquor shops altogether. The latter is reluctant to do so on the ground of individual liberty. He is of opinion that temperance should be brought about by preaching. The State Assembly has unanimously passed a resolution requesting the Darbar to close all licensed liquor shops, and prohibit distillation of liquor except for medicinal purposes, if necessary. It will be interesting to learn how the Thakore Saheb deals with this resolution.

The Hindu, 23-2-1925

*155. TELEGRAM TO SECRETARY, CONGRESS COMMITTEE,
CALCUTTA¹*

February 23, 1925

SECRETARY CONGRESS COMMITTEE
CALCUTTA

THINK GOING BENGAL MARCH ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE. CAN-
NOT COME BEFORE APRIL.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

156. TELEGRAM TO GOVINDDAS

February 23, 1925

GOVINDDAS
TREASURER
SHERTALI

ARRANGING SEND FUNDS.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

157. TELEGRAM TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

February 23, 1925

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI²

EXTENSION

SALEM

PAY VYKOM SATYAGRAHA ONE THOUSAND. WILL REFUND.
PROPOSE COMING MARCH GOING VYKOM. DURING MARCH
MUST I TRAVEL OTHER PARTS PRESIDENCY.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

¹ An identical telegram was sent by Gandhiji to the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Bengal Provincial Conference, Faridpur.

² Chakravarti Rajagopalachari (b. 1879); author and statesman, Governor-General of India, 1948-50

158. TELEGRAM TO LAJPAT RAI¹

February 23, 1925

I MUST NOT POSTPONE WITHOUT REFERENCE MEETING²
BUT MEETING MAY POSTPONE IF DESIRABLE. HOPE YOU
ARE FULLY RESTORED.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

159. TELEGRAM TO A. T. GIDWANI³

[February 23, 1925]

GIDWANI
HINDU COLLEGE
DELHI

CONGRATULATIONS. SELF REACHING DELHI SATURDAY.
START TODAY IF POSSIBLE OR STAY TILL MY ARRIVAL.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

160. TELEGRAM TO MOTILAL NEHRU⁴

[SABARMATI,
February 23, 1925]

WIRED LALAJI. CANNOT POSTPONE WITHOUT REFER[ENCE]
MEETING WHICH MUST MEET.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

¹ This was in reply to the telegram from Lajpat Rai received on February 23, 1925, which read: "Iyengar Jayakar Jairamdas and others unable attend 28th. No date before third week March suitable. Please arrange postponement and wire."

² *Vide* "Statement on Adjournment of All-Party Conference Sub-Committee", 2-3-1925.

³ Acharya Gidwani, who went to jail in 1924 for accompanying a *shahidi jatha* to Jaito, had been released by the Nabha authorities on February 22 and was staying at Delhi with the Principal of the Hindu College. *Vide* "Notes", 26-2-1925, sub-little, "Acharya Gidwani Released".

⁴ This was in reply to the telegram from Motilal Nehru received on February 23 which repeated Lajpat Rai's telegram; *vide* footnote 2 on preceding page.

161. LETTER TO SHAUKAT ALI

SABARMATI,
February 23, 1925

MY DEAR FRIEND & BROTHER,

I have read today your commentary on my statement on Kohat. I honour you and love you all the more for your out-spokenness. But your commentary shows how with all the detachment and impartiality in the world sometimes people most closely related as we are can come to opposite conclusions on identical facts. It makes me more charitable than ever towards opponents and more distrustful of my judgment even than I am. I have twice read your commentary and I see the wide gulf that separates us in the affair. I am prepared to strongly condemn the publication of the poem but I am unable to condone the looting and arson. I do not endorse your opinion that the pamphlet was the cause of the conflagration. The ground was already prepared. I cannot treat the conversions as lightly as you seem to do. In my opinion the Khilafatists have greatly neglected their duty and Maulvi Ahmed Gul certainly betrayed the trust reposed in him.

I do not say these things to influence your opinion if there is no cause for it. But I do want you to look more deeply into the facts than you have done and see whether there is cause for reconsideration. I tremble to publish our statements. The publication will give rise to an acrimonious discussion. I would therefore even suggest the whole matter being examined by Hakim Saheb or Dr. Ansari. I would love to have new light on the question. I would like all the friends to look at the facts and try to influence us both. But if after we have exhausted all our resources to come to a joint conclusion, we fail, we must dare to let the public know our difference of opinion and know too that we shall still love one another and work together. But that very love demands that we take no hasty action. Are you coming to Delhi? If you are, let us travel together. I leave by the metergauge on 27th. But if you are coming and you would rather leave by the Punjab Mail I would join you at Baroda. It may be advisable to have leisurely discussion between us. The train seems to be the best place for such discussion. Do let me know what you would like to do. Please wire if

possible. I am not publishing the statement this week.

With love,

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

I am glad you are taking Kuhne treatment. You certainly need plenty of exercise.

M. K. G.

From a photostat: S.N. 10524

162. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Monday, Maha Vad [February 23, 1925]¹

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Read the enclosed letter and pass it on to the Maulana immediately. He will send the reply himself. I shall leave for Delhi on the 27th morning or the 26th night.

I hope mother has fully recovered now. From tomorrow we are having weddings here—three of them.

Blessings from

BAPU

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

163. TELEGRAM TO REVASHANKER ZAVERI

February 25, 1925

MORALITY²

[BOMBAY]

PRABHASHANKER REFUSES CELEBRATE MARRIAGE WITHOUT
YOUR PRESENCE.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

¹ The addressee received the letter on February 23, 1925. Presumably it was delivered by hand along with the letter to Maulana Shaukat Ali, also dated February 23, 1925

² Secretary of the Modern School, Delhi

164. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

February 25, 1925

MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI
94, BAZAR GATE STREET
BOMBAY

BOOK TWO SEATS BARODA DELHI WITH SHAUKAT ALI
FOR THURSDAY.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

165. TELEGRAM TO RAGHUBIR SINGH

[February 25, 1925]¹

RUGHBIR SINGH²
KASHMIRI GATE
DELHI

REACHING FRIDAY NIGHT NAGDA MAIL.

GANDHI

From a draft in Gandhiji's hand: S.N. 2456

166. TELEGRAM TO DR. M.A. ANSARI

February 25, 1925

DR. ANSARI
DARYAGUNJ
DELHI

REACHING FRIDAY NIGHT NAGDA MAIL. INFORM HAKIMJI
MAHOMEDALI PRESUME SHOULD STAY RAGHUBIR SINGH.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

¹ This was sent on the same day as "Telegram to Mathuradas Trikumji", 25-2-1925.

² *ibid*

167. TELEGRAM TO CHAUNDE MAHARAJ

February 25, 1925

CHAUNDE MAHARAJ

WAI

REACHING DELHI FRIDAY. ARE YOU COMING.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

168. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,

SABARMATI,

Phagan Sud 3 [February 25, 1925]¹

CHI. FULCHAND,

I have your letter. What you say is quite correct. In our lives, exaggeration and slander have grown rife.

Your writing to Pattani Saheb would in itself be sufficient atonement.

Write a nice letter and send it to me. I shall forward it to him.

I wish to see the wording of your letter. Did you see those three gentlemen again? It would be very nice if the citizens join you.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2825. Courtesy: Sharadabehn Shah

169. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

[February 25, 1925]²

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter. When the passenger arrives, send him to the Ashram. Do make proper enquiries. I cannot suddenly take recourse to silence regarding the Hindu-Muslim problem. But that time is coming. We are being crushed by the British. Even so, when there is something done falsely to denigrate them, should we not say: 'We

¹ From the postmark

² *ibid*

must dare to do Justice'¹? If my views are relevant to the situation, I must give expression to them. But you will see my views becoming clearer and clearer day by day.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Going to Delhi tomorrow evening.

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

170. SPEECH AT AHMEDABAD²

February 25, 1925

Prayer time is the best time for words of blessing. On two earlier occasions, when young people who grew up in the Ashram were married off, many among us did not appreciate the significance of the occasion. Whoever comes to the Ashram, whether children or married men, would like to observe *brahmacharya*; and, therefore, how can marriage be solemnized in the Ashram where the aim is to encourage everyone in the observance of *brahmacharya*? It is natural that the question should arise in the minds of many people; and yet three marriages came to be solemnized here. Though the regulations of the Ashram are strict, we are unable to enforce discipline. It is not easy to impart training in *brahmacharya* to young persons. Not that older folk are able to observe *brahmacharya* strictly. To fulfil an ideal, one should have ardour in one's heart. The subject is so profound that the more I delve into it, the more aweinspiring it seems and I see its beauty and drink deep of its delights.

We can't use force on the young people whom we keep in the Ashram. It happens sometimes that marriages cannot be avoided.

¹ This sentence is in English.

² Blessing the couple on the occasion of the marriage of Dahyabhai Patel. *Vide* also "My Notes", 29-3-1925.

There were three such cases. In order to pacify my mind I took the one way out. The ceremonial should be performed outside the precincts of the Ashram. One should get married without deceiving the inner self or the outer world. And then one should come to the Ashram and receive everyone's blessings.

If marry one must, it should not be to indulge the senses but to practise self-control—this must be made clear to the married couple as well as the inmates of the Ashram. Inmates should not eagerly look forward to wedding occasions. It is a different matter if they can't be avoided. That is an event linking the soul and God. That is why in English the soul is feminine in gender. Jaydev has also described the soul as a feminine entity sporting with the Supreme Being. Little remains to be done in this world after such marriage of spirits. If marriages must take place even when this union of souls does not obtain, well, let it be so. It is necessary for me to tell you on this, the fourth, occasion that marriage is not meant for greed but for sacrifice. Resolve that even if you wish to derive sense pleasure from this relationship, you will do so within limits. Among us the rule of fidelity is meant for women only, though the last four morsels given to [the couple] while solemnizing the marriage stand for the union of flesh, spirit and bone. It is a pity we did not lay down a similar rule for men. Therefore I can only say that you must live in moderation and realize that the pleasures of the body should be only a means of procreation.

Who has the right to give birth to a child in these terrible times? Countless persons in India observe *brahmacharya* and many in Europe as well. Among Roman Catholics, there are many adult men and women who observe *brahmacharya* throughout their life. An eighteen-year-old girl walks out of worldly life and observes unbroken *brahmacharya*. They have monastries and nunneries where such men and women live. In these hard times no one in India has the right to beget children. No one has at any time the right to bear children before one is strong enough.

I wanted the marriage to be solemnized in the Ashram, because the priest performing the rites would explain their significance and you could thus learn that marriage is not a matter of pleasure but of self-control. Both of you, therefore, should understand this occasion and remember it. I have taken upon myself one responsibility and I will never regret it. The result is bound to be beneficent. You know my relations with Vallabhbai. He asked me of his own free will that

this marriage be solemnized by me. Kashibhai was also favourable to the idea. There is no need for spending lots of money on a marriage. It is penance that is needed. Outside the Ashram a marriage cannot take place without money being spent, for you cannot have only the religious rite, leaving out things like *barat*¹. That is why the marriage has been solemnized here. The seed that is sown will grow into a tree. But be worthy of your parents to nurture that seed and eschew worldly pleasures. For not spending money, the motive was not stinginess, and it certainly was not greed. Such expenditure bears heavily on the *Patidar* families and our intention was to save them from it altogether.

I have known Dahyabhai for a long time and Yashoda too. I feel confident that they are strong enough through self-control to add lustre to this marriage. All these things which I say to inmates of the Ashram can-not be said too often. I do not mean to seek out such occasions, for that is not my vocation. But if they arise, I perform the ceremonies in the hope that self-control can be strengthened thus. This may well be an illu-sion. I do not wish not to take the chance if it comes. But I wish for all of you that you develop more self-control through such occasions. That is why we are all assembled here. Let us pray to God that we may attain our ideals and we may bring up men and women here who do not think about marriage and procreation, but who regard all children as their own, and who spend their lives in serving children who have no sunshine in their lives. Dahyabhai and Yashoda must think for themselves and realize how great is their responsibility. It seems to me as if they have lost their freedom today. But this state too can be beautiful. Let them be happy and restrained. Let them breathe the spirit of sacrifice and be worthy of their parents and also of us; so that no one may feel like asking why this marriage was celebrated in the Ashram.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 202-5

171. THE EMBARGO

I publish the following telegraphic correspondence between the Private Secretary to H.E. the Viceroy and myself.

¹ Marriage party

TELEGRAM TO THE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE VICEROY¹

REPLY TO THE ABOVE²

SECOND TELEGRAM TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE VICEROY³

REPLY TO THE ABOVE⁴

It is quite true that my going to Kohat is likely to reopen the settlement in so far as it is intrinsically bad. It is settlement brought about by coercion, for it has been arrived at under threat of prosecutions on either side. It is not a voluntary settlement that pleases the parties. Both the Hindus and the Mussalmans whom Maulana Shaukat Ali and I met at Rawalpindi said as much. But my visit to Kohat, whatever else it may or may not bring about, can never mean greater estrangement between the parties. If, therefore, I had been permitted together with Mussalman friends to proceed to Kohat it would have meant furtherance of peace which the Viceroy claims to have at heart equally with me. Whilst, therefore, I was able somewhat to understand the refusal when the things were still in a ferment, I am unable to understand the prohibition at the present moment. Friends were not wanting who suggested that I should have proceeded to Kohat without permission or intimation and taken the risk of a prohibition order. I could not do so unless I meant to disobey any such order and court imprisonment. And as I hold that there is no atmosphere at the present moment in the country for any such step I could not take the proposed risk. I can only hope that the authorities will appreciate the deliberation with which I am avoiding every step that may precipitate civil resistance. My purpose so far as it is humanly possible is to avoid taking a single step that may even indirectly precipitate violence on the part of the people. But a time must come when non-violent resistance on my part may become a duty in total disregard of untoward consequences. I do not myself know when such a time can or will come. I know that it is a possibility. But when that time comes I hope that friends will not find me wanting. Till then I must ask them to bear with me.

Young India, 26-2-1925

¹ *Vide* "Telegram to Private Secretary to Viceroy", 9-2-1925.

² *ibid*

³ *Vide* "Telegram to Private Secretary to Viceroy", 19-2-1925.

⁴ *ibid*

172. INHUMAN IF TRUE

Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee sends me the following telegram:

Reports from Nabha just received give harrowing details of inhuman tortures including wholesale merciless beating to unconsciousness, dragging by *keshas* (hair) and beards, ducking into water, putting hot iron rods on various parts of body and hanging by their feet heads downward, resulting in several deaths at the spot. Many more are in a precarious condition. A large number is seriously wounded. No ration issued on 13th and 14th to some *jathas*¹. Great excitement prevails. Situation extremely serious. Immediate action necessary.

I print the telegram, but alas! what immediate action can be taken? Of Public sympathy the prisoners can be sure. I have little doubt that there will be questions and usual answers in the Assembly but of what use will they be to the sufferers? I can only hope that the picture is overdrawn and that the authorities are not guilty of the inhumanities ascribed to them. I trust that the Administrator of Nabha will give a full explanation about the awful charges brought against the prison authorities and court an impartial inquiry into the allegations.

Young India, 26-2-1925

173. MORE ABOUT VYKOM

The following letter will be read with painful interest by those Hindus who look upon untouchability as a crime:

We have seen your article² in *Young India* about us. It is our fervent prayer that we do really deserve the high terms in which you have been kind enough to characterize our activities here. On reading it we have become to some extent depressed by the sense of our own shortcomings and we are striving our utmost to come up to the level which will satisfy you when you come here and see things actually for yourself.

In the meantime the local Legislative Council has thrown out "our resolution" by a majority of 22 to 21 votes. The Government majority was made up of 15 officials, 3 nominated members, one Brahmin representative of vested interests and three elected members. The constitution of the Council is

¹ Bands of satyagrahis

² Vide "Vykom Satyagraha", 19-2-1925.

15 officials, 7 nominated non-officials and 28 elected non-officials. So of the 35 non-officials 21 voted for us, two stood neutral, 7 against us and the rest were absent. And of the 7 who voted against us, as already stated three alone were elected from the general electorate. It is clear from the facts stated above that the Government, far from taking a neutral attitude, actually went the length of canvassing against the resolution. You may remember that, the Regent Maharani in her reply to the caste Hindu *jatha* expressed a desire to know the attitude of the councils before doing anything in the matter. Then we had expected that the Government would at least have kept a neutral attitude. But now we find that it is not so. It has now become clear that the Government is to a large extent acting as the real opposition where enlightened opinion is in favour of reform.

But what, however, I wished to bring to your notice is this. The result of the resolution in the Council may prove the last straw on the camel's back. There are signs everywhere of an impatience at the gentle and "slow" method of satyagraha. Even responsible leaders may fall victims to the general restlessness. So if it is absolutely impossible for you to go over here in the near future, it must be at least possible for you to issue an authoritative statement regarding the implications of satyagraha. Such a statement coming from you is bound to have the healthiest effect on minds that have begun to waver in the face of the present heavy odds. Some people have begun to advocate social ostracism of the high castes, non-co-operation and so many other methods, all of which are more or less dangerous in the present state of our society.

Considerable strength of mind and perseverance is required now even to manage the Camp. But this is not the real difficulty. The matrix in which satyagraha flourished is the general communal consciousness and I only point out that after ten months of satyagraha when people realize that the Travancore Council has thrown out the "Freedom of Road" resolution, there is either a tendency to take to extreme steps or to completely collapse. Of these I am only afraid of the first and that is why I request that a message, clearly conveying to them all the implications of satyagraha, how though seemingly dilatory in its working yet it is the quickest agent for success, and how other methods are less useful if not positively harmful, especially in a "communal problem", etc., is highly necessary. I hope you will find time to do so.

That a State reported to be advanced should work in opposition to progressive opinion is a sad commentary on its "advanced" state. The progressives really won the battle from a moral standpoint. Whilst it is regrettable that 22 should have voted against the use by the so-called untouchables of the public road in question, it is consoling to

find that 21 members vindicated the position taken by the Hindu reformers by voting in favour of their resolution. The saddest part of the letter, however, is the fact that the satyagrahis seem to be losing hope. I do not wonder. Theirs is the first experience of sustained satyagraha. Let me, however, assure them that victory is assured. For their cause is just, their means non-violent. Let them realize, too, that by their sufferings they have attracted the attention of the world. Whoever knew Vykom before the struggle commenced? They should also know that they are fighting an age-long superstition. What is a year's suffering on the part of a few reformers in their attempt to break down the iron wall of prejudice? To lose patience is to lose the battle. They must fight to the finish. What is the alternative anyone can have in view? The breaking of heads will not serve the purpose. Orthodoxy will stiffen its back and will suck nourishment out of the blood of its martyrs. For if the orthodox are injured, sympathy will irresistibly be drawn towards them though their cause is wrong. To attempt to force the entry will invite stronger barricades. And even if force succeeded, it would merely mean mechanical use of a single public road and not change of opinion.

What, however, the Hindu reformers want is the conversion of the orthodox people who have made of untouchability a religion. This they will only do by sufferings such as they are now undergoing. Satyagraha is the shortest cut to success. All the reforms that have been brought about by violent methods have taken not one year but years. The victory of enlightenment over darkness in Europe was a long and torturing process. And one is not sure that it was a lasting success. There was no conversion of those who opposed and died. The others who were converted were attracted by the sufferings of those who died even whilst inflicting death on their opponents. The net legacy that age bequeathed the world was a confirmation of belief in methods of violence. I hope therefore that the satyagrahis of Vykom will not swerve from their path even though their ranks may be thinned and victory may seem further off than ever. Satyagraha is utter self-effacement, greatest humiliation, greatest patience and brightest faith. It is its own reward.

Young India, 26-2-1925

174. NOTES

28TH FEBRUARY

The Sub-Committee appointed by the All-Parties Conference Committee is to meet once more on the 28th instant at Delhi. No Sub-Committee had perhaps a more difficult task before it. The Sub-Committee redivided itself into two groups, one for drafting a skeleton swaraj scheme and the other for framing a skeleton Hindu-Muslim Unity scheme. Dr. Besant was Chairman of the Swaraj group of the Sub-Committee and she has already presented a report for the consideration of the Sub-Committee. The adjournment took place for the consideration of the Hindu-Muslim question as no agreement could be reached last time, and as the desire was expressed that the members then present should be able to confer with those who were absent and those others who though not members might be able to assist in reaching an agreement. It is to be hoped that those who can will attend the forthcoming meeting. Lala Lajpat Rai has telegraphed asking me to postpone the meeting to a date after the third week of March. Several members have informed him that they will not be able to attend. I have informed him¹ saying that I could not postpone without reference to the meeting itself and that the meeting might postpone if it was thought desirable. Everybody has by this time made up his mind as to what should be done. No new light would possibly be thrown on the question at the forthcoming meeting. The only question for consideration would be whether there is a middle course between the two extremes that were discussed at Delhi at the last meeting. That leads to another question. Is there a will on the part of both the parties to find an immediate solution? The swaraj scheme is also a tremendously important problem. Only, the Hindu-Muslim question seems to block all progress. I do hope that all who are at all able will come and assist the deliberations. I would advise the absentees to send in their opinions lest the meeting should decide to continue its deliberations instead of postponing as suggested by Lalaji.

ACHARYA GIDWANI RELEASED

The reader will share with me the joy of reading the following

¹ *Vide* "Telegram to Lajpat Rai", 23-2-1925.

telegram received on Monday morning from Ambala:

Gidwani released yesterday evening sentence being suspended again. Administrator's order states facts correctly this time. Administrator sent word through his brother Alim Gidwani, who went to see him on the 8th instant to ask for appointment for Mrs. Gidwani that if Gidwani did not interfere in Nabha politics he could go away that day. Gidwani sent word that if that meant obedience to externment order he had no intention of disobeying it when he came and none in future. Mrs. Gidwani brought word on the 11th that that was what Administrator required, when Gidwani sent immediately following letter: "Mrs. Gidwani tells me that you desire some assurance from me that I have no intention of disobeying your externment order. I have not the slightest hesitation in giving you that assurance. When I started from Amritsar last year I had no intention of disobeying the order when I wrote to you for permission to enter Jaito. As I explained in my written statement on 8th March 1924, I had fully intended to abide by your decision; my friends tell me that you did not get that letter in time which perhaps explains the unfortunate misunderstanding. The Congress position and Mr. Gandhi's wishes in the matter which I had ascertained personally before starting required me to obey the order and my future course of action will of course be the same, obeying the order until it is withdrawn." Administrator left for Delhi on 12th morning returned on 15th and had to go immediately to Jaito returning again on 21st night. The suspension order came at 4 a.m. on 22nd. Gidwani proceeding Delhi tonight staying with Principal, Hindu College, awaiting Mahatmaji's instructions.

I rejoice to have the news of Acharya Gidwani's release because his imprisonment was a gross injustice and because that injustice has been redressed. Truly the ways of the Nabha authorities are strange. What they have now received from the Acharya they could have had long ago. In fact as has been repeatedly pointed out in these columns, Acharya Gidwani never entered the Nabha boundary in order to defy orders. He entered purely and simply in order to perform a humanitarian service. But neither the nation nor the Acharya has lost by the imprisonment. It is the necessary training for swaraj and the price that one must pay for liberty.

STONING TO DEATH

I have a long telegram sent to me as President of the National Congress regarding the stoning to death in Afghanistan of two members of the Ahmediya sect. I purposely refrained from any comment on the awful penalty imposed on the late Niamatulla Khan

but I dare not ignore the incidents now reported especially when a personal appeal for expression of opinion is made to me. 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 the 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. I extend my sympathy to the sect in its distress. Needless to say I can express no opinion on the merits of the case. I do not think the public has any data for forming an opinion on merits. It is the form 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.

SOME POSERS

“A well-wisher” sends these lines for my meditation:

The Bible can be read in 566 languages. In how many can the Upanishads and the *Gita*?

How many leper asylums and institutions for the depressed and the distressed have the missionaries? How many have you?

It is usual for me to receive such posers. “A well-wisher” deserves an answer. I have great regard for the missionaries for their zeal and self-sacrifice. But I have not hesitated to point out to them that both are often misplaced. What though the Bible were translated in every tongue in the world? Is a patent medicine better than the Upanishads for being advertised in more languages than the Upanishads? An error does not become truth by reason of multiplied propagation, nor does truth become error because nobody will see it. The Bible was a greater power when the early fathers preached it than it is today. “A well-wisher” has little conception of the way truth works, if he thinks that the translation of the Bible in more languages than the Upanishads is any test of its superiority. Truth has to be lived if it is to fructify. But if it is any satisfaction to “A well-wisher” to have my answer I may gladly tell him that the Upanishads and the *Gita* have been translated into far fewer languages than the Bible. I

have never been curious enough to know in how many languages they are translated.

As for the second question, too, I must own that the missionaries have founded many leper asylums and the like. I have founded none. But I stand unmoved. I am not competing with the missionaries or anybody else in such matters. I am trying humbly to serve humanity as God leads me. The founding of leper asylums, etc., is only one of the ways, and perhaps not the best, of serving humanity. But even such noble service loses much of its nobility when conversion is the motive behind it. That service is the noblest which is rendered for its own sake. But let me not be misunderstood. The missionaries that selflessly work away in such asylums command my respect. I am ashamed to have to confess that Hindus have become so callous as to care little for the waifs and strays of India, let alone the world.

A SUPERSTITION

A Bengal zamindar sends me a long letter dealing with Hindu-Muslim unity, untouchability and swaraj. The letter is too long for publication and covers no new ground. I cull, however, one typical sentence from it. It is:

For over 500 years the relation between Hindus and Mussalmans was that of foes. After the advent of British rule both the Mussalmans and Hindus were compelled out of policy to forget that racial hatred and the acrimony of that bitter enmity is now no more. But the permanent difference in the constitution of these two races does even now exist. I believe the present cordial relation is due to British rule and not to the catholicity of modern Hinduism.

I regard this statement as pure superstition. The two races lived at peace among themselves during the Mussalman rule. Let it be remembered that many Hindus embraced Islam before the advent of Muslim rule in India. It is my belief that had there been no Muslim rule, there would still have been Mussalmans in India even as there would have been Christians had there been no British rule. There is nothing to prove that Hindus and Mussalmans lived at war with one another before the British rule. My belief is that the British policy of "divide and rule" has accentuated our differences and will continue to do so, till we recognize that we must unite in spite of the policy. This cannot and will not happen unless we refrain from a scramble for place and power. The beginning must be made by the Hindus.

BHARUCHA'S DIARY

Here is a record of Mr. Bharucha's work:

Am touring in East Khandesh with Messrs Dastane and Deva. Here is the

diary:

13-2-25 Bhusaval—Khadi Rs. 350 sold principally to lawyers and cotton collection 12 Bengali maunds.

14-2-25 Jamner—Cotton collection $16\frac{1}{2}$ Bengali maunds.

15-2-25 Chalisgaon—Khadi sold to lawyers Rs. 310/- and to cloth merchants Rs. 450/-. Cotton collection 1 Bengali maund.

16-2-25 Pachora—Cotton collection 12 Maunds and at Sindurni 5 maunds pukka Bengali.

17-2-25 Today we are at Yaval. Mr. Dastane wants three days more for West Khandesh, i.e., up to 23rd instant.

I reproduce this extract from one of Mr. Bharucha's letters as spur to action by the other workers. Not without business-like and continuous effort is success possible in the spinning and khaddar propaganda. My experience is that wherever there is work put in, the response is quick.

INDIA'S PLIGHT

Mr. Higginbottom of the Agricultural Institute of Allahabad was examined by the Taxation Inquiry Committee on the 6th instant when he gave expression to interesting opinions on several matters of importance. I cull the following from the *Civil and Military Gazette*:

India, while being poor, is the most extravagant country on the face of the earth in matters of agriculture. The extreme poverty in the land is not so much due to want of either land or material for agriculture but want of a scientific system of agriculture. The existence of numerous uneconomic cattle and religious mendicants are the source of a fearful economic drain on the country. There are far too many cattle for food supply, and there are too many cattle for the work to be done. Lack of food reduces the size and value of cattle. Lack of food and the refusal to eliminate unfit ones has led to the Indian cow giving the least amount of milk of any cow on the earth. Indian milk is most expensive to produce and over 90 per cent of the cattle in this country is an economic loss. . .

The most expensive manure, which is difficult to get, is being burnt by the people.

The potential taxability of India is very great, but her present taxable capacity is very low. The burden of the land tax is very much lower than what it ought to be. Land revenue in India is burdensome when the holding is smaller than an economic holding.

Legislation is necessary for abolishing uneconomic holdings. The present legislation was putting a premium on small farming. The size of a

holding is seldom sufficiently large for the use of labour-saving machinery. The present state of legislation is making all economic holdings to become a number of uneconomic holdings. There is absence of a proper system of village industries to take care of the surplus people. Further the land is asked to provide a whole-time living for a very large number of men and animals who can work on it only for half the time. The remedy is to devise and develop rural seasonal industries for men, women and oxen so that they can be gainfully occupied for a portion of the time when the land does not require their services.

The landlord regards his income as personal, and does not consider the improvement of the countryside as his gain. Moreover, tenants and landlords are eternally at war.

These extracts deal with four things. Waste of valuable manure, the distressing problem of cattle, uneconomic holdings and want of occupation for the peasantry all the year round. All these, apart from the burden of taxation, deepen the poverty of the masses and deserve consideration at the hands of all patriots. Everyone of them is capable of being handled in an effective manner. In a country where the cow is an object of worship, there should be no cattle problem at all. But our cow-worship has resolved itself into an ignorant fanaticism. The fact that we have more cattle than we can support is a matter for urgent treatment. I have already suggested the taking over of the question by cow-protection societies. It is their legitimate function. The question of uneconomic holdings requires revision of the family system. The question of wanton destruction of manure requires a true agricultural education and that of unemployment for half the year for millions of men and women can only be solved by the spinning-wheel. It is clear that to the fight with the Government we must add a scientific study and handling of the problems discussed by Mr. Sam Higginbottom.

Young India, 26-2-1925

175. SPINNING PROSPECTS IN ORISSA

Mr. Shankerlal Banker sends from Calcutta an account of his tour in Orissa. I give below a free translation of his letter¹.

Young India, 26-2-1925

¹ Not reproduced here. It dealt with the difficulties and the potentialities of khadi work in Orissa. *Vide* also "My Notes", 22-2-1925, sub-title, "Khadi in Utkal".

176. TELEGRAM TO ARYA, RANGOON

February 26, 1925

ARYA

RANGOON

RATILAL CHAMPA MARRIAGE CELEBRATED HAPPY AUSPICES WITH FULL RELIGIOUS RITES.

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

177. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

ON WAY TO DELHI,

Phagun Sud 4 [February 26, 1925]¹

CHI. MATRURADAS,

I have your letter. As regards the “plot” of the 8th you will see the news in the *Statesman*. The marriages of Rami²; and Kunverji³, Dahyabhai (Vallabhbbhai’s son) and Yashoda and Ratilal⁴ (Dr. Mehta’s son) and Champa took place on 24th, 25th and 26th in that order. There were strong reasons for solemnizing these marriages under the auspices of the Ashram.⁵ I think I shall reach Bombay on the 4th or the 5th.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

Mahadev’s letters overleaf.

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 From the postmark

² Daughter of Harilal Gandhi

³ Kunverji Parekh

⁴ Son of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta

⁵ *Vide* “Speech at Ahmedabad”, February 25, 1925 and “My Notes”, March 29, 1925.

178. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI¹

*En route DELHI,
February 27, 1925*

DEAR FRIEND & BHRR. . . ?

Why worry about nothing. Had I written to you in English probably you would have read the postcard correctly. I have always your heart hug. What matters *it* whether I have the body *hug* or not? I will not misunderstand you. I knew you were confused. Remember me to Rehana³.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 9551

179. LETTER TO S. V. BAPAT⁴

February 27, 1925

I have your letter. "Much wants more and loses all." Pray excuse me.

M. K. GANDHI

S. V. BAPAT
"KESARI-MAHRATTA" OFFICE
POONA

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

180. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

Phagun Sud 5 [February 27, 1925]⁵

DEAR HARIBHAU⁶,

I have read your article about birth-control. I am afraid if I write

¹ 1853-1936; judge of the Baroda High Court; Gandhiji's friend and lieutenant in the non-co-operation movement

² A form of greeting used between Gandhiji and the addressee whenever they met or wrote to each other

³ Addressee's daughter

⁴ This seems to be in reply to the addressee's request for Gandhiji's reminiscences of Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

⁵ From the contents. *Phagun Sud 5* in 1925 corresponded to this date.

⁶ Then editor of *Hindi Navajivan*

on the subject what is known today only to a few will become known to thousands of people. Because of this misgiving, I have not been able to decide whether I should discuss it in *Young India* and *Navajivan*.¹ If you wish me to write about it, discuss it with me when I reach the Ashram towards the end of March.

Blessings from
BAPU

BHAI HARIBHAU
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI

From the Hindi original: Haribhau Upadhyaya Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

181. TELEGRAM TO ABDUL MAJID

DELHI,
February 28, 1925

KHWAJA SAHEB
ABDUL MAJID
ALIGARH

EXPECT YOU HERE TOMORROW MORNING WITHOUT FAIL. I
MAY BE LEAVING TOMORROW EVENING.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S. N. 2456

182. TELEGRAM TO ANANDANANDA

DELHI,
February 28, 1925

SWAMI ANANDANANDA²
AHMEDABAD

CAN GIVE YOU FULL TIME 26TH MARCH. WILL IT DO. OTHERWISE
AM PREPARED COME AHMEDABAD BEFORE GOING MADRAS.

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

¹ Gandhiji's article "Birth Control" appeared in *Young India*

² Then Manager of Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad

183. LETTER TO DR. MANCREVOUR

February 28, 1925

I thank you for your letter. My belief in satyagraha and non-violence is as green as ever. I am myself still practising non-cooperation and so are thousands of men and women of India. The agreement with those who differ from me is to suspend non-cooperation as a national programme. This suspension leaves those who wish free to enter the legislative councils of this country.

M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

184. LETTER TO SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

Phagan Sud 6, Samvat 1981 [February 28, 1925]

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I have your letter. My programme is as follows:—

Ashram	March 4
Bombay	March 5
Madras	March 7
Vykom	March 8

The programme after that will be decided in Vykom. I expect to return to the Ashram on 26th March. I have to be at Botad on the 1st April and then I have to go to Madhada, Palitana, Sihor, etc.

Now I can see the Jam Saheb only after my return from Vykom; I would come to Bombay, provided he goes there.

Herewith Bhai Fulchand's letter. I have a very high opinion of him. This is an example of how the best of men are deceived by rumours. I am sure you will forgive Bhai Fulchand. When he of his own accord wrote to me saying that he would apologize I asked him to send the letter of apology to me.

Vandemataram from

MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3197 . Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

185. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

Phagan Sud 6, 1981 [February 28, 1925]

BHAI FULCHAND,

I have your letter. I have forwarded it¹ to Pattani Saheb. I got your second letter too. I shall reply to it publicly without mentioning any names.² I fail to understand the propriety of the rule that we ought not to dine at a drunkard's house.

Don't I go to people who do not wear khadi? The cause of prohibition would gain nothing directly by my doing as you suggest. Our not drinking despite going to his place does help it.

If we would have no such relations, we should leave society altogether.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2870. Courtesy: Sharadabehn shah

186. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Phagan Sud 6 [February 28, 1925]³

CHI MATHURADAS,

I shall be reaching there on Thursday morning by the Mail. I shall leave for Madras on the same day. Tell Shuaib that I shall reach there on Thursday. I do not think anything can be done about the Hindu-Muslim question for the present. I sense from your letter that you wish to talk about a lot of things. But it seems that I can have time for that only if you accompany me on one of my tours. This time Mahadev and Ramdas are with me.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Tell Mother that I constantly think of her. I am going to the

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² *Vide* "What Should Be Done Where Liquor Is Being Served?", 22-3-1925.

³ From the postmark

Ashram tomorrow morning. I shall leave the Ashram on Wednesday by the Mail.

CHI. MATHURADAS TEKUMJI
93 BAZAR GATE STREET
FORT, BOMBAY

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

187. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Phagan Sud 6, 1981 [February 28, 1925]

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

The charkha that I got specially made for you has arrived. It is certainly very fine to look at. Bhai Mahadev and I have both tried it; it works very well. I wonder if anyone at our place can set it up properly. Please let me know how it works. I had asked Chi. Maganlal to send one more charkha; I do not know if it has reached you. You must have received my previous letter. I am proceeding to Vykam.

Yours,

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 1606. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

188. REMINISCENCES OF KATHIAWAR-I

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

The memories of my visit to Kathiawar, which lasted from the 15th to 21st, will ever remain fresh in my mind. I was delighted to see the independence displayed by the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot. I had my misgivings about the usefulness of the People's Representative Assembly, but my presence during this body's deliberations for three hours dispelled them. The ultimate benefit from this organization would be known only in the future but it can be said that it is useful even in its present form. It rests with the representatives to increase its utility. The representatives have complete freedom to express themselves and they were seen exercising this to the full. Nobody seemed to worry about what views the Thakore Saheb would approve. The representatives expressed even such views as were likely to offend the Thakore Saheb.

As the proceedings were conducted in Gujarati, the atmosphere was lively. Here was none of the artificiality, snobbery, and so on that one finds in English speeches. Some speeches, one could say, were excellent and effective. The speeches did not drag on and most of them were to the point. I would not consider this council inferior to any other assembly in respect of debating ability, self-restraint and orderly procedure.

Prohibition was the main topic discussed by the Assembly. It unanimously passed a resolution to the effect that the Durbar should ban the distillation of liquor. The representatives knew that the Thakore Saheb was opposed to this resolution. And yet it was passed a second time.

A FLAW IN ARGUMENT

The Thakore Saheb had himself argued with the representatives. Hence his views on this subject could be known. He argued that if drink shops were banned, individual liberty would be curtailed. I think that there is a great flaw in this argument. It is difficult to understand how individual liberty is curtailed if liquor shops are closed down. People did not want drinking to be considered a crime, but they wanted a ban on the preparation and sale of liquor. No society or individual is entitled to prepare or sell a thing if it is considered harmful by them. Everyone is aware of the harm done by drinking. As there can be no liberty for anyone to steal, there can be none to distil or sell liquor. Those who cannot do without liquor may transgress the law. Many instances of such restrictions are found even in countries where individual liberty is cherished. Liberty and license are not the same thing. One cannot have the license to act as one pleases. If such license exists, then the goddess of liberty can never stay there. Everyone has the right to enjoy as much liberty as will not harm others. There is a legal maxim¹ in English that one should use one's property in such a way that others are not injured. I have every right to dig up my whole plot of land but I cannot dig it so that the foundation of my neighbour's house is damaged. If a section of the people drinks wine, the evil consequences are not suffered by the drinkers alone but their children and neighbours also suffer. America has closed down drink shops and breweries. That has not resulted in

¹ A Latin legal maxim, *Sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedars* which means: "Use your property in such a way as not to damage that of others."

the curtailment of individual liberty. When the whole world loudly protests against the drink trade, it is regrettable that the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot is defending individual liberty to drink.

PUBLIC OPINION

Assuming that the ban on the drink trade would curtail individual liberty, even then, if the people clearly hold a unanimous view, it is the duty of the ruler to act according to the wishes of the people. That is a principle recognized all over the world. There was no one in the People's Representative Assembly who did not desire a ban on the drink trade. There is evidence to show that the addicts themselves desire such a ban. Their families have suffered. It will be regrettable if the Thakore Saheb does not respect the wishes of the people in this matter. The ruler has taken the initiative in forming the People's Representative Assembly, and I would expect that he will not disregard the people's wish clinging to wrong reasoning and that he will earn the sincere blessings of the poor by banning the drink trade.

REGULARITY

The Thakore Saheb of Rajkot is a stickler for regularity. He does all his work at the appointed hour and diligently goes through all his appointments, and makes others do the same. He loves discipline. He believes that our greatest drawback is lack of discipline. That this is very much so cannot be denied. The people are not able to fulfil their good intentions for want of rules and discipline.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 1-3-1925

189. SILENCE DAY NOTES TO STEN KONOW¹

[*March 2, 1925*]²

I am sorry that I am silent. But you can say what you wish to. I will answer by writing. I am very busy editing *Young India*—but I will spare a few minutes.

INFLUENCE OF CHARKHA

It is not so much the individual I have in view as the nation. The

¹ 1867-1948; Norwegian Indologist, epigraphist and publicist, visiting professor at Santiniketan, 1924-25. These notes were written by Gandhiji in reply to Konow's questions. The sub-headings are in someone else's hand.

² From the addressee

effect of spinning on the individual may be imperceptible but its effect on the nation will be very considerable even as the work of a single soldier plodding at a trench may be nothing, but the cumulative effect of thousands working at it may turn the scale.

POSITION OF BROWBEATING SECTION OF INDEPENDENTS

They threaten to take a leading part. But they will not succeed. India's heart is not that way. What you have seen of brutality is, I hope, confined to a very narrow group.

POSSIBILITY OF AMICABLE SETTLEMENT WITH ENGLAND

Certainly there is every possibility. I am working to that end. But the thing largely depends upon English conduct as a whole.

From a photostat: C.W. 5993. Courtesy: Prof. George Morgenstierne

190. TELEGRAM TO ANANDANANDA

March 2, 1925

SWAMI

“NAVAJIVAN”

AHMEDABAD

OVER TEN COLUMNS POSTED TWO SECTIONS TO REACH TUESDAY.
REACHING THERE WEDNESDAY. MUST LEAVE FOR BOMBAY SAME
DAY. INFORM VALLABHBHAI ASHRAM.

BAPU

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

191. TELEGRAM TO JAYASHANKER WAGHJI

DELHI,

March 2, 1925

JAYASHANKER WAGHJI

JAMNAGAR

REACHING BOMBAY THURSDAY MORNING. LEAVING SAME
NIGHT FOR VYKOM.

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

192. TELEGRAM TO DR. VARADARAJULU NAIDU

March 2, 1925

DR. VARADARAJULU NAIDU¹

NOTHING CAN BE FIXED BEFORE REACHING VYKOM. REACHING
MADRAS PROBABLY SATURDAY. LEAVING SAME DAY FOR VYKOM.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

193. LETTER TO BIRENDRANATH SEN GUPTA

March 2, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I kept your letter by me all this time. I can see nothing to except in Maulana Mahomed Ali's statement.² May not a man seven feet tall say of another five feet in height that the former is superior to the latter in height, although the latter is superior to the former in every other respect? May not the Maulana truthfully say that he is superior to the so-called greatest man in the world in so far at least as the Maulana believes a religion which in his opinion is the best of all? I think the Maulana has legitimately drawn the contrast.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

194. LETTER TO FAZAL-I-HUSSAIN

DELHI,

March 2, 1925

DEAR MIAN SAHEB,

You were kind enough to ask Maulana Mahomed Ali to let me

¹ A member of the Congress Working Committee.

² Mahomed Ali had said: "As a follower of Islam I am bound to regard the creed of Islam as superior to that professed by the followers of any non-Islamic religion. And in this sense the creed of even a fallen and degraded Mussalman is entitled to a higher place than that of any other non-Muslim irrespective of his character, even though the person in question be Mahatma Gandhi himself." *Vide* Appendix "(A) Mahomed Ali's Letter to Swami Shraddhanand", April 10, 1924.

see your note on Hindu-Muslim question. He therefore sent it to me. I have read and reread it. I am entirely in favour of the Mussalmans in the Punjab and Bengal having representation in accordance with their numbers. But I have been unable to follow the argument in favour of separate electorates. Its working seems to be proving unsatisfactory almost everywhere. And if you have separate electorates for one community you can hardly resist such a claim on behalf of the others and finally by sub-sects. This must mean ruin of nationalism. Have you given a thought to the proposal made by me?

I hope you are better and stronger than when I met you. I wish it was possible for us to meet again and oftener.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

I am in Delhi just now. I leave tomorrow for Sabarmati and thence for Madras.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

195. LETTER TO ZAFAR ALI KHAN

March 2, 1925

I have your letter. I think you are unnecessarily perturbed. If you will reread my note, you will find it to be harmless. I am dealing with your letter in the columns of *Young India* as the subject matter is of general interest.¹ But assume that I have erred, must we not tolerate one another's opinions, especially when they are honestly held?

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

196. LETTER TO SAROJINI NAIDU

March 2, 1925

What is this decision about closing the national schools even? I

¹ *Vide* "My Crime", 5-3-1925.

can understand somewhat the closing of the college. Is it necessary to close the schools also?

With love,

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

197. LETTER TO SAM HIGGINBOTTOM

AS AT SABARMATI,

March 2, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter for which many thanks. I shall certainly call at your farm when I come to Allahabad. At the present moment I must not especially pay a visit there. I have not a day to spare. Have you seen my condensation of your evidence in *Y.I.*¹? Did you receive my note from the Yeravda prison?

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: Higginbottom Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

198. LETTER TO NAROTTAM LALJI JOSHI

March 2, 1925

I have preserved your letter for many days. If I get time, I shall make public use of it in the *Navajivan* without giving your name. If I do so, read my comments carefully. I hope to try and do it soon. You are very greedy. You wish to know everything all at once. You leave nothing for the future, no room for faith. *Ramanama* is no substitute for one's work or profession; but it is for its purification. While doing anything you can chant the Name. Only one with faith can gain some good from it. If you have no faith in your teacher, you can learn nothing from him. They will keep you in the Ashram even for a short period if there is room available. You may write to the manager if you feel like going there. You can do a lot of work in the village, if you

¹ *Vide* "Notes", February 26, 1925.

can be at peace there and do manual labour.

Vandemataram from

MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

*199. STATEMENT ON ADJOURNMENT OF ALL-PARTY
CONFERENCE SUB-COMMITTEE*

DELHI,

March 2, 1925

Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Motilal Nehru have issued the following statement explaining the reasons which led to the adjournment of the Sub-committee of the All-Party Conference over the Hindu-Muslim question:

It was decided at the meeting¹ of the Sub-committee, appointed by the committee of the All-Party Conference, to adjourn the proceedings *sine die* with the provision that the meeting be called on a requisition from a majority of the members of the Sub-committee. We were also required and authorized by the meeting to give a resume of the position as it stands today. The meeting was attended by very few members—14 out of 53. They were Maulana Mahomed Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Swami Shraddhanand, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. S. Datta, Mr. Ahmed Ali, M.L.A., Raja Ahmad Ali Khan of Salempur, Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Quiyum, Mr. Mohamed Yakub, Mr. N.M. Joshi, Mr. N.C. Kelkar, besides ourselves Mr. Jinnah came in for a few minutes from another meeting (Independent Party's meeting) he was attending at that time.

Lala Lajpat Rai had asked for a postponement by reason of the inability of Messrs Jayakar, Srinivasa Iyengar² and Jairamdas to attend. We were unable to postpone the meeting on our own responsibility. We, therefore, informed Lala Lajpat Rai that the question of postponement be placed before the meeting. This was consequently done. But apart from the absence of Lala Lajpat Rai and of the gentlemen named by him the attendance was otherwise also too meagre for

¹ Held on March 1. Gandhiji was the President of the Sub-committee and Motilal Nehru, its General Secretary.

² Lawyer and Congress leader from Madras; presided over the Gauhati session of the Congress, 1926

coming to any decision. In our opinion there was moreover no material for coming to any definite conclusions. Nor is there likelihood of any being reached in the near future. We, therefore, see no hope of being able to convene a general meeting of the Conference within the prescribed period except upon a requisition referred to by us. The failure to reach a decision is likely to disappoint the public. We would, however, advise publicists and others not to despond. That the Sub-committee has not been able to reach any decision is no reason for individuals or groups to relax their effort towards a solution.

There still remains to mention the swaraj scheme framed by the Sub-committee under Dr. Besant. Dissenting notes are being received by us from the members of that committee. In view, however, of the meagre attendance and the failure to reach a decision on the Hindu-Muslim problem the scheme could not be considered by the meeting.

The Hindustan Times, 4-3-1925

200. LETTER TO MESSRS DABHOLKER & JESHTARAM¹

SABARMATI,²

March 3, 1925

GENTLEMEN,

I have your letter of. . . enclosing copy of your letter of. . . I have not yet received the letter which has probably gone after me to Delhi.

As the case is before the court in an advanced state and as Mr. Godrej has his own solicitors, I do not wish to say anything about the terms of reference. I shall be glad to serve as arbitrator with anyone your client and Mr. Godrej may nominate. Only my capacity for work in that direction is limited and my co-arbitrator will kindly have to suit my other appointments. Forwarding your letter to Mr. Godrej for such action as he may choose to take.

Yours sincerely,

From a draft in Gandhiji's hand: S.N. 10527 R

¹ This letter was drafted on the reverse of a letter dated March 2, 1925, from Messrs Dabholker & Jeshtaram (a firm of solicitors) to Gandhiji. The source has two blank spaces in the first paragraph.

² In "Letter to Fazl-i-Hussain", 2-3-1925, however, Gandhiji writes from Delhi in postscript: "I leave tomorrow for Sabarmati".

201. TELEGRAM TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI¹

[March 4, 1925]

REACHING MADRAS SATURDAY MORNING. LEAVING FOR VYKOM
SAME DATE. DO ACCOMPANY.

From a photostat: S.N. 10633

202. NOTES-I

HINDU-MUSLIM PROBLEM

The reader will see from the statement published in the Press that the Sub-committee of the All-Party Conference has not been able to come to any decision on the problem of problems. But perhaps it was as well that it did not. The atmosphere for a reasonable solution is lacking. Each distrusts the other. In such circumstances there can be no common ground of action. Each necessarily wants to surrender as little as possible. Nor does one notice a real anxiety on the part of any of the parties for a solution. There is, however, no cause for despair. The present failure may be a stepping-stone to success, if those who can trust and who have no fear of one another will be true to their faith and try to work at a solution. Any solution to be national must disregard the Government, i.e., must have inherent working power and must not depend for its proper working upon the goodwill of the Government.

HELPLESSNESS

I have a long telegram describing a daring dacoity attempted in Sukkur at 10 p.m. on the 22nd near the Police Station and in the heart of the town. The telegram adds that the bankers are feeling unsafe and that the dacoits are still uncaught. The object of the telegram no doubt is to excite public sympathy and criticism of a Government the most expensive in the world and yet failing to afford simple protection to life and property. That sympathy the citizens of Sukkur have. Criticism of the Government they may also have by the cartload. But the more relevant question is what the bankers were doing when the dacoits came. From the telegram it would appear that they more or

¹ This was in reply to the telegram from C. Rajagopalachari to Devdas Gandhi dated March 4, 1925, which read: "Try accompany Bapu. Write immediately date reaching Madras."

less successfully attempted self-defence. Those who would keep the possessions cannot have too much power of self-defence. When the helpless cry of robbery comes under my notice, I think more of the weakness of the robbed than of the incapacity of the Government to protect. Law allows the right of self-defence. Human dignity demands the courage to defend oneself. It would be a training in swaraj if the people everywhere instead of looking to the authority to defend their lives, property and honour would learn to rely upon themselves for self-defence.

A CRY FROM SYLHET

Here is a pathetic appeal from Sylhet in support of the invitation to visit that District:

Although our present may not justify us in giving you trouble, we have a past which may not fail to draw your sympathy. Ours is a peculiar position. Politically we are under the administration of the Government of Assam, but we have a close inseparable affinity with Bengal in all matters, linguistic, social, religious and political. This District Congress Committee is within the jurisdiction of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee.

During the palmy days of non-co-operation this province of Assam including our district was perhaps a victim of bureaucratic wrath next only to the Punjab.

Tea-garden-labour exodus, the incidents of tearing Koran at Maijbhag and lastly the tragedy of Kanaighat had introduced this district to the rest of India.

The "Law and Order" exacted a punitive tax of two lacs more or less from this district containing about 26 lacs of souls.

Nearly 200 national workers were imprisoned.

This ruthless repression dealt a fatal blow to the Congress activities. Many went to their respective callings and hence there is a miserable fall in our ranks.

Out of ten national schools we have only one dragging its weary life. About 20,000 handlooms are at work, but, alas, with the exception of a very few, almost all work in foreign yarn. Sufficient quantity of cotton is being exported by the foreign capitalist year by year from our hills.

The past record of Sylhet is undoubtedly brilliant. But no nation can live merely upon its past. A glorious past may be, ought to be, an inspiration for the present. But the future can only be determined by the present conduct. It is, therefore, necessary for the people in the Sylhet District to bestir themselves and make the constructive

programme a success so far as their part of the country is concerned. It is a sad reflection that all over the country the imprisonment left the people paralysed. If we had understood the secret of suffering, they should have invigorated us instead of enervating us as they did in general. It ought not to be beyond the ability of the people of Sylhet to intercept some of the cotton that leaves their district nor to persuade the weavers to weave hand-spun yarn and to supply them with such yarn spun in their own district. Then and not till then will they be entitled to ask me to visit them.

THE BAR SINISTER

General Smuts¹ has at last spoken out on the proposed extension of the Colour Bar in South African Legislation. The reader will remember the cablegram received sometime ago that the Union Government was seeking to put the ban on Asiatics being employed in the mines. Speaking on and against that legislation General Smuts is reported to have said:

In opposing the Colour Bar Bill in the Union Assembly, General Smuts declared that the Bill sought to give the Government power by regulation to apportion work in mines and works between whites on the one hand, and Natives and Asiatics on the other, which he thought was a very serious matter. He felt that the Bill was not honest dealing and it was his deliberate opinion that there was only one guarantee of the security of white civilization namely, honest justice between man and man in this country. ("Hear, hear!") Turning to the Bill, as it affected Asiatics, he said that in the days of his negotiation with Mr. Gandhi the position which the latter took up, and which had been taken up at subsequent conferences in London, was an appeal not to dishonour Indians. "We recognize", said Mr. Gandhi, "there is a difference between you and us and that distinctions must be made, but don't cast a stigma on us in the laws of your country," but in this Bill they were doing the very thing they were asked to avoid. They were gathering on their heads the hatred of the whole of Asia from one side to the other. In conclusion, he suggested that the matter should be seriously considered, whether they should not discharge the order for the second reading of the Bill, and see whether some way out of the difficulty could not be found.

General Smuts has correctly given the substance of my conversation with him. My point was that whilst administrative

¹ J. C. Smuts (1870-1950); South African general and statesman, late Prime Minister

difference there was bound to be so long as human nature remained what it was and so long as there was a conflict between European culture and the Indian, a legal recognition of the difference in the shape of the introduction of the Bar sinister in the laws of the country was an intolerable burden. The settlement of 1914 chiefly consisted in the vindication of the Indian position. With General Smuts' opposition we may hope that the Bill will now be dropped. But let us not deceive ourselves. The Natal Disfranchising Bill recently passed is an extension of the "Bar Sinister". General Smut' opposition therefore means only a protest against the bar being introduced even in the matter of employment, not against the bar altogether. However I tender my congratulations to General Smuts on his plain speech at the risk of still further weaken-ing his political position in his country. We may not be satisfied till the South African statute-book is purged of all legal inequality as between whites and Asiatics or better still as between white and coloured people.

Young India, 5-3-1925

203. GOD AND CONGRESS

A friend writes:

There is one matter on which I have been longing to approach you for an explanation. It is about the term "God". As a national worker I would not have anything to say against such a passage as this occurring in a recent number of *Young India*: "I present it (*Ramanama*) to the reader whose vision is not blurred and whose faith is not damped by overmuch learning. Learning takes us through many stages in life, but it fails us utterly in the hour of danger and temptation. Then faith alone saves" (*Young India*, 22-1-'25, p.27).¹ For it is a confession of your individual faith; and I know also that you have not failed on occasions to put in a word of praise about conscientious atheists where it was deserved. As witness the following sentences in your *Niti Dharma*: "We come across many wicked men, priding themselves on their religiosity, while doing the most immoral deeds. On the other hand, there are also men like the late Mr. Bradlaugh² who, while being extremely virtuous and moral, take pride in calling themselves atheists." As for the faith in *Ramanama* which "alone saves us in the hour of danger and temptation", I may mention the martyrdom

¹ *Vide* "Notes", 22-1-1925, sub-title, "Ramanama".

² 1833-91; English free thinker and politician; *vide* "Ethical Religion - V", February 2, 1907.

of the rationalist Francisco Ferrer in 1909 at Barcelona in Spain at the hands of men who believed in Jesus' name, their *Ramanama*. I shall not dwell on the Holy Wars, the burnings and mutilations of heretics, and the torture and slaughter of animals and sometimes of men in sacrifice—all of which have been carried out "for the greater glory of God and in His name". This is by the bye [*sic*].

As a national worker, however, I feel, I must draw your attention to the objection which Mr.—raised (on behalf of a rationalist friend of his) to your saying that only "godfearing" men can become true non-co-operators, and remind you of the assurance you then gave to all to the effect that the programme of national work does not require a man to declare his religious faith. (*Vide Young India*, May 4, 1921 pp. 138-9)¹ That objection applies with greater force now than it did at that time, because "God" has now a place on pledges and vows such as that administered to Congress volunteers, which begins "with God as witness, I. . ." Now you must be knowing that the Buddhists (like the Burmese. . . now an "Indian" people, and your friend Prof. Dharmanand Kosambi) and the Jains, as well as many Indians who do not belong to these ancient recognized sects are agnostic in faith. Is it possible to these, if they wish, to enrol as Congress Volunteers conscientiously and with full understanding of a pledge which begins in the name of an Entity they ignore? I not, is it proper to exclude from Congress service any such merely because of their religious faith? May I suggest that a conscience clause be added to accommodate all such cases, allowing of solemn affirmation in place of the oath in the name of God (to which even some believers in a personal God object, as the Quakers), or else a substitution of "Conscience" in a place of "God" by all conscientious objectors to the use of the latter, or—best of all—that a solemn affirmation without reference to God and with or without "Conscience" be required of *all* comers without distinction? I approach you as you are the author of that pledge and now the President of the Congress. I did so once before, but I am afraid, not in time for you to be able to attend to it before your historic arrest at Sabarmati in 1922.

So far as the conscientious objection is concerned the mention of God may be removed if required from the Congress pledge of which I am proud to think I was the author. Had such an objection been raised at the time, I would have yielded at once. I was unprepared for the objection in a place like India. Though there is officially the Charvak² school, I do not know that it has any votaries. I deny that

¹ *Vide* "A String of Faith", May 4, 1921.

² Ancient materialist philosopher whose followers are called by his name

Buddhists and Jains are atheists or agnostics. The latter they cannot be. Those who believe in the soul as apart from and capable of life independent of and after the dissolution of the body cannot be called atheists. We may all have different definitions or "God". If we could all give our own definitions of God there would be as many definitions as there are men and women. But behind all that variety of definitions there would be also a certain sameness which would be unmistakable. For the root is one. God is that indefinable something which we all feel but which we do not know. Charles Bradlaugh described himself as an atheist no doubt but many a Christian declined to regard him as such. He recognized in Bradlaugh a greater kinship with himself than many a lip Christian. I had the privilege of attending the funeral of that good friend of India. I noticed several clergymen at the function. There were certainly several Mussalmans and many Hindus in the procession. They all believed in God. Bradlaugh's denial of God was a denial of Him as He was known to Bradlaugh to have been described. His was an eloquent and indignant protest against the then current theology and the terrible contrast between precept and practice. To me God is truth and love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of Light and Life and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. For in His boundless love God permits the atheist to live. He is the searcher of hearts. He transcends speech and reason. He knows us and our hearts better than we do ourselves. He does not take us at our word for He knows that we often do not mean it, some knowingly and others unknowingly. He is a personal God to those who need His personal presence. He is embodied to those who need His touch. He is the purest essence. He simply Is to those who have faith. He is all things to all men. He is in us and yet above and beyond us. One may banish the word "God" from the Congress but one has no power to banish the Thing Itself. What is a solemn affirmation if it is not the same thing as in the name of God. And surely conscience is but a poor and laborious paraphrase of the simple combination of three letters called God. He cannot cease to be because hideous immoralities or inhuman brutalities are committed in His name. He is long suffering. He is patient but He is also terrible. He is the most exacting personage in the world and the world to come. He metes out the same measure to us that we mete out to our neighbours—men and brutes. With Him ignorance is no excuse. And withal He is ever forgiving for He always gives us the chance to

repent. He is the greatest democrat the world knows, for He leaves us “unfettered” to make our own choice between evil and good. He is the greatest tyrant ever known, for He often dashes the cup from our lips and, under cover of free will, leaves us a margin so wholly inadequate as to provide only mirth for Himself at our expense. Therefore, it is that Hinduism calls it all His sport—*lila*, or calls it all an illusion—*maya*. We are *not*, He along *Is*. And if we will be, we must eternally sing His praise and do His will. Let us dance to the tune of His *bansi*—lute, and all would be well.¹

Since reference has been made to a booklet² of mine on ethics and religion, I must draw the attention of the reader to the fact that what the correspondent refers to is a translation of the original which is in Gujarati. But the Gujarati itself as the preface makes it clear is not an original effort but an adaptation from an American publication called *Ethical Religion* by Mr. Salter. The translation came under my notice in Yeravda Jail and I regretted to notice the absence of any mention of the source from which I had borrowed. The translator himself I understand did not rely upon the original Gujarati but a Hindi translation. The English rendering therefore is a round-about thing. I owe this explanation to the author of the original book and I am glad that the mention of the work by my correspondent has reminded me of my obligation.

Young India, 5-3-1925

204. MY CRIME

I gladly print the following from Maulana Zafar Ali Khan written by him in his capacity as President of the Punjab Khilafat Committee:

I have read with feelings of mingled amazement and pain your pronouncement, in *Young India* of the 26th instant, on stoning incidents in Kabul. You say that “this particular form of penalty cannot be defended on the mere ground of its mention in the Koran”.³ You, moreover, declare that “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”. Finally you maintain that error can claim no exemption even if it can be supported by the

¹ What follows has been appended to the article under Gandhij’s signature.

² *Vide* “Ethical Religion - V”, February 2, 1907.

³ *Vide* “Notes”, 26-2-1925, sub-title, “Stoning to Death”.

scriptures of the world.

I have always paid unstinted homage to your greatness and have all along looked upon you as one of the few men who are making modern history; but I would be failing in my duty as a Mussalman if I refrained from pointing out to you that by challenging the right of the Koran to regulate the life of its followers in its own way you have shaken the belief of millions of your Muslim admirers in your capacity to lead them.

You are at perfect liberty to express your opinion one way or the other as to whether renegades can be stoned to death under the law of Islam. But to hold that even if the Koran supported such form of penalty, it should be condemned outright as an error, is a form of reasoning which cannot appeal to the Mussalmans.

Error is after all a relative term and Mussalmans have their own way of interpreting it. To them the koran is an unalterable law which transcends the ever changing policies and expediencies of puny humanity. Would to God that to your multifarious activities as leader of India you had not added the rather delicate task of adversely criticizing the teaching of the Holy Koran.

The Maulana has put an interpretation upon my note which it does not bear. I have not adversely (or otherwise) criticized the teachings of the Holy Koran. But I have criticised the teachers, that is, the interpreters, in anticipation of their defending the penalty of stoning to death. I claim to understand enough of the Koran and the history of Islam to know that a multitude of interpreters have interpreted the Koran to suit their preconceived notions. My purpose was to issue a warning against the acceptance of such interpretations. But I would like to say that even the teachings themselves of the Koran cannot be exempt from criticism. Every true scripture only gains by criticism. After all we have no other guide but our reason to tell us what may be regarded as revealed and what may not be. The early Mussalmans accepted Islam not because they knew it to be revealed but because it appealed to their virgin reason. I fully endorse the Maulana's statement that error is a relative term. But we know as a matter of fact that some things are universally accepted as errors. Death by torture is, I expect, such an error. In making the three statements the Maulana has quoted, I have simply mentioned three canons of interpretations which I think are incapable of challenge. Anyway, I abide by them. And if I am at perfect liberty to express my opinion "as to whether renegades can be stoned to death under the law of Islam" why may I not express an opinion as to whether

penalty of stoning to death can be imposed at all under the law of Islam? The Maulana has betrayed intolerance of criticism by a non Muslim of anything relating to Islam. I suggest to him that intolerance of criticism even of what one may prize as dear as life itself is not conducive to the growth of public corporate life. Surely Islam has nothing to fear from criticism even if it be unreasonable. I therefore suggest to the Maulana the advisability in the light of my criticism of applying himself to an elucidation of the tremendous issues involved in the incidents reported from Kabul.

Young India, 5-3-1925

205. NOTES—II

AN OASIS IN THE DESERT

In the midst of complaints against Bombay in the matter of Khaddar, one is glad to find that a group of ladies are doing silent and effective work in spreading khaddar. A letter before me says:

This month we are selling over Rs. 2,000 worth of khaddar vests for the work guild and schools. Moreover we have sent some to Bhavnagar. Add to this the usual money sales. A new class is being opened in the Seva Sadan¹ on the condition that only those children are to be admitted to it who are prepared to do a certain amount of spinning every day. When they have mastered the art, they are to contribute 2,000 yards per month. This is impressing the existing classes. The girls are to commence hand-spinning in some of them.

Another friend properly remarks that it is not the people that are apathetic. It is the workers, the leaders. They are doing nothing to spread the gospel. The people have not yet developed that liking for khaddar as to make them go out of their way to procure khaddar, but if it is brought to their doors, they would gladly take it. The harvest is indeed such but the labourers are few. Why will not every worker make it a point to sell a given quantity of khaddar per month? I know that we have made sufficient progress in the manufacture of khaddar to be able to supply the most fastidious tastes. I was shown the other day a rich bride's trousers. It was all made of khaddar and silver and gold embroidery. There was nothing wanting from a rich man's point of view. And the khaddar saris were as fine as one could possibly desire. There was the inevitable richly-coloured shawl too made of

¹ Sarasvat Hall; *vide* "A Correction", 26-3-1925.

khaddar which the bride has to wear on her being given to the bridegroom. Let no one therefore pretend that he or she does not use khaddar because it is not fine enough or coloured according to one's tastes. Will the workers all over India please note and copy the example of the silent sisters whose efforts I have brought to their notice?

FARIDPUR CONFERENCE

I have telegrams from Faridpur urging me to attend the Bengal Provincial Conference. I am extremely sorry for my inability to attend it, much as I would love to do so. I had warned¹ the Faridpur friends not to rely upon my attendance. I had told them that my movements were uncertain. Mine is not an enviable position. I have calls from Bihar, Wardha, Orissa, Andhra and several other places. I would like to visit all of them. But since I cannot visit all at the same time, I must judge where I can be of the greatest service at a particular moment. I feel that my place just now is among the valiant band of satyagrahis at Vykom. It is a promise long overdue. They are endeavouring to enforce the doctrine of satyagraha in every minute detail. They are few in number. They are fighting against heavy odds. Till now I have interfered with their seeking monetary and other help from outside. It is due to them that I should as a professing expert go to them and guide them and hearten them for all that lies in front of them. The friends from the other provinces will not grudge me or them this privilege of long-deferred communion.

What is more, whereas I fancy I can be of some assistance to these satyagrahis, I feel sure that I can be of no use in the other provinces except to be on show there. My prescription for them is incredibly simple. Settle your local differences whether they are between Hindus and Mussalmans or other or whether they are between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. Spin as much as you can, wear khaddar on all occasions, enrol as many selfspinning members as you can for the Congress. And add to these those who will not spin themselves but will gladly furnish 2,000 yards of yarn per month, hand-spun for them by others. Help the suppressed classes in your district or province in every way you can, rid your place of the drink and the opium evil, and then invite me for further effort. If we want an era of hope drawing upon us next year, during this year of grace we shall

¹ *Vide* "Telegram to Secretary, Congress Committee, Calcutta", 23-2-1925.

devote all our energy to the national constructive programme undeterred by anything that the Government may or may not do, the Bengal Ordinance notwithstanding. If we want to see the Ordinance removed, we must generate enough strength for the purpose. The only way I know of so doing is to work the constructive programme with all our might.

A CASE FOR RECONSIDERATION

Mr. A. V. Thakkar, that friend of the suppressed classes, has sent me a copy of the Report of the Committee appointed by the Bombay Corporation to inquire into the ejection from municipal chawls of certain members belonging to the suppressed classes. These poor men and women have been driven out on the grounds that they are not in municipal service, that some of them can afford to pay more and that some others are undesirable persons against whom prosecutions have been proved. On behalf of the evicted people it has been contended that they are near relatives of the employees, that they have been living in municipal chawls for years and that the evictions have been brought about at the instance of corrupt municipal servants who could not get bribes from the evicted persons. In the Municipal Commissioner's report it is stated that

some years ago after visiting the chawls and making enquiries I was satisfied that the evidence and statements made (about corruption) were such that no impartial person could accept them.

I cannot recall any such statement having been made by me. But the question of bribery is irrelevant. Even if every Municipal official would be proved to be above corruption, the eviction of the people other than employees is bad in principle *so far as the suppressed classes are concerned*. Theirs is a special case. They have nowhere to go to. They do not cluster together in municipal chawls for the sake of finding cheap habitation. They live there because they can procure no other for love or money. I hold that it is the duty of the Corporation not only to let the relatives of the suppressed class employees remain with them but it is also to provide enough and decent additional accommodation for these classes. The Corporation will be entitled to charge a reasonable rent for such accommodation. I know instances of very respectable members belonging to the suppressed classes having been unable to procure lodgings at any rent whatsoever. The owners will not let their houses to these classes. The objection of the Committee or the Municipal Commissioner to

persons other than employees occupying municipal chawls would be valid, if it were raised in connection with any other class. I hope therefore that the case will be reopened and provision made for every one of the evicted men and women of the suppressed class.

Young India, 5-3-1925

206. TELEGRAM TO PRESIDENT, MADRAS CORPORATION

March 5, 1925

PRESIDENT

MADRAS CORPORATION

MADRAS

THANKS. GLADLY ACCEPT ADDRESS SATURDAY AT TIME CONVENIENT CORPORATION.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

207. TELEGRAM TO DR. VARADARAJULU NAIDU

March 5, 1925

DR. VARADARAJULU NAIDU

3 BROADWAY

MADRAS

HAVE WIRED CORPORATION AGREEING ACCEPT ADDRESS SATURDAY IMPOSSIBLE STAY TWO DAYS MADRAS VIEW SILENCE DAY BEING IMMEDIATELY AFTER.

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

208. TELEGRAM TO S. SRINIVASA IYENGER

March 5, 1925

S. SRINIVASA IYENGER

MYLAPORE

MADRAS

HAVE WIRED CORPORATION AGREEING ACCEPT ADDRESS SATURDAY.

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

209. TELEGRAM TO ANNE MARIE PETERSEN

March 5, 1925

MISS PETERSEN¹

PORTO NOVO

REACHING MADRAS SATURDAY MORNING
"EN ROUTE" VYKOM.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

210. LETTER TO AMRITLAL KHETSI

BOMBAY,

*Phagan Sud 10 [March 5, 1925]*²

BHAISHRI AMRITLAL,

I am sorry to learn that Chi. Rami is ill. While I am at Vykom keep me informed about her. Tell her to write to me as soon as she gets well.

Blessings from

MOHANDAS

BHAISHRI AMRITLAL KHETSI

NEAR KANYASHALA

DHRANGADHRA

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 677. Courtesy: Navajivan Trust

211. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

*Phagan Sud 10 [March 5, 1925]*³

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter from Ranchi. A folding charkha has been sent to your Calcutta address from the Ashram and another, of a new pattern, from Delhi. Both were despatched before your letter was received; so they have gone to Calcutta.

I am sorry to learn about your wife's indifferent health. It is difficult to give you any advice without knowing the full details of her

¹ A member of the staff of the Danish Missionary Society in South India

² Gandhiji was in Bombay on March 5, 1925, *en route* to Vykom.

³ Gandhiji left Bombay for Madras on March 5, 1925.

illness. However, as a general rule during illness the patient should have as little food as possible, and this too mainly milk and fruit. It is our common practice to close one's bedroom during illness whereas there is all the greater need then for fresh air. But then all the things I suggest are beside the point; whatever your doctor or *vaid*¹ says should be taken as right.

I am leaving for Vykom today. Probably I shall have to be in Madras Presidency till the end of this month. I hope to reach the Ashram by the 26th or 27th March.

Yours,

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6118. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

212. INTERVIEW TO PRESS ON HINDU-MUSLIM PROBLEM

BOMBAY,

March 5, 1925

My views remain the same as hitherto. Unity is inevitable. It will take longer than I had expected. The estrangement is undoubtedly growing. Let us hope that even in the midst of the storm, some of us will remain calm I am out for conquest. I as a Hindu will not therefore quarrel with the Mussalmans, neither will I yield to threats, such as I see are reported to have been uttered at Peshawar. I am in correspondence² both with Maulana Zafar Ali Khan and Dr. Kitchlew³. I hope that they are incorrectly reported. But I must refuse to lose my head even if they have said all that has been reported of them. I do not believe in the efficacy of retaliation. I would urge the Hindus not to be angry over such incidents. But I see that there is no settlement to be had in the near future. No lasting settlement can be had by higgling. I cannot be interested in a fight for sharing power with the bureaucracy. Such fight can only strengthen British dominance. I would prefer anarchy to that dominance. As equals I would value co-operation of the British, but I would prefer anarchy to their dominance. For I know that we can never become one nation through that dominance. I can see the chance of reconciliation between Hindu and Mussalmans after

¹ A physician practising the Ayurvedic system of medicine

² *Vide* "My Crime", 5-3-1925.

³ 1887-1963; Barrister and Congress leader of the Punjab

a free and hearty fight, but I see none with British arms restraining us. We must learn to restrain ourselves. My motto, therefore, is “Unite now, today, if you can; fight if you must. But in every case avoid British intervention”. I know that the temptation is great. But, great or small, I must avoid it at all cost. I can see swaraj rising out of the Thermopylae being enacted in every street or village in India, but I can see no swaraj out of the armed neutrality between the two communities. There is as much need for a change of heart among the Hindus and Mussalmans, as there is among the British, before a proper settlement is arrived at.

“But who will follow your advice ?” asked the interviewer. The Mahatma replied:

I will. Is it not enough ? Must I surrender my belief because no one will follow it ?

“Still, that is no answer to my question,” said the interviewer. The Mahatma answered:

Your complaint is just. I cannot however take you any further. I know that I am at a discount just now. People will rush to the Government and in such circumstances if I were the Government, probably I would do exactly as the British are doing, i.e., try to divide both and rule. What can one do with those who want to be ruled? The Hindu-Muslim problem is therefore just now an insoluble puzzle. I propose to keep out of it, holding myself available whenever wanted. I believe in God, not as a theory but a fact, more real than that of life itself. I must therefore wait upon Him. In the hour of my need He will guide my steps on this question as He has done hitherto. Meanwhile, in the spinning-wheel and untouchability, I have more than enough to occupy my time and that of those who think like me.

“ But will you not make some concrete suggestion for those who will (not ?) follow your advice ?” was the last question.

I must think about them. I do not want to add to the complications by adding a new formula to the many that are current among us, unless I see a chance of its proper working.

The Hindu, 6-3-1925

213. LETTER TO JANAKDHARI PRASAD

ON THE TRAIN,
March 6, 1925

DEAR JANAKDHARI BABU¹,

Your letter has been travelling with me all this time. I am now writing this in the train that is taking me to Madras. I had no intention of being inattentive to anybody at Belgaum. But what was I to do ? I had not a moment for personal chats. I therefore hardened my heart.

You are morose. There is no occasion for it. Let us do the day's work to the best of our ability and smile. All work faithfully done has the same value in the book of life. Why then should we worry?

You have not asked any definite questions. But if you have any, pray do not hesitate to ask them. Be assured that you are the same to me that you were before. I treasure the memory of the faithful co-workers of Champaran. I shall never have and never had a more faithful band to work with. If I had such a band throughout India, swaraj will not be long in coming to India.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 48

214. TELEGRAM TO "NAVAJIVAN"

MADRAS,
March 6, 1925

"NAVAJIVAN"
AHMEDABAD

POSTED SIXTEEN COLUMNS. ANDREWS ARTICLES MUST GO IN.
PICK AND CHOOSE FROM MINE.

From a handwritten draft: S. N. 2456

¹ One of Gandhiji's co-workers in the Champaran campaign of 1917

215. TELEGRAM TO PRINCIPAL, UNION COLLEGE,
ALWAYE

MADRAS,
March 6, 1925

PRINCIPAL
UNION COLLEGE
ALWAYE

PREFER FIX PROGRAMME AFTER VYKOM INSTEAD
BREAKING JOURNEY.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

216. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

ONTHE WAY,
Phagan Sud 11 [March 6, 1925]¹

CHI. CHHAGANLAL²,

If the man from Ankleshwar comes, give him his ring and ask him to write to me if he wants to say anything. Do not allow him to stay at all in the Ashram. The fellow is obviously mad.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

You must have sent the Rs. 5,000 of Wadhwan. Do the needful about the cheques for Rs. 4,000.

CHI. CHHAGANLAL
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 10245

217. INTERVIEW TO "SWADESAMITRAN"³

MADRAS,
March 7, 1925

Our representative had an interview with Mahatmaji at about 1.30 p.m. at the residence of Shri Srinivasa Iyenger. . . . When our representative arrived there, a few

¹ In 1925, *Phagan Sud 11* fell on March 6. The postmark, however bears the date March 7, 1925.

² Gandhiji's nephew and associate

³ A Tamil Daily

college girls were already there to have the *darshan*¹ of Mahatmaji.

Mahatmaji asked the girls:

Do you spin on the charkha?

One of the girls replied that as they were at college, they could not find time for spinning. Mahatmaji asked them a few questions about their college, curricula, etc, and asked,

“Do you like Tamil language more, or English?”

One of them replied that they have more liking for Tamil which was their mother tongue. At the end, when the girls took leave of Gandhiji, he advised them to take to spinning on charkha. The girls promised to do so.

Thereafter, our representative had the following conversation with Gandhiji:

QUESTION: When I read in papers about what you told a Press correspondent at Bombay regarding the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity, I felt that the atmosphere was such as to cause difference. I would therefore like to know from you directly your assessment of the present situation.

There is an increasing lack of unity between the two fraternal groups. Mutual suspicion has grown.

What would be your immediate solution to this problem?

Mutual mistrust should be given up to strengthen the bonds of unity; the people should repose faith in their leaders.

In connection with the Viceroy's visit to England, the British Press have started a propaganda campaign against India and against Indian interests and advancement. In this context, a few persons have suggested that we should also do counter-propaganda in England for making the truth known and for explaining the viewpoints of the Indian people. I would like to know your opinion in the matter.

It is impossible for us to do propaganda through the British Press. The British Press is bent upon furthering Imperial aims. However much we give them facts about the actual position in India, they would not publish them. At one time, factual material for publication as an advertisement was sent to a British paper by a person along with the charges for publication. But the paper returned the money saying that it could not publish it.

Can't we propagate our views among the general public in England?

The British people are not such as to believe only the views expressed by our speakers. The Englishmen by nature are made to

¹ Sight of a person, place or thing considered holy

realize the bad situation in a country only by two indications, that is, by the eruption of revolution or the launching of the mass movement of non-co-operation with government in that country. Once upon a time when Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea¹ went to England and ably represented the degenerated state of affairs in India, it is said that an English gentlemen posed this question: "If what you say is true, why haven't your countrymen risen in revolt?" The same mentality still persists.

It is said that the majority report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee² is retrograde. Is it not necessary to start a country-wide agitation against Government accepting the findings of the committee?

As far as I am concerned, I try my level best to read the minds of the common people whether it be the retrograde findings of the Muddiman Committee, Government's repressive measures, or its frightful governance, I do not think that any of these factors would be able to arouse feelings among our countrymen at present. To the extent I can, I only see a sense of despair overwhelming the people all over our country.

What then is your suggestion to rid the people of their despair and infuse spirit in them?

There is no better device to inculcate the right spirit in the people than the universal adoption of hand-spinning on charkha. The primary demand of the masses, the poor, is food. It is charkha alone that is capable of giving food to all of them, like a grand benefactor.

You might have come across the recent speeches made by General Smuts. Is it advisable for South African Indian to join hands with him and his partymen in the agitation for securing the rights mentioned in his speeches?

If General Smuts really intends to put in practice all that he uttered in his [recent] speeches, it is enough if united efforts are made

¹ 1848-1925; Member of the Congress deputation to England in 1890; President of the Indian National Congress in 1895 and 1902; member, Viceroy's Executive Council.

² The official committee appointed under the chairmanship of Sir Alexander Muddiman to examine and report on the improved working of the Government of India Act. In its report published in March 1925, the majority comprising Muddiman and three others took the position that by their terms of reference they could not recommend remedies inconsistent with the purpose of the Act, but they praised the successful working of the system. On the other hand, the minority found that the dyarchical constitution had failed and was incapable of yielding better resume in the future; *vide India in 1925-26*.

to achieve the rights enumerated by him. At present he is in the opposition. Indians [in South Africa] may join him in his efforts to secure the said rights. But one has to be cautious as the possibility of his going back on his words when he is back in power should also be borne in mind.

Gandhiji said it was not possible for him to say then how long he would stop at Vykom, and that he would inform all concerned prior to his return to Madras.

[From Tamil]

Swadesamitran, 7-3-1925

218. INTERVIEW TO FREE PRESS OF INDIA

MADRAS,
March 7, 1925

A representative of the *Free Press of India* interviewed the Mahatma in regard to Lord Reading's visit to England.

Do you anticipate any change in Britain's Indian policy consequent on Birkenhead¹ Reading consultations?

What a big question this for a simple man believing in the spinning-wheel?

Supposing Government takes to a policy of repression in the near future, what will be your message to the country?

I will say: "Khaddar, khaddar, khaddar". That is one thing I emphasize. Remember the removal of untouchability too.

Do you believe that khaddar only is sufficient answer for repression.

Yes, that is so. It is an effective one.

The Bombay Chronicle, 9-3-1925

¹ Lord Birkenhead (1872-1930); English statesman; Secretary of State for India, 1924-28

219. INTERVIEW TO "SWARAJYA"

MADRAS,
March 7, 1925

Questioned by the *Swarajya* representative whether the acceptance of office by the Swarajists would in any way affect the relations between the Congress and the Swaraj Party, Mahatmaji answered with a decisive "No" and added that the Congress had given a *carte blanche* to the Swarajists in regard to their activities in the Councils.

On his attention being drawn to the Viceroy's assent to the Hindu Religious Endowments Act in spite of opposition from the elected Hindu members, Mahatmaji stated that he had not studied that Act or its implications, and added that in case it became absolutely necessary for him to do so he would pay his attention to it and express his opinion in course of time.

Questioned whether it was consistent with the policy of the Congress for the President of the Tamilnad Congress Committee to openly support the Act, Mahatmaji replied that he saw no objection to any Congressman supporting the Act who also accepted the principle of entry into the Councils.

To another question Mahatmaji replied that he would certainly avail himself of the opportunity of his visit to Vykombathur to see the Maharani Regent if he could.

He also confessed with regret that the prospects of Hindu-Muslim unity in the North which he lately visited were not very bright. He said that on his way to Bombay he had written on the subject to Dr. Kitchlew and other Muslim leaders and he was expecting a reply from them. Mahatmaji expressed his satisfaction at the cordial relationship existing between the two communities in this province.

The only message he could give to the South was.
I ask them to spin, that's all.

The Bombay Chronicle, 12-3-1925

220 SPEECH IN REPLY TO CORPORATION ADDRESS,

MADRAS¹

March 7, 1925

MR. PRESIDENT, MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION, AND FRIENDS,

As usual, I hope you will excuse me for my inability to speak to you standing. I thank you very sincerely for the beautiful address that

¹ Dr. Usman, the president, read out the address of welcome on behalf of the Corporation.

you have been pleased to present to me. It is always a matter of embarrassment for me to receive addresses. On several occasions I have described myself as a scavenger, and I should be content if I could die also as a scavenger. I am a lover of municipal work. Fates have decided otherwise. There was a time when I was myself thinking seriously of taking to municipal life. It is a life in which a great deal of plodding is required. I am myself a plodder, and I call myself a scavenger because I believe in sanitation from more than one point of view, that is to say, in outward sanitation, as also inward sanitation.

I am not a stranger to Madras. I have lived off and on several occasions in Madras, sufficiently long to enable me to study and understand the sanitation of your city; and it has always grieved me whenever I have walked through your streets early in the morning to see them disfigured. I used to talk when I used to live with Mr. Natesan¹ about the conditions of the streets of Madras. I do not wish to single out the streets of Madras as if they are more insanitary than the streets of other cities of India. But I cannot help remarking upon the condition of your streets because I think that more than any other city of India, the streets of Madras were at that time disfigured even by grown-up elderly men. It was a sight to which I must confess I was unused before I came to Madras, and often did I feel like taking a broom myself and cleaning up every nook and corner of the streets through which I passed. I still indulge in it as a pastime. Whenever I can get a little bit of cleaning work, I assure you, it gives me a pleasure and you could understand my weakness also from municipal addresses. If I must receive addresses at all, I always feel that the receipt of the municipal address does give me opportunity to drive this one truth home to the citizens of India. I feel that in the matter of outward sanitation we have to learn a great deal from the West. It has been my painful duty often to speak against the Western civilization and the methods of the West. I, therefore, whenever I get an opportunity, never miss the opportunity of saying what we can legitimately and usefully learn from the West; and I think that for the methods of sanitation in the large cities that we have in India we cannot do better than go to the West for the lessons. I wish I could drive the truth home to you that scavenging is an occupation which is a noble occupation although it may not give as much renown and that notoriety which services in other departments of life bring to us. You

¹ G. A. Natesan, editor of *The Indian Review*, Madras

will not misunderstand me when I make this comparison in favour of municipal service. Service in other walks of life is just as important as municipal service, but I have noticed a tendency in our public life to disregard the value of municipal service.

You have said several things in your address in praise of such humble services which I have been able to render in my capacity as a humanitarian. I am humanitarian first, and I want to remain a humanitarian up to the very last. I notice, however, one singular omission from your address, and that is in connection with khaddar. I would like to point out to you that among my humble services in the cause of humanity I place khaddar almost in the forefront. Unity among the different races and the different communities belonging to different religions of India is indispensable to the birth of national life. Remove the curse of untouchability, which is as necessary as the removal of phthisis to an individual. It is eating into the vitals of Hinduism, but the removal of the degrading poverty of the masses is dependent upon khaddar and it is for that reason that I say to every Indian, to every Englishman in India, every foreigner who comes to India to visit me when they ask me what is it that I would desire for a foreigner to do. I tell him: "Study the conditions of my country and find out whether you have anything better than simple spinning-wheel, and if you find, after a careful study of the conditions of India, that there is nothing better, speak a word on behalf of the spinning-wheel." I wish that I could isolate the spinning-wheel from several other things, from the politics of the country. But you are aware I have said on more than one occasion that all these departments of life are interwoven and intermixed, that it is impossible to isolate them from the other departments of life. But I do know that, apart from the political value of the spinning-wheel, and to produce khaddar, if we are to remove the economic distress under which this land is labouring, if we are to serve the dumb millions of India, we cannot do without khaddar, we cannot do without the spinning-wheel. I therefore humbly commend it to the attention of the Municipal Councillors. I ask you to give it a place in your schools and I ask you whether you are Englishmen or Indians, whether you are Mussalmans or Hindus, whether you belong to one political school or other in the country, to give place to the spinning-wheel and khaddar in your homes.

I assure you after a little bit of experience of spinning-wheel and khaddar that what I have said is the truth and nothing but the

truth. I thank you very much again for presenting me with this address. I wish the Municipal Corporation of Madras a successful career and in the competition for shining in the matters of municipal life the first place. I thank you once again.

The Hindu, 7-3-1925

221. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MADRAS¹

March 7, 1925

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you all and the various associations sincerely for the addresses that have been presented to me this afternoon. It is a matter for great pity that even after so many years it is not possible for you to understand Hindustani or Hindi and it is a matter of shame and sorrow for me that I am unable to speak to you either in Tamil or in Telugu. I was looking forward to the pleasure of being able to address the audiences in the southern Presidency in Tamil if I had been allowed to finish my six years in Yeravda. Unfortunately for me and unfortunately for you it was not to be. But I do hope that a time will come, and that soon, when you will insist upon people coming from the north and the western Presidency addressing you in Hindustani. You know, and if you have not, you ought to know, that over Rs. 75,000 have been brought from the other parts of India and spent in the southern Presidency in order to induce it to pick up Hindustani. There are teachers covering this Presidency who are giving lessons in Hindi or Hindustani. After all you should take the trouble of learning them. If you have not yet availed yourselves of the opportunity afforded to you let me hope that you will do so now.

It is but a stage in my journey that I find myself today in Madras. I have come not to pay a visit to Madras but to visit the satyagrahis at Vykom and if, after I have finished my work there, time is left for me I do intend to pass a few days in Madras and renew my acquaintance with you individually. ("Hear, hear!") Meanwhile, I ask you to respond to the request made from the chair that you should pray for the success of the mission that awaits me in Vykom. I am going to Vykom personally to tender my sympathy and support to the devoted band of satyagrahis. I hope that they will allow me to wait

¹ At Tilak Ghat (Triplicane Beach). The speech was translated into Tamil, sentence by sentence, by S. Satyamurti.

upon the orthodox party and try to find out their viewpoint. Satyagraha not being a war of violence but being a war of conversion and of conviction, no opportunity will be lost by me in trying to understand the view point of the orthodox party and placing my own before them. If she will graciously permit me I hope also to wait upon Her Highness the Maharani as also upon the Diwan and the other officials concerned.

For me the question of untouchability is a deeply religious question. It is a matter of penance and purification on the part of those who are not untouchables. It is a matter of essential reform in Hinduism. If you will therefore out of deepest conviction pray for success to my mission I want all these prayers of yours.

I know that having come here you will expect me to say something on the present situation that faces India, but you will not expect me to speak upon what may be termed the political side of the question. I am uninterested in it. Whilst it is an integral part of the Congress organization, I have purposely refrained from interesting myself in it.

I have no aptitude for it, nor faith in it. But that does not by any means mean that others need not or should not have faith in that programme. My life's work is chalked out for me. I know for certain that if we can ensure reform from within, the other will follow as day follows night. I am equally certain that no reform from without can avail without reform from within. Every effort that might be made in the Legislative Councils or in the Legislative Assembly, every effort that might be made on your behalf in London, will be perfectly fruitless. This is not said by way of criticism of those who are taking part in that activity, but this is said in order to emphasize the fact that you and I, the men in the street, have to look after ourselves. This is said in order to emphasize the fact that if you and I are to help the fruition of that programme, we must work from within. What can your Councils do if Hindus and Mussalmans fly at one another's throats? What can the Councillors do on the Council floor if we, the Hindus, ostracize a fifth of our own kith and kin? What can they do if we will not identify ourselves with the down-trodden, poverty-stricken masses of India by turning the wheel and wearing khaddar? I am told times without number, in season and out of season, that nothing can be done in this great country of ours unless there is some excitement provided for the people. But please remember that swaraj is not a product of excitement or intoxication. Swaraj will be the natural and inevitable

result of business-like habits. It will be a natural and inevitable result of co-operation among our own ranks, of exacting discipline and obedience, and of sustained energy and willing, well-meant, calculated sacrifice. It will be natural and inevitable result of co-operative industry on the part of the whole nation. It will be the natural and inevitable result of an enlightened awakening amongst the masses of India. But half-a dozen or twenty cities of India along working together cannot bring swaraj. We who have attained a degree of political consciousness and have begun to love our country for the sake of it, must spread ourselves out amongst the masses and go back to the villages.

Of Hindu-Muslim unity you know what I have said in Bombay. Those of you who know how to spin will understand the simile I am about to give you. Indifferent spinners amongst you know how sometimes when you are unwinding your yarn from the spindle it becomes sometimes a tangle. You know the more you try to undo the tangle the more knotty it becomes, and a wise spinner leaves his tangle aside for the moment when he has lost his temper and approaches it after he has cooled down. So it is with the Hindu-Muslim question. It has become a hopeless tangle at the present moment. I thought I was an expert in solving that tangle as I think I am also an expert in spinning. But for the time being I have put away in my cupboard this Hindu-Muslim tangle. That does not mean that I have despaired of a solution. My mind will eternally work at it till I find out a solution. But I must confess to you today that I cannot present a workable solution that you will accept. In the atmosphere surcharged as it is with mutual distrust I cannot persuade either the Hindus or the Mussalmans to accept my solution. But for you I would like to leave this little single thought that those of you who have to deal with Hindus or Mussalmans as the case may be, be straightforward, honest and fearless in your dealings with one another. In spite of the horizon which is black before you, do not lose faith, be loving to one another, remembering that the same Divine Spirit inhabits whether it is the Hindu body or Muslim body and try to be charitable, one towards the other.

Of untouchability you know the exact position without my having to say a word. But I am aware, probably you will also agree, that we have, during the last four years, made a tremendous advance in the right direction. It is not enough, I know, for the purpose required; but it is enough to fill us with the hope that within the present

generation the curse will be blotted out of Hinduism.

Last but not the least to mention remain the spinning-wheel and khaddar. I know that even in that direction we have done something. But it is sheer laziness and our ignorance that have left khaddar in the position in which it stands today. There is no question here of passion and prejudice as there is about the Hindu-Muslim problem. There is no question of religious intolerance as there is about untouchability. I have not yet met a single man who has told me that it is against his conscience either to turn the spinning-wheel or to wear khaddar, its product. It is the simplest A B C of economics that millions of the masses of India who have at least four months of idleness on their hands would be able to turn those four months to good use if they had the spinning-wheels in their cottages. Whilst a few pies per day may be nothing to you and to me, those few pies are a heavensent gift to these masses. It must be a matter of ordinary common sense to understand that if we would have our masses to spin the charkha we must first of all learn the art that has all but died out before we would take the message of hope to these cottages. You will agree that it will be easy enough for a child to understand that if the masses are to spin the charkha and weave khaddar, the classes and masses together must use and wear khaddar, and I am sorry to have to prophesy that if we have become so soft as not to be able to wear coarse khaddar, remember that there is no swaraj for us in this generation. Swaraj is a hardy tree of patient growth and therefore it requires the patient toil of hardy men and women and you will have to do what Elizabeth of old did for her own country. She prohibited the import of soft cloth from Holland and herself wore and coarse cloth that was woven for her in her own dear England and imposed that obligation upon the whole of that nation. You need not go into the complications about the question of khaddar and the spinning-wheel. You need not bother your heads about the question whether it cannot by itself bring swaraj. Let it be a simple but easy test for you and for me. Are we or are we not ready to give half an hour to the nation and spin away for all we are worth for the sake of the nation, for the sake of identifying ourselves with the poorest in the land? Are we or are we not ready to wear such cloth as may be spun and woven by our sisters and brothers? What is better, that we send away one anna or two annas per yard of calico to Manchester or Ahmedabad or send one anna or two annas to the cottages near Madras? Which is your choice? Have you or have you not enough patriotism in yourselves to think of your near

neighbours who are starving?

I am patient by nature. But patient as I am, I grow impatient when clever people talk to me all kinds of sophistries, when it is easy enough for them to understand that one yard of khaddar bought by them means at least two annas in the pockets of the poorest. I have no other and better message for our land and if I am the only one living, a solitary witness of the message, I must continue to deliver that message so long as I have life in me.

You want civil disobedience. I want it also. I know it is the only substitute for an armed revolt. It is the real test of our strength. But disobedience to be civil implies discipline, thought, care, attention. Civil disobedience and excitement and intoxication go ill together. And I know that without proper careful organization of the spinning-wheel and khaddar, there is absolutely no civil disobedience. As Lalaji well said, we may gain swaraj but we shall not have the power to retain it. He said that on another occasion, speaking on another subject; but that remark applies with equal, if not greater force, in connection with civil disobedience.

I thank you for having listened to my remarks with such great patience and courtesy. Let me hope that you will be courteous enough to translate my message into action, if it has carried conviction to you. May God give you the strength and the wisdom necessary for the purpose.

In conclusion, he asked the audience to remain quite at their seats and let him slip out of the meeting without any disturbance whatsoever.

The Hindu, 9-3-1925

222. REMINISCENCES OF KATHIAWAR—II

OTHER STATES

I found that the Rulers of Porbunder, Wankaner and Wadhwan enjoyed the same popularity which I had noticed in the case of His Highness the Thakore Saheb. Each of them seemed to desire the good of the people. I was left with the impression that every one of them was trying to satisfy his subjects. However, I must say one thing. I found that in each State the Ruler's expenses exceeded his income, more or less. I am certain that a Ruler cannot justify his guardianship so long as he does not cut down his expenses. He takes a share of his subjects, earnings and offers his own services in return. One whose services are indispensable becomes the leader. He remains a true

leader only so long as he is loyal. A Ruler's loyalty should mean two things. On the one hand, he must protect the welfare, freedom and virtue of his subjects and, on the other hand, he must put to good use the revenues collected from them. If the Ruler spends money on himself in an unbecoming manner, he is not utilizing the revenues properly. He may certainly spend a little more than his subjects, he may indulge in luxuries if he so wishes; there must, however, be a limit to this. As one disinterested, I can clearly see that, in this age of public awakening, such a limit is entirely essential. No institution which cannot prove its utility for the people will be able to survive long. Having observed, as much as I could in a week, four States in Kathiawar, I did find some justification for my defence of the form of Government existing there; along with this, however, its weaknesses also became apparent to me. As a well-wisher of the Rulers, I would humbly request them voluntarily to introduce the above changes, for, if they do so, not only will they gain more popularity but will enhance the prestige of their thrones. He who sets limits to his own authority, is the real Ruler. God has Himself set limits to His own power, and in spite of having the capacity of misuse that power, He does not do so. Anyone who, despite the capacity to subsist physically, renounces that capacity attains *moksha*¹. The perfect *brahmachari*², by voluntarily conserving his energies, reaches such a state that finally he becomes, as it were, impotent. That state is beyond description. It is beyond all duality. Though he appears corporeal, he is pure and immutable spirit. That is why the English maxim says: "The king can do no wrong." The author of the *Bhagavata* says that the Radiant One can do no wrong. Tulsidas remarked in his sweet Hindi: "Oh holy man! The Mighty can have no faults." In our age, all these three maxims are being misinterpreted; and it is believed and said that the powerful one even though he commits an offence cannot be guilty. The very opposite is true. He alone is strong who never misuses his strength and voluntarily renounces the misuse of his strength, so much so that he becomes incapable of such misuse. Why cannot our Rulers become so? Is it beyond their powers?

NATIONAL SCHOOLS

I witnessed the opening of two national schools. One was in Rajkot. His Highness the Thakore Saheb performed the opening

¹ Deliverance from phenomenal existence as the supreme end of life

² Celibate

ceremony at which I was present. The other was in Wadhwan. Here I myself performed the opening ceremony. Both had to face storms; both had to grapple with the problem of the *Antyajas*¹. Both have solved that problem but are not completely out of danger. The strength of the teachers will be tested by their ability to avoid this danger. If the teachers carry on their work discreetly, peacefully, with circumspection and forbearance, they will not antagonize the people in spite of admitting *Antyajas*; and children of other castes will continue to attend the schools. The national character of the school consists in the strength of the teachers' character, their patriotism, their readiness for sacrifice and their determination. I am envious in a good-humoured way of the buildings of both the schools. These would prove a boon if austere teachers dwell there, otherwise they may bring about our downfall. In Burma there was a time when in every town sadhus taught diligently in good schools housed in good buildings. The buildings today are the same. However, when I visited those schools I found sleepy, indolent sadhus there. The schools existed merely in name. They had lost their souls. Just as admission of *Antyajas* is an essential aspect of national schools, so is the spinning-wheel. On the regular turning of that wheel depends the turn of the wheel of India's fortunes. The full development of the wheel is possible only through national schools. I look forward to its deification in every school. The teachers' service to the country will be measured by their ability to inculcate respect for it. The spinning-wheel is the only means for energizing this country which is slumbering in idleness. As the wheel calls for disinterested labour, it yields the greatest reward; and it is beautiful work. It may at first appear monotonous, however; there is music in that monotony. It is for the teachers to train the ear for this music. I hope that both these schools will become perfect models.

TO CITIZENS OF WADHWAN

I appeal to the citizens of Rajkot and Wadhwan to take interest in their schools. My appeal is especially directed to the citizens of the latter. There was some bitterness at Wadhwan between Acharya Fulchand and the citizens. I deliberately sought an occasion to understand this matter. I met those gentlemen who had some complaints. As a result of this, I came to the conclusion that there was no cause for complaint unless it be Shri Fulchand's temper. The

¹ Hindus traditionally regarded as untouchables

citizens have a prominent role under the new arrangements. The school belongs to them. It is desirable that they take part in its activities with enthusiasm. It is their duty to take such part. They did so once and they also contributed funds. Everyone said that had Shri Shivlal been alive Wadhwan would have shone out uniquely. All men, however, are mortal. We may, if we choose, immortalize those whom we love. Why cannot many wise citizens of Wadhwan become Shivlals? It is not too much to hope that the wealthy citizens of the town will take it upon themselves to finance the school. While the teachers are the souls of such institutions, the citizens should become the bodies.

TECHNICAL SCHOOL

The technical school for spinning and weaving founded at Wadhwan by Shri Shivlal is also remarkable. A fair amount of propagation of khadi has been carried out by that school. However, I consider it insufficient in view of the potentialities of the villages around Wadhwan. On the principle that where nothing has been done all round, even a little effort shines out, Wadhwan may be deemed to have done well. However, we cannot rest satisfied with a little. The real question is whether Wadhwan has done all that it could. I have said already that its capacity is great. The technical school is a solid memorial to Shri Shivlal. The spinning-wheel was his life's work. I was told that he had fully understood its significance. I hope that all aspects of the art of the spinning-wheel will be developed in Wadhwan.

THREE SPRINGS

Today, there are three springs of khadi in Kathiawar—Wadhwan, Madhada and Amreli. The organizing committee has drawn up plans to produce more khadi. However, it is desirable that these three centres should exchange their experience and enter into a healthy competition with one another. All the three centres can multiply the production of khadi. There is every hope that khadi will get encouragement from the States. Hence these centres should not falter in producing khadi. Proper steps should be taken incessantly for the propagation of khadi amongst the people. The organizing committee is primarily responsible for this. I wish that this committee should buy up all the khadi that is left over and stock it. It should take over the monopoly of khadi. What is practised by the rich in America in order to increase their wealth should be practised by us for the

good of the people. In order to gain control over a certain business, they buy up the entire stock of that article and then sell it at any price they choose. Why should we not do the same for khadi in the interest of the people? In America, such monopoly is practised in order to raise prices. We shall do so in order to bring down prices. The cost of producing khadi varies at different places because there is some variation in the cost of spinning, etc. Moreover, we are seeking gifts of cotton. This is in a way a bounty or encouragement for khadi. Because of this, the committee can afford to sell khadi at a loss, whereas private organizations usually cannot do this. The former can add up the different charges, then add to it the cost of cotton received by way of gift, and then sell khadi at the price arrived at. The rate at which private organizations are to be paid can be fixed by talking the matter over with the organizations concerned. They should, however, bear the following in mind.

1. They should locally dispose of as much as possible. For instance, some of the khadi produced in Wadhwan must find a local market. In other words, the organizations concerned must make efforts for local sale.

2. The organizations should improve the quality of yarn and attend to the count and fineness.

3. The standard of weaving should be improved.

4. They should take only the cost price from the committee and satisfy the committee on this score.

This task can be achieved only when everyone works diligently, honestly and in mutual trust. We are faced with many difficulties because we have not developed either the enthusiasm or the ability to team together for public service. These organizations can keep away from all these shortcomings because their workers have a well-developed sense of public service. They are imbued with a missionary spirit and have had some experience too. They might not have learnt how to work harmoniously together and to tolerate different temperaments. Where the motives are good, experience alone will overcome the shortcomings.

IMPROVE THE SPINNING - WHEEL

Ordinarily I carry my spinning-wheel with me when I travel. However, because of my faith in Kathiawar and the reluctance to travel with excessive luggage, I did not take the spinning-wheel with me and decided to borrow one wherever I went. This gave me a good

opportunity for testing [the progress of spinning]. I had hoped to get a good spinning-wheel in Rajkot, at any rate. However, I would by no means call it good. A good spinning-wheel is one the tape, belt, etc., of which are of the best quality, and its spindle is neither thin nor bent. I do not think that it passed all these tests. However, what I found intolerable was the dust that had gathered on the spinning-wheel. A workman always keeps his tools in the best shape. Why should the wheel gather dust? In Jetpur the very limit was reached. Devchandbhai hastily promised that he had an excellent spinning-wheel which he would send immediately. He had taken me to Jetpur by car. It was eleven o'clock at night but how could I go to sleep without spinning? The spinning-wheel duly arrived, but why should it work at all? The spindle worked as if it was the guest of the Girnar mountain, the tape consisted of yarn wrapped anyhow, the belt, a mere string. Ordinarily, my arm does not ache when I work on the spinning-wheel but this time I had to turn the wheel so hard that within half an hour my arm was tired. Such was Devchandbhai's fine spinning-wheel. After this bitter experience, it appeared as if Devchandbhai had called the public meeting in order to mock at the spinning-wheel. I did not spare the wheel nor its owner my rebuke at the meeting. However, in the light of the aforesaid misinterpretation of the maxim, namely, the powerful are blameless, who would put the blame on Devchandbhai's spinning-wheel? After all, he was the secretary. He himself was convinced that his spinning-wheel could not possibly be faulty. I would, therefore, like to make it publicly known that if Devchandbhai does not immediately set right his spinning-wheel, he will be removed from office.

I have had enough of joking. But even a joke has a sting. However, as the sting is merely that of conscience, it will be welcomed even though it hurts. It is difficult to get a pure and upright secretary like Devchandbhai. We should make the best use of him that we could. Where the subjects slumber, the king cannot be awake. How could Devchandbhai be vigilant when all of us are negligent? He has understood the significance of the spinning-wheel but he did not repair or adorn it because of the slackness all around him. If he was devoted only to the spinning-wheel, the imperfection in his wheel would be unforgivable. I was a little less dissatisfied with Porbandar. The same could be said of Wankaner. This imperfection gave me an idea of the progress of the spinning-wheel in Kathiawar. The wheel has not yet secured the place of honour which it deserves. It is being

tolerated but not welcomed; it is a stranger at the door and has not become an honoured guest. So long as it is not treated as an honoured guest Kathiawar will continue to starve.

I have reason to write at length about imperfections in the spinning-wheel. It is easy to find fault with it. My suggestions are as follows:

1. The secretaries should keep account of the spinning-wheels.
2. An expert or two should be appointed to go round and examine each spinning-wheel.
3. Owners should be invited to register complaints about their spinning-wheels.
4. The spindles, etc., of the wheels in use should be repaired. Large spindles may be replaced by rods with necessary modifications.
5. The expert should explain all the changes to the owners.
6. In every town which he visits, he should train a local expert and maintain a list of these experts.
7. The expert should keep a record of the output of each spinning-wheel and the hours for which it is used.

If work is done systematically in this manner, a great improvement will be noticed within a short time in the spinning wheel and its yarn output. I found that whereas I can easily turn out a hundred yards of yarn on my spinning-wheel, on these other wheels I could hardly spin fifty. Moreover, except in Rajkot nowhere else did I experience the pleasure that one has while plying a good spinning-wheel. Before the end of this year, not only should khadi gain a firm foothold in Kathiawar, but we should acquire such skill as to be able to weave fine saris. I found that Yashodabehn had had hand-spun dhotis woven for her husband, Dahyabhai. These could compete with the fine dhotis made in Andhra. Why cannot hundreds of men and women spin such fine yarn?

POLITICS

The division of labour agreed to at the time of the conference was as follows—the people should spin, wear khadi, and I should take care of political matters. I have already explained its implications, yet it is necessary to explain them again. This is what it means. Just as the people must actively fulfil their own pledge, similarly I too must be alert and fulfil mine. The people can, by being vigilant, fulfil their pledge and succeed therein. This is because the key to success is in

their own hands. It is possible that, in spite of my vigilance and in spite of fulfilling my pledge, I may not succeed, because my success depends on others. Moreover, my success too is dependent on the people's fulfilment of their pledge. It is sad that it should still be necessary to explain how politics is linked with yarn. The collective strength of the people lies in spinning yarn. I am convinced that its invisible power will influence everything. Whether this is true or not, it is necessary that the people realize the implication of my pledge. There is no guarantee that I will indeed be able to achieve something. I have only pointed out to the people the path which I consider the best. A nation cannot achieve anything through demonstrations alone. We should also understand the situation of the Rulers. Our purpose is not served by mere condemnation or criticism. In order to understand this situation, I advised the conference to refrain from passing resolutions on political matters. I have pledged myself to examine the matter as thoroughly as possible in my capacity as the president. I am striving to fulfil the pledge. I am not reclining at ease, nor shall I do so. However, this does not mean that those who are suffering should seek no remedy. My advice merely means that the conference can assist in the above manner. It should be clearly understood that I am in no way opposed to people adopting whatever truthful and peaceful means they prefer to redress their grievances. The conference should give all possible assistance. At the moment, that assistance has taken the form of my using all my powers of persuasion with those States against which complaints have been made. Success depends on the purity of the issue and the persons concerned and on the people's fulfilment of their own pledge. The people too must create an impression by their vigilant work. They will gain self-confidence if they preserve their self-respect by means of constructive work. Today, the people of Kathiawar, like those elsewhere, have lost their self-respect. My experience suggests that in many States of Kathiawar, the conditions are such that the people can make as much progress as they wish. Some facilities that are absent in British India are available to the people of the States of Kathiawar. The people can take full advantage of these only by engaging themselves in constructive work.

FIRST OF APRIL

I have taken such a fancy for Kathiawar that I have arranged to visit it again in April. I had to see the *Antyaja* school at Botad, the khadi centre at Amreli and the Ashram at Madhada. This, however,

was not possible during my last visit. Those who wish to take me to different places should arrange my April programme in consultation with Devchandbhai and the Amreli office. I hope that no one will wish to take me to a single place where khadi is not the attraction. I expect to see a large number of members enrolled in April. I also hope that cotton which was promised has already been collected and more promises secured; and lastly, those centres which were to be opened under the Rajkot resolution have started working.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 8-3-1925

223. MY NOTES

A SISTER'S SENTIMENTS

Bhai Vitthaldas Jerajani writes:¹

This feeling is understandable. Anyone who has worn khadi spun by himself and woven by himself or others can realize the value of the pearl-like tears which have fallen from this sister's eyes. A certain gentleman had lost a towel made of self-spun yarn. He was restless with anxiety so long as it was not traced. We attach no value to a match-stick or a pin but what would be our attitude if we had made it ourselves? The same sweetness and sentiment that one sees in food cooked by oneself one also finds in hand-spun, hand-woven khadi.

AMONG "KALIPARAJ"

The following is an extract from a letter I have received from the Vedchi Khadi Ashram:²

The experience of this correspondent is shared by others in many places. The spinning-wheel has become the focal point for nation-building.

WHAT IS REQUIRED IN EDUCATION

An educationist writes as follows:³

The reader will see that these ideas are contrary to those of Dr.

¹ The letter is not translated here. It described the pain felt by a certain lady when a sari woven from her own yarn was temporarily misplaced.

² The letter is not translated here. It described the progress and the benevolent effects of khadi work among *Kaliparaj*, a backward community in Gujarat.

³ The letter is not translated here. The correspondent pleaded for all-round education.

Sumant Mehta. There is truth in both these view-points. It would be good if both were put into practice. However, we do not always have the strength to do everything that is good. Experience alone will determine the ultimate shape of education. It is not our indifference to chemistry and other such subjects but rather lack of equipment which is responsible for our not teaching them at the moment. It is for this very reason that only the most important things have been accommodated. The spinning-wheel is the symbol of industry. When it is firmly established in its proper place, the sciences and crafts of the blacksmith, the carpenter and others will automatically find a place. There is no doubt that our efforts should be to meet the needs of all the four castes. I can see that we are making progress in that direction. If all educationists who put their faith in national education continue the work assigned to them with faith and courage, the desired changes will come about of their own accord. Where the intention is honest, success is inevitable. I observed during my tour that people are prepared, or almost anxious, to contribute funds for these activities, but we have a dearth of men with conviction and competence.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 8-3-1925

224. LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI

COCHIN,

[*March 8, 1925*]¹

CHI. PRABHUDAS,

I am able to reply to your questions today at Cochin [*Phagun Sud 13*]. There is no harm in printing my speeches. Do not mind if same errors remain in what you print. Surely we do not want to print anything about Chhotam. I see no harm in startling the Ashram inmates. If they oppose anything, drop the matter.

If our activities outside the Ashram are good, you should take as much notice of them as you can. You should also certainly take notice of the activities of the Ashram inmates who are outside the Ashram for the time being.

The reason for Chhotam's . . .² seems to be all right.

My only fear is that in trying to make that more attractive, other

¹ Gandhiji arrived at Cochin on this date and it also corresponded to *Phagun Sud 13* mentioned in the first sentence as the date on which this letter was written.

² A few words here are illegible in the source.

essential matters might get neglected. But you alone can decide that.

I have heard that the Cutchha hakim's treatment has agreed with you very well. May your health improve considerably.

Blessings from

BAPU

CHI. PRABHUDAS GANDHI

C/O SHETHJIWANDAS VALLABHDAS, ROHA

From the Gujarati original: S.N 33039

*225. SPEECH IN REPLY TO CORPORATION ADDRESS,
ERNAKULAM*

March 8, 1925

I thank you very sincerely for the address and the sentiments expressed in it. It is a matter of great sorrow to me that, at the present moment, I have not beside me my friend Maulana Shaukat Ali or Maulana Mahomed Ali. As you know we had become almost inseparable in all our travels in India. One of the brothers, however, is today immersed in his journalism and the other Big Brother has practically buried himself in and about Bombay. As I have arrived in this Presidency purely for the sake of visiting Vykam and entering the zone, where my work chiefly lies, during the present visit, it pleases me to receive this address from you. This is an errand of peace and I want all the assistance that I can receive from public opinion throughout the length and breadth of this land. Above all, I want the prayers of those who believe in prayers, whether they are Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Jews or Parsis. Whatever faith they may belong to, if they believe in prayers I want their prayers for the success of my mission.

There are other things also in which I am interested and in which you should also be interested. It makes no difference whatsoever whether you belong to British India proper or to one of the Protected States. I refer to Hindu-Muslim unity which is a form of unity amongst all the races professing the various religions of India. I know that in this State you have no such question, as I understand, as between Hindus and Muslims or between Hindus and other races. It is a matter of great pleasure to me to find that in this State all the races are living in peace, amity and brotherhood. Let that state of things last

for ever. But I am afraid I am unable to pay you the same tribute so far as the spinning-wheel is concerned. I took the opportunity, in replying to the address of the Madras Corporation, of mentioning the fact that no municipality's work in India can be considered to be complete until that municipality had identified itself with the lowest of its citizens. One often learns that the order is really reversed, that is to say, the municipalities give to those who have much and take away much from those who have very little. They care more for the rich and the powerful and little or less for the poor and down-trodden. ("Hear, hear.") I hope that it is not true of this town and that you are observing the proper order of things. I therefore suggest the spinning-wheel only by way of addition. It is to me a symbol of inseparable connection between the rich and the poor. It is the one certain definite solution for the poverty of the masses of India. I ask you therefore to introduce the spinning-wheel in your schools and also its product, khaddar. I ask you to give it a sacred place in your homes as it occupied years and years ago. I have not hesitated to call it one of the *yajnas* of this age and as the great ones do, so do the lower order of beings follow. You will not therefore be able successfully to carry the message of the spinning-wheel to the humble homes of India, unless you adopt it yourselves. May you have the courage and the strength and the goodwill to follow the advice that I have humbly tendered to you!

The Hindu, 9-3-1925

226. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, COCHIN

March 8, 1925

FRIENDS,

It gives me much pleasure to be able to meet you. When I decided to come to Vykom, I little thought that it would be possible and necessary for me to stay here before proceeding there. I know that yours is a historic city. It is full of all kinds of vivid recollections, not all of them of a pleasant type. Living on the seaside you are aware of what adventure can do. The sea is an epitome of adventures. At the present moment, however, I am not concerned with the adventures that the sea offers. What we need is the spirit of adventure in our national life and if we find that we have made but little progress towards our

goal, it is because the spirit of adventure is absent from us. It requires for instance an adventurous spirit to find out in the Hindu religion its black spots. Those who are not fired with that spirit are satisfied with things as they are. They do not stop to enquire whether they are good or bad; but ever since I have been in India, after my sojourn in South Africa for a period of nearly 20 years, I have been telling the Hindus that we have in our religion a black spot which must be removed. It is untouchability and here I am sorry to add also unapproachability. I have not come in order to argue with the orthodox people. I have come with a message of peace. I want to plead wisdom and tell them that this untouchability and unapproachability cannot be part of Hinduism. I have come to tell them that the satyagrahis who are fighting against enormous odds at Vykom are not out to destroy religion, but to reform it. I have come to tell them of all the implications of this struggle. I have come to tell them also that it is wrong for us to be satisfied with things as they are, if we find that they are bad. It, therefore, gives me pleasure that I shall be carrying with me your blessings and your sympathy, for in the address presented to me on your behalf by the municipality I am assured of your sympathy and support. I want you also to carry the same spirit a little further and I want you to find with me that one of the most potent causes of the ever-deepening poverty of the masses is that they have nothing to do for nearly a third part of the year throughout India. I would like you to discover with me that if we give them the spinning-wheel which had a place in every home in India only a hundred years ago, they will find enough to occupy themselves during their leisure hours. But the introduction of the spinning-wheel in the millions of our homes will be a perfectly useless thing if we do not discard the use of foreign cloth or mill-made cloth.

In going about, therefore, from place to place I am pleading with those men and women whom I see that it is their bounden duty to discard the use of foreign cloth and mill-made cloth and replace it with hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. For you in Malabar plenty of clothing is a burden. I have no doubt that I am an object of envy with most of you. In this weather of ours the least we have in the shape of clothing the better it is from every point of view. I wish you will not run away with the idea that dignity or civilization requires multipli-

cation of clothing. (Laughter and “hear, hear!”) “Handsome is not who is handsome clothed, but handsome is who handsome does.” The truest test of civilization, culture and dignity is character and not clothing. I feel overwhelmed with sorrow whenever I find the people in India telling me that they have outgrown khaddar and that it is impossible for them to return to the savage days when our ancestors were satisfied with khaddar clothing. I would like you to answer with me the critics who think in that way, that the best way of ridding India of the curse of poverty and pauperism is for one and all of us to be dressed in khaddar. Those of you who will go in for fineries and fineness, it is possible for you to get as fine a hand-spun yarn as you wish to. I hope therefore that you will tax yourselves, tax your minds and dot every home in Cochin with the spinning-wheel and see to it that everyone in Cochin uses khaddar and nothing else.

I need say nothing about the Hindu-Muslim question. I know that you miss the presence of one of the Ali Brothers. It has been usual for one of them to be touring with me throughout India. But it was not possible to do so this time. But I wish to congratulate you on the freedom from this taxing problem in your midst. It is a matter of great pleasure to me to find that all the communities belonging to the different religions are living in a spirit of goodwill and brother-hood in this State. I wish that we could in every part of India copy your worthy examples. May God give you the strength and the wisdom to introduce khaddar and the spinning-wheel in your homes and to rid Hinduism of the curse of untouchability! May all the races inhabiting this fair land remain for ever united as they are today!

The Hindu, 9-3-1925

227. LETTER TO SUBRAMANIAM

[March 9, 1925]¹

SUBRA [MANIAM]

I thank you for your letter. I shall gladly wait on you and the other friends at the District Magistrate's house at 8 a.m. tomorrow. All those whom you mention and any others you may choose may be present at the interview. For my part I shall not bring any person beyond the ones mentioned by you. But as Sjt. Krishnaswami Iyer is not here, subject to your approval I propose to bring with me Sjt. Kelappan Nair who has taken Sjt. Krishnaswami's place.

I appreciate and reciprocate your wish that there should be no ill feeling between the parties. Indeed we should be able to tolerate one another's opinions.

What I am looking forward to is not anybody's authority but Shankaracharya's² in favour of unapproachability as defined by you and the other friends. Nothing would please me better than to see this question settled amicably, satisfactorily and consistent with the dignity and the purity of the faith which you and I hold in common.

*I remain,
Yours in the service
of the faith,*

[PS.]

I am sorry I do not know Malayalam. It will be difficult for you to get my Hindi translated. I therefore send you my reply in English.

From a microfilm: S.N. 10594

228. LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI

[March 9, 1925]³

REVERED ANASUYABEHN,

Today is Monday. Half a day was taken up at Cochin. Now we are getting ready to go to Vykam. The country is enchanting. The people are simple. You see creeks everywhere and we have to

¹ The interview referred to in the letter took place on March 10, 1925.

² Eighth-century philosopher; eminent exponent of *Advaita Vedanta*

³ From the postmark

negotiate them to go to Vykom. We are all in good health. Rajagopalachari and Ramanathan are with us.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: G.N. 11546

229. *LETTER TO DR. VARADARAJULU NAIDU*

March 10, 1925

DEAR DR. VARADARAJULU,

With reference to the Gurukul controversy¹ I told Mr. Iyer² that I would not give a definite opinion unless I had seen you and heard you. Having heard you, it seems to me that in so far as the present *brahmacharis* are concerned, if the parents of the Brahmin boys insist on their boys being allowed to dine separately, their scruples should be respected. But, for the future, it may be announced that no *brahmacharis* would be accepted whose parents would not let their boys dine in the same row with the others. I understand from you that the cook at the Gurukul would be always a Brahmin. What you object to (and that properly) is the separating of non-Brahmin boys from the Brahmins. I do think that all the boys should sit in the same row whilst they are taking their meals.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

The Hindu, 21-3-1925

¹ The question of inter-dining at the Tamil Gurukul at Shermadevi

² V. V. S. Iyer of the Gurukul

230. DISCUSSION WITH CASTE HINDU LEADERS, VYKOM¹

[March 10, 1925]

GANDHIJI: Is it fair to exclude a whole section of Hindus, because of their supposed lower birth, from public roads which can be used by non-Hindus, by criminals and bad characters, and even by dogs and cattle?

NAMBUDIRI TRUSTEE: How can it be helped? They are reaping the reward of their karma.

G. No doubt they are suffering for their karma by being born as untouchables. But why must you add to the punishment? Are they worse than even criminals and beasts?

N. They must be so, for otherwise God would not have condemned them to be born untouchables.

G. But God may punish them. Who are we human beings to take the place of God and add to the punishment?

N. We are but instruments. God uses us as His instruments in order to impose on them the punishment that their karma has earned for them.

G. But supposing the *avarnas* said that they were instruments in the hands of God in order to impose afflictions on you? What would you do?

N. Then Government would stand between them and us and prevent them from so doing. Good men would do so. Mahatmaji, we beseech you to prevent the *avarnas* from depriving us of our age-old privileges.

G. Will you prove to me that you are entitled to prevent them from using the roads? I am sure that the suppressed classes have as much right to use the roads as you have. The Shastras nowhere lay down that they may not use these roads. Do you know that even the Dewan thinks that you have taken up a

¹ In a brief report of this, *The Hindu*, 11-3-1925, said: "Early morning yesterday Mr. Gandhi joined in the satyagrahi's prayers. . . . Mr. Gandhi met by invitation the local orthodox caste Hindu oppositionist leaders at the residence of Indanthurithi Nambiyathiri. Among those who accompanied Mr. Gandhi were Messrs Rajagopalachari, Mahadev Desai, Ramdas Gandhi and Krishnaswami Iyer. He discussed with them for over three hours and made certain practical proposals with a view to bringing the struggle to a speedy termination. These alternative proposals were an arbitration, a referendum, an examination by select pandits of the Sankara *Smritis*. The oppositionists did not choose to accept any of these."

wrong attitude?

N. How does the Dewan's opinion help us? He is welcome to hold what opinion he likes. And why, Mahatmaji, do you use the word "suppressed" for these classes? Do you know why they are "suppressed"?

G. Oh, yes! Just for the same reason that Dyer massacred the innocents in Jallianwala.

N. So you think those who introduced the custom were Dyers? You would call Shankaracharya a Dyer?

G. I am calling no Acharya a Dyer. But I do characterize your action as Dyerism, and if indeed any Acharya was responsible for introducing this custom his ignorance was as monstrous as that of General Dyer.

N. But how can we give up an ancient custom? You say the satyagrahis are going through suffering. Suffering is entirely on our side. The satyagrahis sit at the gates of the temples. Their shadow would pollute us and so we have to take a long and circuitous way to the temple. Is that not a great hardship?

G. That surely is extraordinary. It reminds one of the old story of the wolf and the lamb. I beseech you to talk with some reason at least.

N. Reason is out of place in matters religious.

G. If this is an ancient *sanatani* custom it must obtain everywhere in India. But I do not find it in any other part of the country.

N. Surely untouchability is there in every part of India. We carry untouchability a little further. That is all.

G. You say these people are worse than criminals. Supposing they became Mussalmans or Christians tomorrow. Would they then cease to be criminals?

(The Nambudiri remained silent. But the Devaswom Commissioner answered on his behalf: No *fresh* Christian or Mussalman convert would have the right. It is old Christians and Mussalmans who enjoy the right.)

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI (who was present at the interview): So Christians and Mussalmans may upset God's rules and regulations?

(No Reply.)

G. You cite Shankaracharya's authority in support of your contention. Will you show it to me?

N. Yes.

G. And if Shankaracharya's books do not support the custom will you withdraw your opposition?

N. There is enough evidence there. But of course you may explain it away.

G. No, I will not explain it away. We will have it interpreted by recognized pandits.

N. If the interpretation goes against the custom we cannot accept it.

G. So then there is no authority in Shankaracharya's books, but in your own lack of reason? Well, supposing the court were to decide that the roads should be opened to the *avarnas*?

N. We should use the roads no longer, and we should leave the temples.

G. And if the Maharaja were to issue a *smriti* throwing open the roads like the Shankaracharya *Smriti* that you claim there is in support of the prohibition, what will you do?

N. The State has authority to issue what *smriti* it likes. We should have to obey it.

G. I beseech you not to forget that you are the trustee of Hinduism, and I hope you will not besmirch its fair name. Well, let me suggest a compromise. Would you accept a referendum?

N. A referendum of only the temple-going public?

G. That's not fair. I mean a referendum of all *savarnas*, I don't say of all *avarnas*. That should satisfy you.

(No reply.)

G. Another suggestion. Supposing we ask a recognized pandit in India to interpret the Shankara *Smriti*? Would you accept his interpretation?

N. There may be no authority in the *Smriti*, but there would be sufficient authority found in the commentary on the *Smriti*.

(An old man at this stage exclaimed: It was Parashurama who gave us the whole of Malabar. Now if you were to ask us to produce Parashurama's charter, how can we do so? Similar is the present right. How can we produce authority for it?)

G. A last alternative. Would you accept arbitration? You appoint a pandit, I appoint a pandit on behalf of the satyagrahis, and the Dewan acts as Umpire. What do you say to that?

(No reply.)

The Epic of Travancore, pp, 17-21

231. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, VYKOM

March 10, 1925

FRIENDS,

I know you will excuse me for not standing up to speak to you, and I hope you will also excuse me for being a few minutes late. I can only give you my assurance that my being late was due to no delay on my part. I have been occupied the whole day long with the mission that has brought me here. It gives me very great pleasure to see such a large assembly here, because it enables me to tell you the purpose of my mission.

At the outset, however, I wish to thank all those who presented me with addresses yesterday; at the time the address was presented, a letter was delivered into my hands protesting against that address and assuring me that it did not represent the sentiments of all the people in Vykom (“Shame!”). I gladly accept that protest and inform you of it. The very fact of the letter having been signed by a few gentlemen shows at least that they were not in sympathy with the address or rather the wording of it. Nor does it surprise me that the address did not carry the consent of all the people of Vykom. I know that you are unfortunately divided here over a very vital question. So far as I am concerned, I would be happier without any address whatsoever, but when I do receive addresses, they give me a topic of conversation with the meetings which I address and this address does show that in a most particular manner. I thank those who have presented me with the address this evening also. That too deals with the subject that has brought me here and that is the subject of untouchability and unapproachability and the method, namely, satyagraha, adopted in Vykom in order to rid this place of unapproachability in a particular way. As you are aware, that struggle from its very inception has commanded my deep admiration and sympathy. It is possible that the conductors of satyagraha may have made mistakes in the campaign. Who is there in the world who is infallible? But I am satisfied that the mistakes, if any were committed, were not deliberate. Satyagraha, like the name itself, is a somewhat new doctrine, or rather a new presentation of an old doctrine.

The question of untouchability is one which lends itself to the method of satyagraha in a peculiar manner, for satyagraha is a method of suffering, not suffering imposed upon those who are opposed to you, but suffering imposed upon oneself. Now the

position taken up by the satyagrahis at Vykom is that the roads that pass by the great temple should be open to those who are considered to be untouchables or unapproachables. The claim is based upon humanity itself. Any road which is open to the public, so far as Hindus are concerned, any road that is open to those who are caste Hindus, should and does claim to be open to those who are thrown out of caste and considered untouchables or unapproachables. In my humble opinion, it is a natural and just claim. As you know, ever since I set my foot on Indian soil after a long exile in South Africa, I have been speaking frankly, fearlessly and freely on the question of untouchability. I claim to be a *sanatani* Hindu. I claim to know sufficient of the Shastras for my own purpose and I venture to suggest that untouchability and unapproachability, as they are practised in this holy land of ours, have no place or sanction in the Hindu Shastras. ("Hear, hear", and cheers.) Neither approve nor disapprove, but simply listen to my remarks. I venture to suggest to those who are professors of Hinduism, who hold Hinduism as dear as life itself, that Hinduism like every other religion, apart from the sanction of Shastras, has got to submit itself to the test of universal reason.

In this age of reason, in this age of universal knowledge, in this age of education and comparative theology, any religion which entrenches itself behind Shastric injunctions and authority is, in my own humble opinion, bound to fail. In my opinion, untouchability is a blot upon humanity and therefore upon Hinduism. It cannot stand the test of reason. It is in conflict with the fundamental precepts of Hinduism. The first among the three principles I am about to enunciate of Hinduism is *Satyannasti paro dharmah*,¹ i.e., there is no religion other than or higher than truth. The second is *Ahimsa paramo dharmah* and if ahimsa, meaning love, non-violence, is the law of life, is the greatest religion, is the only religion, then I suggest to you that untouchability is in direct conflict with that truth. The third is that God alone is Truth and everything else is transitory and illusory. If it is so, I suggest to you that it is impossible for us to reconcile untouchability and unapproachability with the grand doctrine. I have come, therefore, to reason with my orthodox friends. I have come to plead with them, and by their courtesy and goodwill. I was able to wait upon them this afternoon. They gave me a patient hearing and listened to me. We argued, I appealed to their reason, I appealed to their humanity, I appealed to the Hinduism in them. I am

¹ *Mahabharata*, Shantiparva, Ch. 160

sorry to confess to you that I was not able to produce an impression that I had expected I would be able to do. But “despair” is a term which does not occur in my dictionary. (Laughter.) I shall despair when I despair of myself, of God and humanity. But as I believe in God, as I believe in the fact that we are all met here together and as I believe also in humanity, because I see that in spite of all our differences, all our quarrels, humanity lives on, I believe also that the truth that I claim I represent for the time being, will impress itself upon my orthodox friends here.

I have made three sporting offers to these friends of mine. In the name and on behalf of the satyagrahis of Vykam, those offers are binding on me, but I have left them free to reject or accept them. I have pleaded with them that they should accept these offers even though it may be by way of trial. I have not hesitated to enter into such unilateral contract because I believe in the truth that I implicitly believe and stand for. For I have come not to precipitate and enhance the quarrel, but to bring about peace and goodwill between the orthodox section and those who are today trying to act in the name of humanity and justice. Though I may seem at times to be fighting, my purpose is never to fight, nor have I undertaken a fight to prolong it, but to bring about peace at the shortest possible notice. An English friend when I embarked upon non-co-operation, told me that my non-co-operation was only skin-deep but that I was pining for co-operation. I immediately closed with him and I told him that he had read my heart correctly, and so it is with my orthodox friends, I assure them. Satyagraha is there, but to be called off as soon as they wish it, it is for them to make a sporting offer and it will be accepted, only let them beware of murdering truth. A satyagrahi has always his minimum and it is the minimum that is wanted in connection with this struggle. The right of way is such a reasonable demand that it has only to be asked to be given. Let it be understood, therefore, that there is no mental reservation behind this struggle.

I have repeatedly told the Hindus of India what the removal of untouchability means to me and to those who are today engaged in that holy campaign. It does not mean the breaking up of *Varnashrama dharma*. It does not mean inter-dining or inter-marriages. But it does mean the common relations between man and man that should exist in any civilized society. It does mean that places of worship should be open if they are at all open to anybody, to all those who are considered Hindus. But I grant that if there is a

particular class, say, Brahmins, who want to build temples and exclude non-Brahmins from them. I say that it is their right to do so. But if there is a temple which is open to non-Brahmins also, then there is no such thing as a fifth caste which may be put out of that temple. I see no warrant for such an exclusion in the Hindu Shastras. Similarly I claim that public places such as schools should be open alike to the untouchables, if they are open to other classes. So would it be with watering places such as wells, lakes and rivers. That is the whole of my claim on behalf of those who are engaged in this campaign against untouchability and unapproachability.

Let me, however, clear the position a little so far as Vykom is concerned. The present satyagraha is merely directed towards vindicating the right of the unapproachables to pass through the roads through which Christians and Mussalmans and caste Hindus are entitled to pass. Satyagrahis today are not fighting for entry into temples. They are not fighting—I do not know if there is any prohibition in the schools of Travancore—they are not fighting for admission in the schools, not that such is not their claim. But I am presenting you today the implications of the present struggle. Since satyagraha is a method of conversion and conviction, it seeks never to use the slightest coercion. I therefore gladly endorse in its entirety the remarks made by the Dewan Sahib in his address¹ to the Travancore Assembly, and if I find the satyagrahis in Vykom in denial of their own faith use violence or any other method in order to put undue pressure upon the orthodox Hindus of Vykom, you will find me, on proof given to me, entirely dissociating myself from those satyagrahis so-called. But so long as satyagrahis keep within the terms of their contract, so long shall I consider it to be my bounden duty to give them all the assistance that a single, humble individual is capable of giving. I plead, therefore, with all the force at my command that the orthodox Brahmins and non-Brahmins of Vykom who may be opposed to this campaign study it in all its bearings, to apply their reason to bear upon the struggle and stand for justice and humanity; if they find that this struggle is just and the means adopted by the satyagrahis to vindicate the right of humanity are also fair, reasonable and non-violent.

I am glad to be able to bear my testimony to the happy relations that have hitherto subsisted generally between the police authorities and the satyagrahis; they have shown how a decent gentlemanly battle can be carried on without any vexation, without any hard swearing

¹ *Vide* Appendix “Extract from Dewan of Travancore’s Speech on Vykom Satyagraha”, March 19, 1925.

and without violence. I know that prejudices die hard. Untouchability is an error of long standing. I have, therefore, told my satyagrahi friends that they will have to exercise tremendous patience.

Time is always on the side of those who will wait upon it. Public opinion, I hope, even of Vykom, is on their side. Public opinion outside Vykom, I know, is on their side. The world opinion is growing strong on their side and if the satyagrahis will only play the game well, have patience and will be able to endure silent and slow sufferings, I have no doubt that victory is theirs. The Government of Travancore, so far as I can see from the address of the Dewan Sahib, has held the scales evenly between the two parties. I know that my satyagrahi friends here shook their heads when I told them that the presentation by the Dewan was not open to exception. Whatever the truth may be, there is no doubt about it that the credit will be yours if the two sections of the community meet together and find a reasonable and honourable solution for the difficulty without the intervention of the Government. The Dewan himself, so far as his own opinion is concerned, has told the orthodox people where his opinion lies. He invites them to march with the times, to recognize the time spirit. I hope my orthodox friends will listen to the sound advice given by him. In any event, I give them my best assurance that no matter what they think of it, no matter how they behave, whether they accept my offers or reject them, I shall only do according to the behests of the Hindu religion as I know it. I recognize no one as my enemy on the face of the earth. I shall, therefore, love them in spite of differences between them and myself. I shall ever pray to God that he may guide their steps in the right direction, open the eyes of their understanding, open their eyes to the writing on the wall and render justice to these down-trodden countrymen of ours. I am humble enough also to pray to God at the same time that if I have misread the Hindu Shastras, if I have misread humanity, and have erred in giving the advice that I have tendered to the satyagrahis, He will open my eyes also, show me my error and give me strength and the necessary courage to acknowledge my error and apologize to my orthodox friends.

One thing more and I have done. When there is a difference between you and me on the question of untouchability, I hope there is no question of difference of opinion about another matter which also concerns the poorest of the land. I refer to the spinning-wheel and khaddar. You owe it to the poorest in the land to find a sacred corner in your homes for the spinning-wheel and you owe it to them that you

wear the product of the spinning-wheel and place a few coppers in the pockets of the poorest of your countrymen and countrywomen. I shall not be satisfied as I have said repeatedly until the prince and the peasant, the Viceroy and his page, are clad from top to toe in khaddar, hand-spun and hand-made.

The third thing I need not mention to you, namely, the Hindu-Muslim unity. You have in this connection much to teach to the rest of India. All the different races and communities belonging to different religions, I am happy to be able to know and testify, are living in perfect harmony and friendship in Travancore. I hope that the rest of India will copy the admirable spirit which actuates you. I thank you all for the very patient hearing you have kindly given to me and I now close with the hope and fervent prayer that the battle that is going on in Vykom may end in the only manner it should. (Cheers.)

The Hindu, 16-3-1925

232. TALK TO INMATES OF SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, VYKOM¹

[*March 11, 1925*]²

(The following is almost a verbatim report of the quiet talk I gave to the inmates of the Satyagraha Ashram at Vykom. The Ashram has at the present moment over fifty volunteers who stand or squat in front of the four barricades which are put up to guard the four entrances to the Vykom temple. They spin whilst they are stationed there and remain there at a stretch for six hours. They are sent in two relays. I reproduce the talk as being of general interest and applicable to all satyagrahis. M.K.G.)

I am sorry that I shall be going away today without having a chat with you which I would regard as complete and satisfactory. But it seems it is not possible to do more. Those in charge of arrangements about my programme are of opinion that I ought to see, in order to help the cause, more places than Vykom. I have yielded to their advice but my own conviction based on past experience is that the success of the movement depends more on yourselves than on outside support. If there is nothing in you, any amount of enthusiasm

¹ In *Young India*, this was published under the caption "Satyagrahi's Duty".

² From *The Hindu*, 14-3-1925

brought about by a passing visit like mine will be of no avail. But if I had not come here and there had been no enthusiasm on the part of the public, and if you had been true to yourselves there would have been nothing wanting. Your work would have commanded all the enthusiasm that might have been needed for a cause like this. Therefore if I could have passed here a longer time than I have, it would have been more profitable. However, that could not be done in face of the advice of friends who are guiding me.

But I want to tell you as briefly as I can what I expect of you. I would ask you to forget the political aspect of the programme. Political consequences of this struggle there are, but you are not to concern yourselves with them. If you do, you will miss the true result and also miss the political consequences, and when the real heat of the struggle is touched you will be found wanting. I am therefore anxious, even if it frightens you, to explain to you the true nature of the struggle. It is a struggle deeply religious for the Hindus. We are endeavouring to rid Hinduism of its greatest blot. The prejudice we have to fight against is an age-long prejudice. The struggle for the opening of the roads round the temple which we hold to be public to the unapproachables is but a small skirmish in the big battle. If our struggle was to end with the opening of the roads in Vykombathur you may be sure I would not have bothered my head about it. If therefore you think that the struggle is to end with opening of the roads in Vykombathur to the unapproachables you are mistaken. The road must be opened. It has got to be opened. But that will be the beginning of the end. The end is to get all such roads throughout Travancore to be opened to the unapproachables; and not only that, but we expect that our efforts may result in amelioration of the general condition of the untouchables and unapproachables. That will require tremendous sacrifice. For our aim is not to do things by violence to opponents. That will be conversion by violence or compulsion, and if we import compulsion in matters of religion, there is no doubt that we shall be committing sui-cide. We should carry on this struggle on the lines of strict non-violence, i.e., by suffering in our own persons. That is the meaning of satyagraha. The question is whether you are capable of every suffering that may be imposed upon you or may be your lot in the journey towards the goal. Even whilst you are suffering, you may have no bitterness—no trace of it—against your opponents. And I tell you it is not a mechanical act at all. On the contrary I want you to feel like loving your opponents and the way to do it is to give them the

same credit for honesty of purpose which you would claim for yourself. I know that it is a difficult task. I confess that it was a difficult task for me yesterday whilst I was talking to those friends who insisted on their right to exclude the unapproachables from the temple roads. I confess there was selfishness behind their talk. How then was I to credit them with honesty of purpose? I was thinking of this thing yesterday and also this morning, and this is what I did. I asked myself: "Wherein was their selfishness or self interest? It is true that they have their ends to serve. But so have we our ends to serve. Only we consider our ends to be pure and therefore selfless. But who is to determine where selflessness ends and selfishness begins. Selflessness may be the purest form of selfishness". I do not say this for the sake of argument. But that is what I really feel. I am considering their condition of mind from their point of view and not my own. Had they not been Hindu they would not have talked as they did yesterday. And immediately we begin to think of things as our opponents think of them we shall be able to do them full justice. I know that this requires a detached state of mind, and it is a state very difficult to reach. Nevertheless for a satyagrahi it is absolutely essential. Three fourths of the miseries and misunderstandings in the world will disappear, if we step into the shoes of our adversaries and understand their standpoint. We will then agree with our adversaries quickly or think of them charitably.

In our case there is no question of our agreeing with them quickly as our ideals are radically different. But we may be charitable to them and believe that they actually mean what they say. They do not want to open the roads to the unapproachables. Now whether it is their self-interest or ignorance that tells them to say so, we really believe that it is wrong of them to say so. Our business therefore is to show them that they are in the wrong and we should do so by our suffering. I have found that mere appeal to reason does not answer where prejudices are age-long and based on supposed religious authority. Reason has to be strengthened by suffering and suffering opens the eyes of understanding. Therefore there must be no trace of compulsion in our acts. We must not be impatient, and we must have an undying faith in the means we are adopting. The means we are adopting just now are that we approach the four barricades and as we are stopped there we sit down and spin away from day to day, and we must believe that through it the roads must be opened. I know that it is a difficult and slow process. But if you believe in the efficacy of

satyagraha you will rejoice in this slow torture and suffering, and you will not feel the discomfort of your position as you go and sit in the boiling sun from day to day. If you have faith in the cause and the means and in God the hot sun will be cool for you. You must not be tired and say “how long”, and never get irritated. That is only a small portion of your penance for the sin for which Hinduism is responsible.

I regard you as soldiers in this campaign. It is not possible for you to reason out things for yourselves. You have come to the Ashram because you have faith in the management . That does not mean faith in me. For I am not manager. I am directing the movement so far as ideals and general direction are concerned. Your faith therefore must be in those who are managers for the time being. The choice before coming to the Ashram was yours. But having made your choice and come to the Ashram it is not for you to reason why. If we are to become a powerful nation you must obey all directions that may be given to you from time to time. That is the only way in which either political or religious life can be built up. You must have determined for yourselves certain principles and you must have joined the struggle in obedience to those principles. Those who remain in the Ashram are taking as much part in the struggle as those who go and offer satyagraha at the barricades. Every piece of work in connection with the struggle is just as important as any other piece, and therefore the work of sanitation in the Ashram is just as important as spinning away at the barricades. And if in this place the work of cleaning the closets and compound is more distasteful than spinning it should be considered far more important and profitable. Not a single minute should be wasted in idle conversation, but we must be absorbed in the work before us and if everyone of us works in that spirit you will see that there is pleasure in the work itself. Every bit of property, anything in the Ashram, should be regarded by you as your own property and not property that can be wasted at pleasure. You may not waste a grain of rice or a scrap of paper, and similarly a minute of your time. It is not ours. It belongs to the nation and we are trustees for the use of it.

I know that all this will sound hard and difficult for you. My presentation may be hard, but it has not been possible for me to present the thing in any other way. For it will be wrong on my part if I deceive you or myself in believing that this is an easy thing.

Much corruption has crept into our religion. We have become

lazy as a nation, we have lost the time sense. Selfishness dominates our action. There is mutual jealousy amongst the tallest of us. We are uncharitable to one another. And if I did not draw your attention to the things I have, it will not be possible for us to rid ourselves of all these evils. Satyagraha is a relentless search for truth and a determination to search truth. I can only hope you will realize the import of what you are doing. And if you do, your path will be easy—easy because you will take delight in difficulties and you will laugh in hope when everybody is in despair. I believe in the illustrations *rishis* or poets have given in religious books. For example, I literally believe in the possibility of a Sudhanva¹ smiling away whilst he was being drowned in the boiling oil. For to him it was greater torture to forget his Maker than to be in boiling oil. And so it can be in a lesser measure here, if we have a spark of Sudhanva's faith in this struggle.²

Mahatmaji was then put a series of questions by the workers. Mr. T. R. Krishnaswamy Iyer, M.A., B.L., asked how long the struggle should be continued. Mahatmaji said:

I do not know. It may last a few days, or for ever. I embarked on the South African struggle fancying that it would be over in a month's time but it lasted eight years.

Asked as to why batches in large numbers should not be sent to the barricades, he stated that it would result in disturbance and misunderstanding, and secondly, they had not sufficient numbers for the purpose. He thought good deal must be done by way of consolidating public opinion. It was claimed that public opinion was on their side which was correct to a certain extent, but that public opinion had not been rendered effective and that meant tremendous organization which they lacked. He saw no use in forcing the pace and advised the workers to learn Hindi in three months, also Sanskrit and engage themselves in work of some kind which should in the long run make the institution thoroughly self-supporting. Mahatmaji opined that if subscriptions were solicited from outside Kerala and Travancore, it should have a demoralizing effect and mentioned that in Champaran he had offers of money from all sources but did not accept them except from a private friend, that at the time of the labour strike in Ahmedabad he rejected offers of thousands of rupees from a single individual. In the Kheda campaign he accepted something from personal friends and not even half of

¹ Sudhanva, son of King Hansadhawaja of Champavati, was thrown into boiling oil for not reporting himself at the appointed place for fighting the invaders in response to the royal proclamation. But he came out unscathed because of his *bhakti*.

² What follows is from *The Hindu*, 14-3-1925.

what was given had been spent. From South Africa he brought back three to four lakhs of rupees. He could not recall a single battle he had fought where there was a debit balance and the amounts in every case were obtained with the minimum amount of trouble and fuss.

Young India, 19-3-1925 and *The Hindu*, 14-3-1925

233. NATIONAL EDUCATION

An Assistant Principal in a national institution writes:

In order to save the young generation from the slave mentality created in the Government schools, the national education movement was started on a large scale in the first decade of this century. It only aimed at establishing schools where education was imparted “on national lines and under national control.” . . . It undoubtedly produced a band of workers many of whom have taken a vigorous part in the struggle for freedom. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that as a purely educational movement, it had neither a separate source nor a separate existence

The non-co-operation movement gave a second impetus—indeed a tremendous one—to the cause of national education. Hundreds of mushroom schools sprang into existence all over the country. Their object was also limited in scope. They mainly aimed at accommodating the N.C.O. students for one year only. The boys were to be made “Swaraj Soldiers”, i.e., workers to carry out the different items of N.C.O. Here again the educational movement had no existence separate from the political one. When the latter lost its force, the former became feeble and infirm.

The result is that national education has always been given a secondary or subordinate place in the programme and no scientific and independent thought has ever been accorded to it by any leader. It seems that with you it is not as dear as khaddar, or it may be that with you khaddar and national education mean one and the same thing! The Swarajists are enamoured only of the Councils. Taking these facts into consideration is it possible for the movement to make any progress? And if it meets with failure now and again, will it not produce a lamentable and discouraging effect upon the majority of the people?

The aim of education is to develop the physical and mental organs of children so as to make them worthy citizens of their country. This can only be done when boys are in the secondary schools. Before that they are too young and after that their character will have taken already a

particular bent difficult to be turned to any other desirable direction. Now according to your opinion, the age in secondary schools is to be devoted mainly to hand-spinning, hand-weaving and everything connected with it. Is not that education unnatural and oppressive where students of varied capabilities and different aptitudes are cramped together in one and the same mould? . . .

Hand-spinning and hand-weaving may become one item of the curriculum, but it cannot and must not become the whole. It is not better to lay down some broad fundamental and definite principles of national education and give every institution discretion to act according to its requirements, capabilities and the calibre of the students? . . .

During the last forty years or more, a number of experiments were tried in the field of national education. Can you point out at least one institution, the model of which we can proudly ask the Government to imitate?

The whole world is advancing in material civilization, without which we shall certainly be handicapped. It is now a settled fact that India fell a prey to western nations because she was wanting in scientific and material progress. History has taught this lesson and it cannot be overlooked. But you never seem to give much importance to subjects like physics and chemistry. Is this not strange?

I do not know the conditions of 1906 but I do know those of 1921. National education to be truly national must reflect the national condition for the time being. And as the national condition at present is one of uncertainty national education too must remain in a more or less uncertain condition. How do children fare in a besieged place? Do they not according to their capacity take part in repelling the attack of the besiegers and suit themselves to the changing circumstances? Is that not their true education? Is not education the art of drawing out full manhood of the children under training? The greatest drawback of the present system of education is that it does not bear the stamp of reality, that the children do not react to the varying wants of the country. True education must correspond to the surrounding circumstances or it is not a healthy growth. The necessity of this response was the object of non-co-operation in education. True, we have not acted up to the ideal. That is because of our limitations, because we are unable to shake off the hypnotic effect of our surroundings.

But this is not to say that our educational institutions must become mere spinning and weaving institutes. I do regard spinning and weaving as the necessary part of any national system of

education. I do not aim at taking the whole of the childrens' time for this purpose. Like a skilled physician I tend and concentrate my attention on the diseased limb knowing that that is the best way of looking after the others. I would develop in the child his hands, his brain and his soul. The hands have almost atrophied. The soul has been altogether ignored. I therefore put in a plea in season and out of season for correcting these grave defects in our education. Is half an hour's spinning every day by our children too great a strain upon them? Will it result in mental paralysis?

I value education in the different sciences. Our children cannot have too much of chemistry and physics. And if these have not been attended to in the institutions in which I am directly supposed to be interested, it is because we have not the professors for the purpose and also because practical training in these sciences requires very expensive laboratories for which in the present state of uncertainty and infancy we are not ready.

Young India, 12-3-1925

234. SOUTH AFRICA

Things are clearly going from bad to worse in South Africa and there is no telling where they will end. In two separate measures, which have been put forward by the Government in power, "Asiatics" are discriminated against and classed with "Native", as contrasted with the "Coloured", people. It is somewhat difficult for those who have never been to South Africa to understand clearly what such discrimination means. What has to be realized is that the great bulk of the "Native" population is entirely uneducated. On the other hand, the "Coloured" people (i.e., those who have a slight mixture of European blood in their veins) are on the whole a fairly literate community. It appears that the policy of the new Government, under General Hertzog is to depress still further the "Asiatic" and to raise the status of the "Coloured" people.

A further measure is scheduled, whereby South African citizenship will be confined to the pure white population, which has been born and bred in South Africa. An Englishman coming out straight from England will not have his citizenship in South Africa as an inherent right on account of his English birth and origin. He will have to take out naturalization papers in South Africa. Leading newspapers in South Africa suggest that a compact has been made between the Labour Party (which relies chiefly on the British labour

vote) and the Nationalist Party (which relies chiefly on the Dutch vote) on the understanding that the Nationalist will support a strong anti-Asiatic labour policy provided that the labourites will support a strong “burgher” policy.

In addition to this, we have the further news that a new segregation measure, of even more drastic character than the late “Class Areas Bill”, is already being prepared. It will be remembered that the Municipal Franchise Act for Natal, depriving Indians in future of municipal franchise, has now been passed and sanctioned by the Governor-General. If a racial Segregation Act is also passed, it will be difficult to see what will still remain of “vested rights”, which were to be strictly observed under the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement of 1914.

In the Transvaal, a picketing system and a boycott of all Indian trade has again been started. This time, in the present inflamed atmosphere— it has met with some measure of success. The repatriation of Indians in Natal by means of Government “recruiters” is still proceeding. I have personally cross-examined those in Madras who have returned. They have told me that they have been unable to find employment in India. They are therefore now to be found, after great misery and privation, entering the emigration depot for Malaya, asking to be sent out of India to the rubber plantations of the Federated Malaya States. Truly the whole situation of Indians in South Africa has reached the lowest point where even stout hearts may find it difficult to look forward to the future with hope. There is one redeeming feature, however, which continually meets us in every fresh information that reaches us in India. The Hindu-Muslim problem out there does not exist. In face of common suffering Indians are one people—one in heart and soul as well as one in Indian birth.¹

In view of the foregoing gloomy study of the situation in South Africa, the remarks of General Smuts quoted last week² in these columns derive an added interest. The picketing referred to by Mr. Andrews is nothing but veiled coercion. If with all the elaborate precautions it did not remain peaceful everywhere in India in 1921, how less likely it is to be peaceful in South Africa, only those who know its white population can realize.

Young India, 12-3-1925

¹ The foregoing article was contributed by C. F. Andrews.

² *Vide* “Notes-1”, 5-3-1925, sub-title, “The Bar Sinister”.

235. SWADESHI AND NATIONALISM

The following from a friend has been on my file for a long time:

No doubt you have read M. Romain Rolland's book entitled *Mahatma Gandhi*. On page 176¹ of this book appears this paragraph: "What is this but the triumph of nationalism—the narrowest and most unpolluted? Stay at home, shut all doors, change nothing, hold on to everything. Export nothing, buy nothing, uplift and purify body and spirit! A gospel indeed of medieval monks! *And Gandhi of the broad mind, lets his name be associated with it!* (By way of preface to D. B. Kalelkar's² *Gospel of Swadeshi*.) Coming from an ardent admirer of yours, this indeed calls for an answer from you. I notice in the November 27 issue of *Young India*, you append a note at the foot of Mr. Andrews' article entitled "Truth about Nationalism", which purports to state that Indian swadeshi cannot become impure or racial. Will you not stretch the argument further in a subsequent issue and allay the fears of the author of this wonderful book and its innumerable readers?

So far as D. B. Kalelkar's pamphlet is concerned, the position is this. It is a rendering of a Gujarati pamphlet. My preface was to the original. D. B. Kalelkar is a valued associate. I therefore wrote the half dozen lines of preface also in Gujarati without studying the pamphlet. I had only glanced at passages here and there. I knew my friend's views on swadeshi. I had no difficulty about identifying myself with them. But at the instance of Mr. Andrews, I have read the translation and I confess that the presentment is narrow in places. I have discussed them with Mr. Kalelkar too and he agrees that they do read narrow in the translation for which he is not responsible. So far as my own views are concerned, my writings in *Young India* make it quite plain that my swadeshi, and for that matter Mr. Kalelkar's, is not as narrow as the pamphlet would lead one to suppose.

So much for the pamphlet itself.

My definition of swadeshi is well known. I must not serve distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest. It is never vindictive or punitive. It is in no sense narrow, for I buy from every part of the world what is needed for my growth. I refuse to buy from anybody anything however nice or beautiful if it interferes

¹ Page 115 in the sixth impression published by Messrs George Allen & Unwin LTD.

² b. 1885; Educationist, writer and constructive worker; Padma Vibhushan

with my growth or injures those whom Nature has made my first care. I buy useful healthy literature from every part of the world. I buy surgical instruments from England, pins and pencils from Austria and watches from Switzerland. But I will not buy an inch of the finest cotton fabric from England or Japan or any other part of the world because it has injured and increasingly injures the millions of the inhabitants of India. I hold it to be sinful for me [not] to buy the cloth spun and woven by the needy millions of India's paupers and to buy foreign cloth, although it may be superior in quality to the Indian hand-spun. My swadeshi therefore chiefly centres round the hand-spun khaddar and extends to every thing that can be and is produced in India. My nationalism is as broad as my swadeshi. I want India's rise so that the whole world may benefit. I do not want India to rise on the ruin of other nations. If therefore India was strong and able, India would send out to the world her treasures of art and health-giving spices, but will refuse to send out opium or intoxicating liquors although the traffic may bring much material benefit to India.

Young India, 12-3-1925

236. BIRTH-CONTROL

It is not without the greatest hesitation and reluctance that I approach the subject. The question of using artificial methods for birth-control has been referred to me by correspondents ever since my return to India. Though I have answered them personally, I have never hitherto dealt with the subject publicly. My attention was drawn to the subject, now thirty-five years ago, when I was a student in England. There was then a hot controversy raging between a purist who would not countenance anything but natural means and a doctor who advocated artificial means. It was at that early time in my life that I became, after leanings for a brief period towards artificial means, a convinced opponent of them. I now observe that in some Hindi papers the methods are described in a revoltingly open manner which shocks one's sense of decency. I observe, too, that one writer does not hesitate to cite my name as among the supporters of artificial methods of birth-control. I cannot recall a single occasion when I spoke or wrote in favour of such methods. I have seen also two distinguished names having been used in support. I hesitate to publish them without reference to their owners.

There can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth-

control. But the only method handed down from ages past is self-control or *brahmacharya*. It is an infallible sovereign remedy doing good to those who practise it. And medical men will earn the gratitude of mankind, if instead of devising artificial means of birth-control they will find out the means of self-control. The union is meant not for pleasure but for bringing forth progeny. And union is a crime when the desire for progeny is absent.

Artificial methods are like putting a premium upon vice. They make men and women reckless. And respectability that is being given to the methods must hasten the dissolution of the restraints that public opinion puts upon one. Adoption of artificial methods must result in imbecility and nervous prostration. The remedy will be found to be worse than the disease. It is wrong and immoral to seek to escape the consequences of one's acts. It is good for a person who overeats to have an ache and a fast. It is bad for him to indulge his appetite and then escape the consequence by taking tonics or other medicine. It is still worse for a person to indulge in his animal passions and escape the consequences of his acts. Nature is relentless and will have full revenge for any such violation of her laws. Moral results can only be produced by moral restraints. All other restraints defeat the very purpose for which they are intended. The reasoning underlying the use of artificial methods is that indulgence is a necessity of life. Nothing can be more fallacious. Let those who are eager to see the births regulated explore the lawful means devised by the ancients and try to find out how they can be revived. An enormous amount of spade-work lies in front of them. Early marriages are fruitful source of adding to the population. The present mode of life has also a great deal to do with the evil of unchecked procreation. If these causes are investigated and dealt with, society will be morally elevated. If they are ignored by impatient zealots and if artificial methods become the order of the day, nothing but moral degradation can be the result. A society that has already become enervated through a variety of causes will become still further enervated by the adoption of artificial methods. Those men therefore who are light-heartedly advocating artificial methods cannot do better than study the subject afresh, stay their injurious activity and popularize *brahmacharya* both for the married and the unmarried. That is the only noble and straight method of birth-control.

Young India, 12-3-1925

237. NOTES

LATEST FIGURES

Further figures reported since last week from Gujarat and through a telegram from Pandit Jawaharlal from Allahabad bring the total of membership to 7,851. The figure reported last week was 6,644. So far only five provinces show an advance on their position as it stood last week. The revised figures of these provinces are as follows:

	A	B	TOTAL
1. Gujarat	1847	80	1927
2. U.P.	129	254	1094
			(including unclassified figures)
3. Bihar	418	146	737 (do)
4. Maharashtra	48	123	171
5. Sind	Details not furnished		168
6. Burma	26	3	29

The last named Province is one of the six Provinces from whom no report has been received on the 1st of March. The other five, i.e., Tamilnad, Kerala, Delhi, Assam and North-Western Provinces still remain unrepresented in the grand total given above.

As had been foreshadowed in the previous report the larger number of provinces have not yet been able to cope with the task of collecting district figures. It is hoped that full classified figures will be communicated to *Young India* office next week. Messages should not reach us later than Wednesday morning.

MEMBERSHIP RETURNS

The figures, published last week, of membership leave a great deal to be desired. Six Provinces have not sent in any returns at all. Of those that have, many have not even taken the trouble of giving the classification. One had hoped, from the letter I published some weeks ago, that Berar will at least make a brave show at least in yarn-giving members. But I am sorry it stands at the bottom of the list. Ajmer could, if it wished, easily give one thousand self-spinners. It has begun with only two self-spinners against fifteen yarn givers. I expect

Bengal, Andhra, Karnatak and Bihar and Tamilnad which have well-equipped spinning centres, to beat Gujarat if only because they have a much larger population than Gujarat. They have moreover spinning traditions whose memory still lingers in the present generation.

THE RS. 1,000 PRIZE

I observe that several youngmen are making an earnest effort to win Mr. Revashanker's prize. Some of the essays promise to be brilliantly written. These competitors will be glad to learn that Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai has agreed to join the examining board. I am looking forward to worthy contributions to the growing literature on the subject.

SPINNERS' YARN

A District Congress Secretary writes to say that some spinners have grown so fond of spinning that they are anxious to purchase their own yarn and get it woven into cloth for personal use. He asks whether those who have sent their yarn as Congress subscription may buy their own yarn for the purpose mentioned. The ideal is undoubtedly for people during the leisure hours to spin enough for their own clothing. It is the easiest and the best method of India becoming self-supporting for her cloth. I would therefore advise all secretaries to encourage the idea of spinners buying their own yarn on the understanding that they do not use it for paying the subscription again.

SOME STRIKING FIGURES

A lover of khaddar has handed me the following condensation of figures to prove how easy it is to make India self-supporting for her cloth, if only the people could be induced to shake off their laziness and work the charkha and to wear khaddar garments:¹

NO STONING IN KORAN

I gladly publish the following telegram from Dr. Mahomed Ali, President, Ahmadiya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam:

The Koran enjoins no such punishment as stoning for any offence whatever. Your note is unfair to Islam and her Prophet and liable to

¹ Not reproduced here. The figures included were: For 312 million people of India, at 20 yards per head per annum, 6,240 million yards could be produced by 3 crores of charkhas and 35 lakhs of handlooms. About 200 crores of yards imported in 1922 could be produced by just one crore of charkhas and only 12 to 15 lakhs of handlooms.

tremendously prejudice the world against Islam. I am sure this is not your considered opinion and is based on hearsay. A reference to my English translation of Koran on the points concerned will convince you that your informants are in error. Pray consider and refute.

Dr. Mahomed Ali has misunderstood my criticism. I knew that stoning to death had been defended by some as a penalty described by the Koran in certain circumstances. Without stating my opinion as to whether such a penalty had or had not been prescribed in the Koran or the traditions, I simply said that it could not be defended even on the authority of the Holy Koran. I am glad that Dr. Mahomed Ali assures me that "the Koran enjoins no such punishment as stoning". I would like to know on what ground it has been defended at Kabul and the defence upheld in India by a section of Mussalmans. I would like to see a unanimous condemnation by Mussalmans of stoning as a form of penalty. If it could be had it would make a repetition of the penalty impossible in any part of the Islamic world.

A TYPICAL LETTER

A well-known Indian public worker once wrote to a well-known Englishman a letter asking for an interview. Here is a characteristic reply sent by the Englishman:

In reply to your letter I regret that I cannot see you for the simple reason that, in my opinion, no benefit could be derived by you from an interview with me in the present state of the Indian question. I can neither understand nor sympathize with the action and purpose of the leaders of the Indian community. Your people must surely understand something of the nature of the race of men with whom they are dealing. Much has been given you by the British Government. Can you not put to its full use that which has been given in the spirit of justice? It is possible for your people, by high organization of their voting power and by the careful selection and continual criticism of their best men, to prove over a series of years that they are capable of exercising the highest duties and fulfilling the most exacting responsibilities of citizenship. I am sure that in giving this proof of political capacity you would carry with you for future political evolution, the best minds and the most effective sympathies of my countrymen. If you place your trust in political bargains among English parties, you can but be disappointed by results.

It is difficult to choose whether to deplore the insolence of the letter or to admire the sincerity of the writer's convictions. He had made up his mind that he had nothing to learn from the would-be visitor. He had only to give. Who can satisfy this Englishman who keeps himself locked up in a safe and refuses to see that no amount of

argumentative powers can possibly fit us for the “exacting responsibility of citizenship”? Who can prove to such an Englishman that the responsibilities of citizenship require the primary capacity for self-defence and that this cannot be acquired by learning the art of debating? Who can show to him that his own race learnt the art of self-government by developing the capacity for defending its country and that such debating power as it has learnt came to it only after the English people began to have self-government? Who can show to this writer and his like that we Indians think not that much has been given us in the spirit of justice, but that so little has been given to us, and that too by force of circumstances? Lastly, who can show him that we put our trust not in “political bargaining among English parties but in our own strength?” This ignorance of Englishmen and their attitude of studied isolation is truly deplorable. The letter, however, teaches us a lesson. We must not court insult by asking for interviews with those we do not know. Our own conduct will right our relations with the whole world.

A WORKER IMPRISONED

I have a telegram from Cochin saying that Sjt. Kurur Nambudiripad has been sentenced to two months’ simple imprisonment. I do not know the cause of imprisonment. Sjt. Nambudiripad is a seasoned soldier and staunch worker. I congratulate him on his imprisonment. In my opinion he also serves who is imprisoned in the act of service and without any moral lapse.

A POLITICIAN?

Mr. Andrews sends me for answer a letter he has received from an English friend. This is the friend’s puzzle:

I was surprised to read in a recent article Gandhi’s repudiation of intermarriage between touchables and untouchables. That seems to me the test question. Not that I would have him advocate marriage between any particular caste and any other, any more than between any person and any other person. But surely the right marital relations, and the right children, are found whenever man and wife are of one mind, in the fullest sense. And is that not Gandhi’s aim in India? In proportion as it is reached, will not intermarriage between castes not become as natural as in Ephesus was intermarriage between Jew and Greek?

I know Gandhi is a politician and I can guess he wrote the words to avoid offence. But surely the *political* price of such a statement is sure to be fatally injurious to his central aim? How can he expect the European farmer in Kenya to treat the Indian shopkeeper as he should, if Brahmins are to deny equal

privileges to sweepers *on the sole ground of caste?*

I have repeatedly expressed my view of caste and intermarriage. With me marriage is no necessary test of friendship even between husband and wife, let alone their respective clans. I cannot picture to myself a time when all mankind will have one religion. As a rule there will, therefore, be the religious bar. People will marry in their own religion. Similarly there will persist the territorial restriction. The caste restriction is an extension of the same principle. It is a social convenience. An English nobleman's son does not, as a rule, marry a grocer's daughter. She would, as a rule, be rejected on the sole ground of her birth. I am opposed to untouchability because it limits the field of service. Marriage is not an act of service. It is a comfort man or woman seeks for him or herself. And I see no harm in restricting the circle of comfort or being selective in regard to such a life-change as marriage. If a Kenya settler will not tolerate my presence in Kenya because I will not give my daughter in marriage to him or receive his for my son I should be sorry for him but would content myself with exclusion from Kenya rather than be compelled to contract an incompatible tie. I would only add that the Kenya settler would not permit me even to think of any such relation. And if I put forth any such claim it would be regarded as an additional reason for excluding me from his preserve. Though the point is absolutely clear as it seems to me and though marriage is restricted in practice all over the world to classes, clans, etc., Mr. Andrews' correspondent is not likely to be satisfied with my answer. But I can give him the assurance that I have not evaded the issue for fear of giving offence. I am not a politician in the narrow sense given to the word by the correspondent. I have written as I have believed. I have sacrificed no principle to gain a political advantage. Probably I would gain greater reputation in the circles I move in, if I did not accept the Hindu restraint on intermarriage. And what is my central aim? It is equal treatment for the whole of humanity and that equal treatment means equality of service. The duty of service may be denied to none. The privilege of marriage presupposes temperamental and other affinity. It would be no crime for a woman to reject the hand of a red-haired man but she would be guilty of a gross sin if she neglected the duty of serving him because of his red hair. Marriage is a matter of choice. Service is an obligation that cannot be shirked.

TO ANOTHER REVOLUTIONARY

I am afraid your advice to me to retire from public life is not so

easy to follow as it is to give. I claim to be servant of India and there through of humanity. I cannot always have it my own way. If I have had my share of fair weather I must face the foul too. I must not abandon the field of battle so long as I feel that I am wanted. When my work is done and I have become a disabled or worn-out soldier, I shall be put away. Till then I must continue to do my work and endeavour to neutralize in all the ways accessible to me the poison of the revolutionary activity. A well-meaning and self-sacrificing physician who prescribes arsenic when he should have given fresh grape juice is one to be shunned in spite of his good intentions and even sacrifice. I invite the revolutionaries not to commit suicide and drag with them unwilling victims. India's way is not Europe's. India is not Calcutta and Bombay. India lives in her seven hundred thousand villages. If the revolutionaries are as many let them spread out into these villages and try to bring sunshine into the dark dungeons of the millions of their countrymen. That would be worthier of their ambition and love of the land than the exciting and unquenchable thirst for the blood of English officials and those who are assisting them. It is nobler to try to change their spirit than to take their lives.

HINDU AGGRESSION

A Mussalman correspondent takes me gently to task for my article dealing with the alleged building of mosques on private property, and then quotes unsupported instances of alleged Hindu aggression. He, however, supports one statement with facts. I have invited him to support his other statements and have promised full publication and even investigation in the event of his so supporting them. Meanwhile, I give below the only statement made and supported by my correspondent:

The Moslems of Lohani want to substitute a pukka structure for an old cutcha mosque. The Hindu might won't let the Moslem right prevail. Our brethren are using the same weapons of boycott against the rightful countrymen which they were taught to use against foreign aggression. Prayers and call to prayers are all stopped.

If the Hindus of Lohani have done what is imputed to them, they are certainly guilty of aggression. I invite them to send me their version for publication and set the matter right without delay, if the allegations made against them are right. Those who seek justice must come with clean hands.

Young India, 12-3-1925

238. THE LOWLANDS OF KENYA¹

After a recent visit to Delhi, I feel it to be of the utmost importance to make plain, beyond any shadow of misunderstanding, how emphatically I should object to anyone being sent out from India officially to investigate an area in the Lowlands of Kenya in which large free grants of Crown lands should be given to Indians for colonization purposes.

In the first place, to accept even tentatively such an offer, or even to examine it with a view to approval, is to stultify the whole Indian position. For the Indian claim is not to receive free grants of Crown lands anywhere, but to recover the legal rights of sale and purchase of land in the Highlands which have been illegally taken away after a solemn promise had been made that they should remain intact. Indians are asking for an elementary right of citizenship. They are asking to be placed on a basis of equality with other citizens in the eyes of the law. It, therefore, can easily be seen, that if Indians even examine the proposal that they should be given grants in the Lowlands, it will be certainly understood as their final abandonment of legal rights elsewhere. I do not think that it can be made too plain, that the very *act* of sending an Indian official to examine an area in the Lowlands will be interpreted as a giving up of Indian legal rights in the Highlands altogether.

In the second place, for Indians to use the British military force to take possession of a large area in the Lowlands, thus depriving the natives of still further territory, in addition to the 12,000 square miles of fertile soil that has been taken from them in the Highlands by the whites, is to commit an injustice. It means that India, for the first time, by a definite act is prepared to enter upon a policy of imperial "grab", wherever an opportunity occurs. That the African Natives, as far as they have any voice or power, will most strongly object to any such policy of "grab", on the part of India, goes without saying. If they are voiceless and powerless, then the wrong done to them will be all the greater. It must be remembered that Kenya is not an empty country, with no Native inhabitants. It is a large territory, with only a very small fraction of good, well-watered agricultural land. If it had not been for the labour exploitation that has been going on, with its inevitable demoralization, the Native population would already have spread over the cultivable soil and occupied it. Even today, in spite of the exploitation that has taken place, the Native "reserves" are already proving too small. It would be an act of grave injustice, therefore, if Indians were to seize, under the cover of British and Indian bayonets, a great slice of the territory still remaining open for Native occupation.

¹ This was C. F. Andrews' article to which Gandhiji appended a note.

In the third place, the Indian claim to free immigration into Kenya and Uganda is based entirely on the ground that Indians are helping and not hindering the Native advancement. There is no other claim than this. What is put forward is this, that for two thousand years the trade between East Africa and India has gone on. Indians have come freely to East Africa and have been hospitably received because they came in peace and not for war; because the trade and the barter that they brought with them was mutually beneficial. East Africans have, from this side, been able to come freely to India in the same manner. They have been hospitably received for the same reason. Thus free emigration on both sides has been encouraged and has prevailed. But if an entirely new relationship is advocated—the relationship (however decently veiled) of conquest and possession,—the whole aspect changes. The Indian claim, to respect the Native and to benefit the Native, falls to the ground. Indians become imperialistic invaders of Africa and are classed as such in the same category with the Europeans. Though feeling the iron yoke of subjection themselves, they are ready to bring others into subjection. They do not any longer stand out on the side of the oppressed, but themselves take the side of the oppressors and their own share of the spoils. Any such action on the part of responsible Indians, on such a large scale as is now contemplated, is to me unthinkable.

I entirely endorse Mr. Andrews' view that it would be wrong in every way to countenance the idea of Indians being excluded from the highlands and restricted to the lowlands especially if it is true that the lowlands have to be stolen from the native of the soil.

Young India, 12-3-1925

239. TO M. V. N.

I draw a sharp distinction between untouchability and *varna* or caste. The former has no scientific basis. It cannot be supported by reason. It denies man the privilege of service to fellow beings and deprives the "untouchables" in distress of the right of receiving service from their kind. The caste system has in my opinion a scientific basis. Reason does not revolt against it. If it has disadvantages, it has also its advantages. It does not prevent a Brahmin from serving his Sudra brother. Caste creates a social and moral restraint. The doctrine of caste cannot be extended. I would restrict it to four divisions. Any multiplication would be an evil. I would reform the castes and rid them of undoubted abuses but I can find no reason for their abolition. For me there is no question of superiority or inferiority. A Brahmin who regards himself as a superior being born to look down upon the

other castes is not a Brahmin. If he is first he is so by right of service.

Young India, 12-3-1925

240. TO R.S.S.R.

You have not given your address. If, in your opinion, the *Gita* advocates violence in the other chapters, the verses you quote from the 12th do not take us much further along non-violence. But I do not agree with you that the *Gita* advocates and teaches violence in any part of it. See the concluding discourse at the end of Chapter II. Although that chapter lends itself to a violent interpretation, the concluding verses seem to me to preclude any such interpretation. The fact is that a literal interpretation of the *Gita* lands one in a sea of contradictions. The letter truly killeth, the spirit giveth life.

Young India, 12-3-1925

241. TELEGRAM

March 12, 1925

REGRET IMPOSSIBILITY GETTING DAY IN PRESENT
PROGRAMME TO MEET EX-HIGHNESS¹.

The Hindu, 14-3-1925

242. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, QUILON

March 12, 1925

MR. PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL AND FRIENDS,

I thank you sincerely for the beautiful address that you have given to me and the sentiments that you have expressed therein. I know that you regret, as I regret, the absence of my friend Maulana Shaukat Ali, who as a rule accompanied me in all such tours. As it so happened, it was not possible for him to tear himself away from the special engagements that have kept him in Delhi, nor was it really necessary for him to accompany me during this tour. As you are aware, I have for the time being a special mission in Travancore in which he is not so interested as we Hindus are.

The question of untouchability expresses itself in all its evil

¹ Sir Sri Rama Varma, ex-Maharaja of Cochin. Gandhiji met him at his palace on March 18.

form in Malabar. I must confess to you that before the struggle started in Vykom, I never knew that approachability was a crime. Travancore is one of the few favoured places in India where education seems to be almost universal. You are in a State which is considered—and I think rightly considered—to be progressive. This State, I know, has done a great deal for what are miscalled the depressed classes. I say the depressed classes miscalled, because the proper term is suppressed classes. It was Swami Vivekananda¹ who reminded us that the upper classes had suppressed a portion of themselves, and had thereby been depressed themselves. You cannot lower the members of your own species without lowering yourselves. It surpasses comprehension that any human being should be prohibited from making use of roads which are semi-public or altogether public. Ever since I have entered Travancore, I have been patiently and courteously listening to the arguments that can possibly be advanced in favour of such a prohibition but I must confess to you that I remain totally unconvinced, not because I am not open to conviction, but because there seems to me to be something inherently wrong in the very opposition that is taken up by the orthodox people.

I have made to them three definite offers. I will not discuss them at the present moment, but I ask you all who are assembled here to give me and give the cause your sympathy and co-operation in an active manner. (Cheers.) And that co-operation and sympathy I ask of every man and woman in this city if you are convinced with me of the error that has crept into Hinduism. Pray remember that all the religions of the world are at present in the melting pot. They may not support themselves upon mere scriptural authority. They will have to stand the severest test of reason and, *sanatana dharma* Hindu that I claim myself to be, I do not hesitate to repeat what I have said on many an occasion that if I find that there were any texts in the Vedas or Puranas that were inconsistent with reason, I would have no hesitation in rejecting them, but all the researches that the limited time and the limited knowledge have enabled me to make personally and all the assistance that I have received from the most learned Shastris that are to be found in India have convinced me that there is absolutely no warrant for unapproachability or even untouchability as they are being practised today in India in our Shastras. This is a land

¹ 1863-1902; disciple of Ramakrishna Paramhansa; exponent of Vedantic philosophy; founder of Ramakrishna Math

of learning and if you desire to controvert the statement that I have made I invite you to give me your assistance and give me the verses that in your opinion may support the contention of the orthodox. I assure you that if we do not wake betimes—I am speaking to the Hindu part of this audience—our religion is in danger of perishing.

I am asked to be patient in connection with this reform. I know from experience that patience is a virtue. I have in my own humble manner cultivated that virtue for the past 40 years with the greatest deliberation, but I must confess to you that I can no longer remain patient with the curse that blots Hinduism. I ask you to regard impatience with this curse a virtue. Mark my words, I do not say impatience with the orthodox people, but I ask you to be impatient with yourselves. Do not rest satisfied till you have rid the land of this curse and you will tear down the opposition of blind orthodoxy if you bestir yourself and express your own opinion with emphasis, and satyagraha is nothing but an emphatic expression of one's own opinion. Emphasis is not required in the speech, it is required in the action and emphasis of action means suffering in one's own person. I ask you in the light of this test critically to study the movement that is going on at Vykom and if you find in the satyagrahis there the slightest trace of violence, denounce them in unmeasured terms, but if you find that they are a set of honest people acting in defiance of the opinion of the orthodoxy of Vykom, but patiently enduring what becomes their lot, if you find that what I am telling you about these men is true, I ask you to support them.

Satyagraha is a force that has come to stay. No force in the world can kill it. It is a priceless possession. It blesses those who practise it and it blesses those in connection with whom it is practised. No one need fear it, and I wish that you, the educated people of this place, will study the method of satyagraha with all its implications and you will admit with me that it is a method which is matchless, if it is properly understood and practised.

I was delighted to see in the address of the Dewan of Travancore a reference to the spinning-wheel. You have passed in the Assembly a resolution recommending the adoption of the spinning-wheel in the national schools. I congratulate the Assembly upon the resolution, but as I passed through the towns or the cities of Travancore, I must confess to you that I have my misgivings about the success of the introduction of the spinning-wheel in your schools. If I remember rightly, the Dewan has advertised for an expert spinner. I wonder

whether it will be possible to get a single expert spinner in Travancore and if you have not sufficient expert spinners, I do not see how it will be possible for you to man your schools with spinning teachers, but having passed the resolution, I ask you to make of that resolution a success. Believe me, the spinning-wheel and the spinning-wheel alone will solve, if anything will solve, the problem of the deepening poverty of India. You want a universal supplementary occupation for the agricultural classes of India. Such an occupation has to be supplemented only by the spinning-wheel, nor is it a new thing. Only a hundred years ago every cottage of India had a spinning-wheel. Restore the spinning-wheel to its place and you will solve the problem of poverty.

I have fallen in love with the women of Travancore. They do not need the inordinate lengths that the women of the Tamil land require. I am glad that the women of Travancore consider themselves sufficiently elegant if their limbs and bodies are covered. Their white dress has captivated me. I hope and believe that it is a symbol and emblem of the purity within, (Cheers.) but I am distressed to find that they wear the calico of Manchester or even the calico of Ahmedabad. I ask them to copy their sisters of Assam. Every woman in Assam knows how to weave, and almost every household in Assam even at the present moment has a handloom. I ask every one of you, man and woman, to clothe yourselves in khaddar, hand-spun and hand-woven. You will thereby place yourselves in direct touch with the poorest of the land and if you will kindly adopt the advice that I have humbly ventured to tender to you, you will find that this will be a land of plenty.

The Hindu, 14-3-1925

243. SPEECH IN REPLY TO “EZHAVAS ‘ ’ ADDRESS,

VARKALAI¹

March 13, 1925

I am deeply grateful to you for the address that you have kindly presented to me. Needless to say, I was looking forward to this visit. I wanted to know who were the different communities that were barred entrance to roads that are public or semi-public in

¹ The address was presented at Sivagiri Hall at a large gathering of *Ezhavas* and other untouchables.

Vykom and it has, therefore, been a matter of study, to come here and make your acquaintance personally. I have now a demonstration of what is in store for His Holiness, if he went to Vykom and tried to cross the barrier.

As you are aware, I was to have waited upon Her Highness the Maharani Regent, and similarly, I was to have waited upon His Holiness (Swami Narayana Guru), both of which I did yesterday, and feel highly flattered that I was able to wait upon these high personages. I am able to tell you that Her Highness's sympathies, so far as she herself is personally concerned, are entirely with those who are trying to seek redress. I am free to tell you that she considers that the roads at Vykom and similar roads elsewhere should be open to all classes, (Cheers.) but as the head of the State, she feels powerless, unless there is public opinion behind her, and unless, therefore, public opinion in Travancore is organized in a perfectly legitimate, peaceful and constitutional manner, and unless that opinion is expressed in an equally constitutional, legitimate and peaceful manner, though ever so emphatic, she will feel powerless to grant the relief desired. I, for my part, entirely accept that position. It is for you and me to break down the opposition of blind orthodoxy. You will not feel the glow of freedom and liberty, unless you yourselves take a leading part in breaking down that opposition.

The orthodox friends whom I saw flung in my face, and rightly, the law of karma. The paraphrase that I would give of the law of karma is that everyone gets what he deserves, and we deserve what we have inherited. Hinduism believes in heredity, and so do the scientists, and Hinduism is a science reduced to practice, but that very science, that very Hinduism also teaches us to undo the law of karma and that undoing is done by doing more karma of an opposite character. If, in my past incarnation, I did something that was wrong, it is possible for me to undo the result of that evil past by doing something which is contrary to the evil, and even as it is possible for us to do better than our past, it is possible for this blindly orthodox people now to heap bad karma upon bad karma, and earn a reward which they would not like. The law of karma is no respecter of persons, but I would ask you to leave the orthodoxy to itself. Man is the maker of his own destiny, and I therefore ask you to become makers of your own destiny. I am myself trying to become a bridge between my blind orthodoxy and those who are victims of that orthodoxy, and, therefore, in so far as it is possible for me, I am trying to become one

of yourselves, and then, as I was telling His Holiness this morning, I described myself as a scavenger—*Bhangi*—and *Bhangi* occupies the lowest rung of the ladder among suppressed classes. I am not ashamed to call myself a *Bhangi*, and I ask every *Bhangi* not to be ashamed of his calling. A *Bhangi*, if he is true to his salt, is a sanitarian. I described myself also as a weaver, spinner and farmer. The suppressed classes, the orthodox say, should remain suppressed because of the vices which, they say, are inherent in them. It is for you and me to show that no vice is inherent in man. That which is inherent in man is his virtue. Immediately he realizes his own potentialities, man becomes almost divine, and I would like every one of us to become what he should be, and not remain what we are.

It gives me pleasure to find amongst you so many educated men and women; to find lawyers, doctors and other professional men. But I must confess to you that I am not satisfied with that. It is good, but it is not good enough. What will tell in the end will be character and not a knowledge of letters. I would, therefore, ask you to cultivate the best in yourselves, and you will find that no strength, however invincible it may appear to be, can stand against the inherent strength you would have developed in yourselves. There are instances innumerable throughout the length and breadth of India, or people belonging to suppressed classes, having not only come into their own, but of having commanded reverence from the highest among Brahmins, and I want you to do nothing less than those distinguished men have done before you. I ask you to regard yourselves as trustees for the welfare of Hinduism. I know that there is at the present moment a wave of impatience going round the country, not only through Travancore, but throughout the length and breadth of India, amongst the suppressed classes. I assure you that it is wrong. You cannot achieve durable reform by becoming impatient. If we must be impatient, we must be impatient with ourselves, and not impatient with the wrongdoer. I have presented India with the same prescription in connection with the conduct of Englishmen towards us, and I have no other in connection with the conduct of orthodoxy towards us. And if every vice that is attributed to us is eradicated, you will find that orthodoxy has absolutely no bottom left to itself. You will say, and very properly, what can virtue and character have to do with entrance to a public road, but I want you to look beneath the surface. There is, in the mind of orthodoxy, religion mixed up inextricably with the use of certain public roads.

The position that is taken up by orthodoxy is wrong, unsound, immoral and sinful, but that is my viewpoint, that is your viewpoint, not that of orthodoxy. There was a time when our ancestors offered human sacrifice. We know that it was diabolical, that it was irreligion, but not so thought our ancestors. They knew no better and they had made of vice a virtue. And we would be doing them grave injustice if we do judge them by the standard of today. If we are to judge them rightly, it is necessary for us to step into their shoes and see how they would have felt, and they did feel when human sacrifice was abolished. This is not in justification for the past deeds, but it is a circumstance which is in favour of our ancestors, that they knew no better, and so would I have you to judge the blindly orthodox people of our own times. They know no better, and I tell you, I am speaking from bitter experience. I am speaking, that is to say, of experience in my own domestic life. I have not yet been able to remove the wall of prejudice that surrounds my own dear wife and I be impatient with her. I must carry her with me by showing to her the greatest consideration, the greatest courtesy and greater affection still, if it were possible for me to do so. While I remain absolutely strict with reference to my own conduct, while I must become impatient of any wrong, the slightest that may be lurking in me, I must be generous towards her. You will not expect me to do otherwise. Then similarly I expect you not to feel otherwise towards the orthodox people, and that is the secret of a true religious life. Swamiji told me yesterday, religion was one. I combated that view, and I combat it here this morning. So long as there are different human heads, so long will there be different religions, but the secret of a true religious life is to tolerate one another's religion. What may appear evil to us in certain religious practices is not necessarily evil to those who follow those practices. I cannot, I dare not, blind myself to existing differences. I cannot rub them off the slate, if I would, but knowing those differences, I must love even those who differ from me. You will find an exemplification of this law throughout the world. No two leaves of this very tree, under whose shadow we are sitting, are alike, though they spring from the same root, but, even as the leaves live together in perfect harmony and present to us a beautiful whole, so must we, divided humanity present to the outsider looking upon us a beautiful whole. That can be done when we begin to love each other and tolerate each other in spite of differences. So, although I see the deep ignorance, the black ignorance of blind orthodoxy, I refuse to be impatient with that

orthodoxy, and hence I present to the world the law of non-violence and I say that a man who wants to lead a religious life on this earth and a man who wants to realize himself on this earth in this incarnation must remain non-violent in every shape and form and in every one of his actions. And I am here to tell you that, had this Vykom satyagraha been carried on in that absolutely non-violent spirit and had that campaign received that support from you which it should have received, the battle would have closed long ago. I have given my need of praise to the satyagrahis of Vykom. They have done well. They have commanded my admiration, but that was only one side of the picture. I would be untrue to you if I did not present to you the other side of the picture but there again, applying the same law of non-violence, I refuse to condemn them. They have done their best, but I ask them and I ask you to do better. They have done no physical violence to anybody, but their thoughts and their minds were not non-violent. I discovered that even during my discussion with them. They feel bitter towards the orthodox people who are putting up this opposition. They are angry with them and they distrust their motives. They distrust the motives of the Government. I say that all these things are beneath the dignity of satyagraha. I will take the Government at its word. I believe the orthodox when they say that it does violence to their religious sentiment when I pass through their road and, by giving them the same credit for honesty which I would claim for myself, I disarm their suspicion and opposition. I place myself in a most favourable position by insinuating myself in their esteem and thereby expect to open the eyes of their understanding. I want you to take up that attitude mentally, because I believe that thoughts are infinitely more powerful than deeds. Deeds are indifferent caricatures of our thoughts, and a student of psychology has no difficulty in analysing the deeds and tracing them to their sources, and finding out how noble and mainly a man is and often times how equally degraded he is.

My object today is to reiterate the main principles, that we must attain our own salvation, we must be self-reliant, we must exert ourselves and I ask you to set aside every other task that may be before you and apply yourselves to the finishing of this particular satyagraha. It is a test case and the way for you to do it is to feed this noble band of satyagrahis and to feed them in every sense of this term. You must be ashamed of receiving money from me or from any other person outside this province, if it were possible even outside

Vykom. You must not only find this physical food for them but you must also dedicate yourselves to the cause, and never allow the ceaseless flow of satyagrahis to dry up. You must not be satisfied with a few young men, brave lads, day in and day out sitting in and spinning away in that fierce sun before the barricades, but you must take your due share in the cause, you must also perform *tapas-charya* by being baked in the sun, and what is more, since sacrifice is a sacred thing, you must approach this task with a sacred heart. Your character must therefore be above suspicion and you must be truthful and self-controlled. You must not indulge in luxuries for the time being at any rate, you must cut your necessaries down to the lowest point, you must cut yourselves off from every worldly tie for the time being; having taken leave of your elders, you must not turn your back towards them. They may not expect you to help them even in time of their need, once you have gone from them. Try to do this in reality and you will find for yourselves that you have carved a status which no power on earth can deprive you of; all cannot have the privilege of doing this special work, but all of you can do social amelioration work among the community. There is the drink evil, you must tackle that evil. I do not sufficiently know the other evil habits that may be prevalent in your community. But you must remove untouchability from amongst yourselves. You must go out to those among the suppressed classes who are still lower down in the scale, befriend them and help them in every manner possible.

Take up the gospel of spinning and khaddar. I have urged His Holiness to take up this thing in right earnest and ask everyone of you to take to spinning and weaving and wear the product of your own labour. I understand that not very long ago everyone of you or at least every woman in your community was a beautiful spinner. Thousands upon thousands knew how to weave. Both are noble callings. In spinning alone lies the economic salvation of India, I am convinced. Individually spinning, I admit, is not a profitable occupation; nationally it is one of the most noble and the most profitable of occupations. Hence I have called spinning the *yajna* of this age for India. I was gladdened beyond measure when His Holiness told me that he would spin himself (Cheers.) and he has given me his assurance that henceforth he is going to ask everyone of his devoted disciples not to appear in his presence unless he is clad in spotless khaddar. I expect all the educated men among you to feel the privilege of spinning and the privilege of wearing khaddar. I expect

you to go amongst your women folk and ask them to do likewise. You do not go in for the heavy saris that the Tamil sisters wear in the Madras Presidency. You do not go in for variety and colour. I am charmed with the spotless white dress of your women. A few yards of cloth suffices for the wants of men and women. You must regard it as a matter of shame and humiliation and degradation that you should have to fall back upon Manchester or Ahmedabad calico. If you would attend to these things, that would be your contribution to the national cause or to the cause of satyagraha at Vykam. Do not be frightened that it is a long-drawn-out battle. His Holiness told me yesterday that we might not see the end of this agony during our life time, in this generation, and that I should have to wait for another incarnation of mine before I had the pleasure of seeing the end of this agony. I respectfully differed from him. I hope to see the end in this very age during my lifetime, but I do not hope to do so without your assistance. Assist me to the full measure of your ability to show to you that this wrong becomes a thing of the past. Do your duty manfully and I undertake to show to you that this fifth class from Hinduism entirely eradicated. (Cheers.) May God grant the necessary strength and determination to His Holiness to infect you with a proper understanding and may God grant you the wisdom and the strength to carry out this sacred task.

I tender my thanks publicly to His Holiness for the extreme kindness that he has shown to me and the hospitality that he has extended to me. I thank you once more for the address that you have presented to me and for the patience with which you have listened to me, but the best reward that I ask you to give me, I expect, is the translation of what you have listened to in action (Loud and continued cheers.)

The Hindu, 16-3-1925

244. SPEECH IN REPLY TO STUDENTS' ADDRESS,

TRIVANDRUM¹

March 13, 1925

It is a common superstition in India, and more so outside India—because, that is what I find from my correspondence in

¹ At the Maharaja's College of Science

Europe and America—that I am an opponent, a foe, of science. Nothing can be farther from truth than a charge of this character. It is perfectly true, however, that I am not an admirer of science unmixed with something that I am about to say to you. I think that we cannot live without science, if we keep it in its right place. But I have learnt so much during my wanderings in the world about the misuse of science that I have often remarked, or made such remarks, as would lead people to consider that I was really an opponent of science. In my humble opinion there are limitations even to scientific search, and the limitations that I place upon scientific search are the limitations that humanity imposes upon us. I was only the other day discussing with a friend on the uses of science, and at that time I told him a story of my life which I propose to repeat to you. I told him that there was a time in my life when I very nearly went in for medicine and I told him also that had I gone in for it, probably, I would have become a celebrated physician or a celebrated surgeon or both; because, really I am a lover of both these branches and I feel that I could have rendered a great deal of service in that department. But when I understood from a medical friend—and he was a distinguished doctor—that I would have to practise vivisection I recoiled with horror from it.¹

Probably, some of you will laugh at my horror, but I do not want you to laugh at it. I want you to consider carefully what I am really saying. I feel that we are placed on this earth to adore our Maker, to know ourselves, in other words, to realize ourselves and therefore to realize our destiny. Vivisection cannot add, in my opinion, an inch to our moral height. It may—though many medical men tell me that it is not an absolutely correct statement—it may, I say, bring in some relief to a man whose body is ailing. But I must honestly confess to you that I believe in placing limitations upon the remedies for keeping the body alive. After all it is a broken weed to rely upon. It may slip out of our hands at any moment. I recovered from the skilful handling of Col. Maddock² from the operation that was performed by him upon me. But there was no guarantee whatsoever that after my recovery I may not fall under a stroke of lightning or under some other accident. Such being the case, I feel that we have got to explore whether we should restrain ourselves or whether we might let ourselves go.

I have only given you one illustration of the limitation that I

¹ *Vide* "Letter to H. S. L. Polak", September 8, 1909 & October 14, 1909.

² Surgeon in the Sassoon Hospital, Poona, who operated upon Gandhiji for appendicitis in January 1924

would place upon scientific research and upon the uses of science. Therefore, I would simply say—as I have said to so many of the students of India, and I have the good fortune to enjoy the confidence of the students world and the good fortune to come in contact with the thousands and thousands of students all over India, and therefore I would not hesitate to tell them—that they must make up their minds about one thing at least in life, viz., to understand what they are in this world for. I place the same view in all humility before professors and teachers and it is for that reason that I have so often written and spoken upon and against the materialistic tendency of modern civilization—I will not say Western civilization though as it so happens for the time being, the two have become convertible terms. But there is another aspect also which I would like to place before you. Many students go in for science not for the sake of knowledge but for the sake of livelihood that their scientific studies might give them. It is true not only for students belonging to colleges of science, but it is equally true of students belonging to any other college. But seeing that science is one of the few things in which you have to go in for accuracy of thought and accuracy of handling, the warning that I wish to utter to you will perhaps come home to you with greater force than to others.

I would like you to keep the two most brilliant examples we have in our own dear country, and those two are Drs. J.C. Bose¹ and P.C. Ray². At least to the students of science, they must be household words, household names. I believe that they are household names to the whole of the educated India. They went in for science for the sake of science and we know what they have achieved. They never thought of what the profession of science would bring them in the shape of money or fame. They cultivated it for the sake of it and Sir J.C. Bose once told me that he had accepted the limitations for himself long before I had uttered a single word about how we should apply our minds to science and I speak upon his authority that all his researches have been devoted in order to enable us to come nearer our Maker.

But students in India labour under one very serious disability. Those who go in for this class of education or for higher education are drawn from the middle class. Unfortunately for us and unfortu-

¹ 1858-1937; botanist; Fellow of the Royal Society; founded the Bose Institute near Calcutta

² 1861-1944; Chemist and patriot

nately for our country, the middle classes have almost lost the use of their hands and I hold it to be utterly impossible for a boy to understand the secrets of science or the pleasures and the delights that scientific pursuits can give, if that boy is not prepared to use his hands, to tuck up his sleeves and labour like an ordinary labourer in the streets.

I well remember the classes that I used to attend on chemistry. It seemed to me then to be one of the dullest subjects. (Laughter.) I know now what an interesting subject it is. Although I am an adorer of all my teachers, I must confess to you that the blame was not mine but that of my teacher. He asked me to learn by heart all those awful sounding names without knowing what they were. He never agreed to place even the different metals before me. I had simply to learn things by heart. He brought frightful notes carefully written by him, read those notes to us; we had to copy those notes and memorize them. I revolted and failed in that one subject, (Laughter.) so much so that he might not have issued to me the certificate for going in for my Matriculation Examination. Fortunately for me, I was at that time ill; he took pity on me and issued the certificate. Had it been so, he would really have blamed me for not having passed in the Chemistry paper instead of blaming himself.

So, the professors and teachers—I except you, Sir, and your race from the category—the Indian teachers and professors and the Indian students, all sail in the same boat. Science is essentially one of those things in which theory alone is of no value whatsoever—unless you have practical knowledge and unless you conduct practical experiments. I wonder how far you go in for practical experiments and how far you take the keenest delight in it. If you go in for science in the right spirit then I know that there is nothing so great or so valuable for making us accurate in thought and accurate in action. Unless our hands go hand in hand with our heads we would be able to do nothing whatsoever.

Unfortunately we, who learn in colleges, forget that India lives in her villages and not in her towns.

India has 7,00,000 villages and you, who receive a liberal education, are expected to take that education or the fruits of that education to the villages. How will you infect the people of the villages with your scientific knowledge? Are you then learning science in terms of the villages and will you be so handy and so practical that the knowledge

that you derive in a college so magnificently built—and I believe equally magnificently equipped—you will be able to use for the benefit of the villagers ?

Lastly then, I place before you the instrument to which you may apply your scientific knowledge and that is the humble spinning-wheel. Seven lakhs villages in India are today pining for want of that simple instrument. It was in every home and every cottage of India only a century ago, and at that time, India was not a lazy country that it is today. Her agriculturists—and agriculturists form 85 per cent of the population—were not forced to be idle for at least four months in the year. That is not what I am telling you. This is not my testimony. This is the testimony of another scientist, that is Mr. Higginbottom¹. He has lately been giving evidence before the Taxation Committee and he said that India's poverty, which was growing, would not diminish but would grow unless the Indian millions had a supplementary occupation. Now apply your scientific means to finding out what such supplementary occupation can be which will serve the needs of 7,00,000 villages scattered over a surface 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad, and I assure you, you will come to the same irresistible conclusion that I have, that nothing but the spinning-wheel can do it.

The spinning-wheel has gone out of use now. Wherever I go I ask for a spinning wheel and instead of a spinning-wheel I get a toy. I cannot get good yarn, which will give you good khaddar, out of toys. It is for you to make the spinning-wheel hum. I present to you the noble example of Dr. P. C. Ray who is the maker of the Bengal Chemical Works. It is a growing concern which has furnished a calling for hundreds of students. But Dr. Ray is a scientist of scientists and he wanted to give the benefit of his scientific knowledge to the villagers of India. Because he was working at the time of the Khulna famine he saw the secret of the spinning-wheel and you know today that he is devoting his life only to the spinning-wheel propaganda and the noble band of workers under him, all scientists, are endeavouring to perfect the spinning-wheel, to perfect every accessory required for the spinning-wheel. It is a noble calling. It is worthy of scientists. May it also find an abiding place in your hearts. I thank you for giving me this patient hearing. (Cheers.)

The Principal then garlanded Mahatmaji and presented a beautiful flower bouquet. Mahatmaji said, "I thought it would be of homespun yarn." As Mahatmaji

¹ Of the Agricultural Institute of Allahabad

stepped into the car he said, "I expect to see you all next time in khaddar, khaddar woven by yourselves." Amid cries of "*Vandemataram*" and cheers Mahatmaji left the Science College premises.

The Hindu, 19-3-1925

245. *SPEECH IN REPLY TO WELCOME ADDRESSES,*
TRIVANDRUM¹

March 13, 1925

Mahatmaji, in the course of a joint reply, wished publicly to express his thanks to Her Highness the Maharani and also to the Dewan whom he interviewed on the Vykam struggle. He had also visited Swami Narayana Guru at Sivagiri Math and heard some of the *Pulaya* boys reciting Sanskrit. *Ezhavas* were clean and as good as the highest in the land and it hurt his sense of religion, humanity and sense of nationalism because the Swamiji could not enter the prohibited roads of Vykam.

Referring to the discussion with obstructionists at Vykam, the Mahatma said he placed three proposals before them for acceptance. The first was a referendum either at Vykam or the whole of Travancore restricted only to *savarna* Hindus², which the spokesmen would not accept but stated that the verdict of the majority could not possibly bind those who had settled convictions. In the second place Mahatmaji offered to place the authority on which the spokesman based his settled convictions before learned Shastris of India but it was said their decision as to authenticity and interpretation was not binding on the obstructionists who were free to reject it if hostile to them. Thirdly on behalf of satyagrahis, he undertook to nominate one Shastri as arbitrator asking the oppositionists to nominate their arbitrator, the Dewan sitting as umpire over them, Mahatmaji undertaking to be bound by the arbitrator's decision and the umpire, whatever it was. These offers were still open for acceptance, and he asked the *savarna* Hindus and the whole Hindu community to insist on breaking down the prejudice of orthodoxy in Vykam, and compel by pressure of public opinion the opening of these roads to the untouchables and unapproachables. Both the Maharani and the Dewan appreciated the proposals made and showed their sympathy with the reformers and both had promised to the best of their ability to help the reform movement otherwise than by legislation at the present moment. He felt sure that organized public opinion would help the reformers even by legislative action. He had invited Her Highness to help them in obtaining a

¹ This was Gandhiji's joint reply to the several addresses of welcome presented to him at a public meeting on the Cantonment maidan by the Travancore citizens, the Kerala Hindu Sabha, the Humanitarian Society, the local Congress and Khilafat Committees and the Hindi students.

² Caste Hindus

referendum, but whether she was able to do so or not, there was nothing to prevent them from organizing public opinion. Blind orthodoxy could not stand the fierce light of local public criticism provided it was sympathetic, non-violent and humble. There were only sixty thousand Brahmins, compared to eight lakh non-Brahmins and 17 lakh untouchables in Malabar, and while he was gratified on their educational advancement, he felt they should not be refused the rights of common humanity. Mahatmaji concluded his speech by making an appeal particularly to ladies who were present in large numbers to wear khaddar.

The Hindu, 14-3-1925

**246. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS,
TRIVANDRUM¹**

March 14, 1925

From what little I have been able to see of Travancore and its conditions, I can heartily endorse the sentiments that you have expressed in your address in connection with the Royal House of Travancore. As I have been saying to my friends who were with me, the severe simplicity of the Royalty in Travancore has bewitched me. I know the position of so many Princes of India that I must confess I was totally unprepared for this simplicity of life that rules the Royalty in Travancore and I thought that I would be guilty of discourtesy or suppressing the truth if I did not publicly give voice to what has so enraptured me.

After referring to the existence of two dirty slums in Trivandrum which he had noticed in his drive, he considered that a Municipal Councillor to be worthy of his office should regard himself as the custodian of the health of the citizens he represented. The majority of diseases in towns were due to dirt, filth and filthy air. He instanced the case of Trichinopoly where nuisance was committed on the banks of the Cauvery, the water of which was drunk by the people. Though Trichinopoly was a big town, its water supply was so awfully neglected by its citizens, but in Trivandrum he was struck by its cleanliness. People stifled themselves in big towns and cities in dungeons where no fresh air could be had and he was glad they lived in cottages in Travancore scattered all over the land. As a lover of municipal life, he had studied the activities of many Corporations and considered it a misfortune that he had not been able to devote his lifetime to municipal service.

Continuing, Mahatmaji stated that though his countrymen were suffering in South Africa under disabilities which he thought was only a passing phase, South Africa had very noble people who understood the world current. Whatever their views

¹ At the Victoria Jubilee Town Hall

in connection with colour, he had the privilege of learning a great deal from their management of Corporations. They had made ugly spots pretty. Johannesburg which was merely a sandy desert, was turned into a garden, and they had spent a fortune over adorning that beautiful city. When plague broke out in Johannesburg, they spent money like water and rid the town of disease in 24 hours. They isolated the area, and the Government, on the report of the Sanitary Inspector, reduced to ashes a beautiful market. To take time by the forelock and take energetic measures was municipal economy.

The ordinary life of municipalities throughout India should be untouched by politics, but concentrated upon the health of the citizens, upon their proper feeding and upon their proper education. He did not for a moment share the belief that municipalities should control merely the primary education of children, but thought they should take care of the highest form of education of the children that grew under their care. His experience with two great Corporations convinced him that municipalities should also have the control of the Police of their towns, besides the lighting of streets and scavenging. In congratulating the townsmen on the passing of the spinning resolution in the Council, he asked them to work it in earnest.

The Hindu, 16-3-1925

247. SPEECH AT LAW COLLEGE, TRIVANDRUM'

March 14, 1925

After paying a short visit to the Fort High School and the Mahila Mandiram, an association for women to which a hostel also is attached, Mahatma Gandhi came to the Law College where Mr. M. K. Govinda Pillai, Acting Principal of the College, received him. An address was presented by the students to which Mahatmaji made a reply in the course of which he gave an account of his early education, his first voyage to England and his initiation into the bar 40 years ago when the profession was overcrowded. He advised the students who took to law to have a complete mastery of facts, to understand human nature, to sift every case given to them, and if they found it a just cause that commended itself to them, to take it up or otherwise throw it overboard. They as lawyers should not sell their conscience for a mess of pottage. When they got a good case, they should identify themselves with the client and make the client's case their own by asking for all the facts they wanted without being led by him.

You know how strongly I have spoken against lawyers and their ways—but who should speak if not I who knew all the intricacies of legal life, who knew all the spheres of a legal life—and so I took courage to deliver myself of what was within me in connection with the legal profession.

¹ In reply to an address of welcome presented by the students of the College

The late Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Badruddin Tyabji¹ were not by any means the tallest among lawyers, but their services to the national cause were invaluable. The late Mana Mohan Ghose² was a friend of the poor and he refused to charge fees when it was a poor man's case. He rendered invaluable services at the time of the Indigo riots in Bengal.³

In asking them to study the lives of lawyers like Ghose, Mahatma Gandhi asked them not merely to be satisfied with the heritage those great lawyers had left for them, but wished the present generation to do better. They should become the poor man's friend in every sense and then alone would they be able to justify the legal profession. Their end was not to get more than a decent livelihood or how to shine in life, but to serve humanity in order to serve the motherland. They ought not to become lawyers in order to increase cases. The education they received ought not to be prostituted to the base use of earning a livelihood, it ought to be used to promote moral growth to enable them to realize themselves, to understand that there was the Maker who saw everything and registered all thoughts, pure and impure, and the learning they derived should be dedicated to a vigorous self-analysis and not prostituted.

Concluding, Mahatmaji gave the students the message of the spinning-wheel and asked them to remember that not from the law-books or platform oratory but only from the spinning-wheel would they find the deliverance of India.

A purse of Rs.500 was given over to Mahatmaji as proceeds of collections made yesterday at the public meeting.

The Hindu, 16-3-1925

¹ 1844-1906; distinguished member of the Bombay Bar and later Judge of the Bombay High Court; President of the Indian National Congress in 1887

² 1844-1896; one of the early leaders of the Indian National Congress

³ Mana Mohan Ghose started a vigorous Indigo agitation in the columns of the *Hindu Patriot*. Subsequently, an Indigo Commission was appointed.

248. IN SEARCH OF KNOWLEDGE

A French writer has written a story with the title "In Search of Knowledge". The writer sends many learned men in this search to different continents. One of them comes to India. This seeker goes to those who have understood *Brahman*¹ to those who have learned the Shastras, to courtiers and others, but fails to get knowledge anywhere. He is convinced that knowledge means the search for God. Finally, he comes upon the home of an *Antyaja*. Here he finds devotion at its best. Here for the first time he experiences simplicity, innocence, and artlessness. Here he comes face to face with God, and he reaches the conclusion that one who wishes to discover God easily must search for Him amongst the poor and the humble.

This is an imaginary story. Our Shastras, however, bear witness to this very truth. Sudama¹ readily found God. Mirabai² found God when she ceased to be a queen. Duryodhana³, because he went and sat near Krishna's head, got the latter's army only. God became the charioteer of Arjuna⁴ who sat at His feet.

These thoughts have occurred to me because of the following letter:⁵

It has been written by one who has a clear conscience. The correspondent is in search of knowledge. However, the more he seeks it, the more it evades him. He is making vain efforts to grasp by reason something which is beyond reason. Giving up the desire for the fruit of one's action does not imply that no result will follow. It implies that every action brings in its result and in the mysterious scheme of things, where fibres are so interwoven that the trunk is not distinguishable from the branches, who can identify the fruit of one man's action amidst the complex of the collective acts of many persons? What right have we to know this? Even a king's soldier has no right to know the result of his own action, why should we who are the servants of the people know the results of our particular actions? Is

¹ A poor Brahmin friend of Lord Krishna

² A medieval saint-poetess of Rajasthan; queen of Mewar

³ Chief of the Kaurava princes in the *Mahabharata*

⁴ Third of the Pandava brothers

⁵ Not translated here. The correspondent, a young man of 25, had described his Philosophical quandary.

it not enough to know that action necessarily brings results?

This correspondent, however, has no faith in *Ramanama*, no faith in God. I beg him to have faith in the experiences of millions of men. The world subsists on the omnipresence of God. *Ramanama* is God's name. If anyone is hostile to *Ramanama*, let him worship God by any other name that he likes. There is no reason to believe that the example of Ajamil¹ is fictitious. But the question is not whether Ajamil did exist; it is whether someone did save himself by chanting the name of God. To disregard the experiences of mankind as described by the authors of the Puranas, is to disregard the history of mankind. The battle against *maya* is going on all the time. A person such as Ajamil chanted the name of Narayana while fighting that battle. Mirabai repeated the name of Giridhar² while sleeping, sitting, eating or drinking. This is not a substitute for struggle, but rather it sanctifies the struggle. Anyone who chants *Ramanama*, who repeats the *Dwadashamantra*, is not defeated in his battle with *maya*, but defeats the latter. Hence the poet has sung that although *maya* entices all, it accepts defeat at the hands of the true devotees of God.

The example of Rama confronting Ravana³ is ever present before us. If this does not satisfy one, it only means that one regards Rama and Ravana as historical characters. As such, they no longer exist. However, Ravana as *maya* continues to exist today and Rama's devotees, those whose heart is His abode, are every day destroying Ravana.

What a delusion it is to desire to know that which is known only after death? What would be the plight of a child of five if it desires to know what is going to happen to him at fifty? However, just as an intelligent child can guess his future from the experience of others, we too can satisfy ourselves by guessing the state after death on the basis of other men's experience.

Where is the need, however, to know what is to happen after death? Is it not sufficient to know that good actions are well rewarded and evil ones bring forth bitter fruits? The fruit of the best actions is *moksha*, this is the definition of *moksha* that I would suggest to the above correspondent.

¹ A hardened sinner who in his last moments called for his son, Narayan, and was saved by the divine attendants for uttering the name of God.

² Another name of Lord Krishna

³ Legendary ruler of Lanka and enemy of Rama

The correspondent has taken an image literally, has used a mislea-ding metaphor and, as a result, has fallen into a trap. The image is not God. Man, however, projects godliness on it and makes it an object of rapt contemplation. We cannot create human beings out of wood nor use wooden dolls to serve our purpose; but hundreds of thousands of those good sons and daughters, who refresh the memories of their parents throu-gh photographs do nothing wrong! God is omnipresent, even a pebble in the Narmada can represent Him and serve as an object of worship.

Finally, if the correspondent feels that he will find happiness in villages and in service to villagers through the spinning-wheel and such other things, he should hasten to go there.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-3-1925

249. CONCERNING “NAVAJIVAN ”

A subscriber of *Navajivan* has written a long letter of complaint. Its substance is as follows:

1. *Navajivan* has become like a monthly magazine because it contains uninteresting and depressing articles on the spinning-wheel and khadi.

2. Mahadev gives something like a diary of my tours in the *Navajivan* and goes on writing on the same theme.

3. The supplement to *Navajivan* which is supposed to deal with education gives disheartening news regarding education; but it too has no plans for education.

4. Other articles find no place in *Navajivan*. This is indeed the limit.

5. Perhaps no other weekly in the world is as expensive as *Navajivan*. Moreover, although the prices of paper have gone down, the price of *Navajivan* remains the same.

There is some truth in these arguments. The subscriber wishes me to discuss this matter in the paper.

I regard the subscribers as partners in *Navajivan*. I insist on publishing it only as long as a certain minimum number of persons subscribe to it. I also propose to meet its expenses through subscriptions alone and not through advertisements. Hence its subscribers can, if they so desire, put an end to its publication.

It is indeed true that *Navajivan* is not a newspaper, but a paper intended to propagate certain views. It tests these views in two ways: in the first place by bringing them up for discussion from time to time, and secondly, by finding out the number of people who support these views.

Navajivan searches for the means for securing swaraj and puts them before the public; hence it presents something new. It does not attempt to do what other newspapers do. What is not found in other newspapers constantly appears in *Navajivan*, and in this way the paper maintains its novelty and distinctiveness. It does not propose to compete with other newspapers.

It is obvious that *Navajivan* is not as interesting as it used to be. At one time its subscribers numbered about 40,000 as against only 6,000 today. Swami Anand believes that the reason is that now-a-days I write more for *Young India* and less for *Navajivan*. I do not think this is correct. *Young India* is in the same pitiable plight today as *Navajivan*. Its circulation, too, which had reached the figure of 30,000 is now almost the same as that of *Navajivan*.

Nevertheless, I still cherish the desire to write more in *Navajivan*. God willing, it will be fulfilled, and then the Swami's doubts will be resolved.

The fact is that what I am putting before the public now is neither intoxicating nor exciting. Moreover, there is no hope of winning swaraj soon. *Navajivan* does not put forward new means for securing swaraj but it rather attempts to place before the public the same old means in new ways. It is interesting precisely because it is uninteresting. As it promotes the cause of swaraj, it is only those who have faith in the spinning-wheel and such other means that subscribe to it; this is enough to satisfy me. Its publication will continue so long as a certain minimum number of subscribers are pleased with it.

Those who look upon the spinning-wheel as a powerful means for securing swaraj, those who regard it as the panacea for ridding India of her poverty, will not tire of *Navajivan*. I have no doubt that those who have patience and faith will come to realize the power of that weapon, if not today then tomorrow, and I hope that readers of *Navajivan* will never entertain such doubts.

The fact that Shri Mahadev Desai gives a diary of my tours should not be a cause for complaint. My tours are not for my pleasure but for service. Hence readers have a right to know their impact and it

is my duty to report it in some form or other . It is indeed a fault of Mahadev's diary that it often praises me. That, however, seems to be inevitable. My secretary who travels along with me and who works as my slave, can hardly be my critic. What inspires him to accompany me can be only love or a sort of fascination. He is not tempted by a salary. I can exercise restraint on his praises, but I cannot altogether prevent these. If the good opinion of those who are my close associates does not swell my head with pride, I would rather look upon it as a burden and make special efforts to be worthy of it. As long as I do so, this praise is not likely to prove harmful.

Nevertheless, I wish to stress this criticism of the correspondent. There is always a danger lurking behind praise. If a son continuously praises his father, he is likely to commit the sin of misleading his father. Hence a son who loves his father does not praise him. On the other hand, the father who continuously praises his son is likely to do him harm rather than good. Or, friends who sing the praises of each other are likely to dig each other's graves.

Hence, I request Mahadev to comprehend the essence of the correspondent's criticism and act upon it. I myself will try and be more on my guard.

There is a difficulty even in this, namely, that I cannot read all that Mahadev writes before it is published in *Navajivan* and I cannot do so even afterwards. Hence certain things are published which could have been omitted had I read them in time. In these circumstances, if *Navajivan* performs other useful service, this particular defect, so far as it is unavoidable, may please be ignored by those like the present subscriber.

The supplement on education is also issued as a matter of service. When it was decided that the Vidyapith would save a considerable sum by issuing its magazine on education as a supplement to *Navajivan*, it was resolved to do so. It too reflects a truthful picture of national education, and hence, it is but natural that its readers feel disheartened. The truth, even if it is uninteresting or painful , must be told wherever it is relevant. National education is at a low ebb today, hence a review of it must carry disappointing news. However, rays of hope are emerging from this dark disappointment. The reader should not concentrate on the number of children who take advantage of it, but should rather note the kinds of difficulties amidst which the ship of education is making headway. That which is

being poured into national education today will generate fearlessness in children, will make them fit for swaraj, and will lead to their physical, mental and spiritual advancement.

There is no need now to show why the price of *Navajivan* cannot be reduced. Nevertheless, I would add that those who subscribe to *Navajivan* are its owners, and the profits earned by it are not private but public income. *Navajivan* cannot be made a monthly as it does not contain merely articles; it is a weekly record of progress towards swaraj.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-3-1925

250. *QUINTESSENCE OF NON-VIOLENCE*

A certain gentleman asks the following questions:

1. Is it a fact that in the manufacture of foreign sugar, bones, blood and such other unclean things are added?

2. Can anyone who observes the vow of non-violence consume foreign sugar?

3. Will those who wear khadi as a matter of non-violence continue to do so after securing swaraj or will they wear all kinds of cloth afterwards?

4. Is Khadi related to non-violence or is it a political matter? As between [Indian] mill-made cloth and foreign cloth, which is worse from the standpoint of violence, considering that both are equally machine-made?

5. Can anyone who observes the vow of non-violence drink tea? If the answer is in the negative, how does it involve any violence?

I hesitate to answer such questions as they indicate ignorance. Nevertheless, since readers frequently raise such doubts, it is proper that they should be resolved. Moreover, while answering these questions, I wish to indicate the essence of non-violence as I understand it.

It is not that foreign sugar contains bones and such other substances, but that these are said to be used in the process of refining sugar. There is no reason to believe that Indian sugar is not subjected to this same process.

Hence, from the standpoint of non-violence, the use of both kinds of sugar should, perhaps, be given up. Or, if it has to be taken, the process of its manufacture should be ascertained. Thus, foreign

sugar has to be renounced solely for giving an impetus to swadeshi. There is, however, a subtle non-violent consideration for which all sugar might be given up. Every process involves violence, hence the less an edible substance is processed, the better. It is best to eat sugarcane, jaggery is next in order, and sugar is the worst of all. I do not see any necessity for the common man to enter into such minute details.

Those who wear khadi should continue to do so after the attainment of swaraj, both for the sake of swaraj and of non-violence. The very same means by which we shall secure swaraj will enable us to preserve and strengthen it. A nation which relies upon others for its necessities loses its independence or enslaves others. Wearing khadi is a matter of non-violence, politics and economics. In accordance with the above-mentioned law, khadi involves less of violence as it is processed less.

Then again, as between foreign and [Indian] mill-made cloth, although both are manufactured by the same kind of machines, the use of the latter involves less of violence, as wearing it connotes a feeling of love for our neighbours, whereas the use of foreign cloth not only implies a lack of such feeling but connotes the presence of sheer self-indulgence, selfishness and indifference to others. It also implies absence of benevolence, and non-violence.

Anyone who practises the vow of non-violence may or may not drink tea. There is life even in tea; it is not an essential article of food and, therefore, the violence involved in drinking it is not unavoidable. Giving up tea is therefore desirable. Indentured labourers are employed wherever there are tea gardens. India is well aware of the miseries of such labourers. From the point of view of non-violence, an article in producing which the labourers suffer should also be given up. In actual practice, we do not go into such minute details, hence we could regard tea as being innocent from the standpoint of non-violence just as we do in the case of other things. From the medical point of view, tea is more harmful than beneficial, especially when it is boiled.

It is clear from the above questions that those who talk of non-violence know very little about it. Non-violence is a quality of the mind. One who has not understood it will gain little by renouncing any number of things. A sick person who gives up many things because of his illness gets no other benefits besides being cured of his disease. The victims of famine, who get no food to eat, do not reap the

fruit of fasting for that reason. One who has no self-control, although his outward acts may look like the result of such control, acquires no merit. Non-violence does not consist merely in restrictions on eating. It is the virtue of the Kshatriya. A coward cannot practise it. The brave alone can show mercy. An act can be said to be non-violent in so far as it is compassionate. Knowledge is necessary for compassion. Blind love is not non-violence. The mother who under the influence of blind love pampers her child in all sorts of ways practises violence born out of ignorance rather than non-violence. I wish that people would not attach undue importance to restrictions on eating and drinking and, while observing these restrictions, understand the meaning of non-violence in its broader sense, its subtle form and essence. A Western saint who eats beef because it is customary there, is a million times more non-violent than a wicked hypocrite who following the custom in his country does not eat beef. The person who has put the questions to me should say to himself: "Although I give up foreign sugar, foreign cloth and tea, if I do not have compassion for my neighbour, if I do not regard other people's children as my own, if I am not honest in my trade, if I do not regard my servants as members of my family and do not love them, the restrictions on my diet are meaningless, they are mere show, senseless practices born out of ignorance." Narasinha Mehta's¹ sacred utterance is, "So long as one has not realized the truth about the *atman* all penance is in vain." To realize the self is to become non-violent. To be non-violent is to love even one's opponent, to do good to him who has harmed us, to reward vice with virtue, and while doing so, to look upon it not as something strange but as one's natural duty.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-3-1925

251. NOTES

A TEACHER'S DIFFICULTY

A teacher writes:²

As this teacher has answered his own questions, my task is simplified. What I had said could not possibly mean that ten teachers

¹ A medieval Gujarati saint-poet

² The letter is not translated here.

or a single teacher should rest after teaching only one child. My contention is that not merely ten but even twenty teachers should not forsake a solitary student or leave a school but should try to increase their number. When plenty of students are available, the teacher should draw an allowance sufficient for his living, but his true test lies in his ability to accept nothing and starve to death if the need arises, and let his dependents also starve to death. Such a teacher sacrifices his relations, his parents, his children, his all for his work. What do those who practise other professions do when they incur heavy losses? If a person does not find a job despite all possible efforts, he lets his dependents starve along with himself; this should be the case with the teachers in national schools. This would make our dependents work for their livelihood. When teachers are idle for want of students, they should, of course, take up some other activity, but even while doing so, they must try to revive the school. Moreover, seeking out some other activity means that, in the absence of children, and during spare time, they should earn their living through the work of carding and weaving.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-3-1925

252. *SPEECH IN REPLY TO WELCOME ADDRESSES,*

KOTTAYAM¹

March 15, 1925

It has given me pleasure to be able to come to a place which is the centre of Christian influence. All the world over, I enjoy the privilege of having many Christian friends and I expect from Christians in India a great deal. There is nothing in the programme that I have ventured to place before the nation in which a Christian cannot whole-heartedly participate. Indeed I go so far as to say, if I may do so in all humility, that a Christian is the less a Christian if he does not whole-heartedly participate in this constructive programme. Those who are born and bred in this land, and to whom this land is as much the motherland as it is to me, as it is to the Mussalmans, if these Christians do not promote the nation's growth, to that extent, I venture to say, they are denying Christianity. You cannot serve God and

¹ The addresses were presented by the Kottayam Municipality and the Hindi students.

refuse to serve your neighbours. But he who passes over his neighbour, be he Hindu, Christian or Mussalman, denies his God. I, therefore, suggest to my Christian friends that they should regard it as a special privilege, and therefore special duty, to serve India to the best of their ability.

We may have different religions, we may hold different views about our conception of God, we may have different views about salvation. But there is one thing which binds all Indians to the soil. There is one thing which binds all Indians, one to another, is an indissoluble tie and that is the spinning-wheel and its product khaddar. I harp upon khaddar and the spinning-wheel in season and out of season because I know that in khaddar alone, in the spinning-wheel alone, lies the economic salvation of India. The spinning-wheel is a symbol and a symbol of the binding tie between the masses and the classes. The classes derive their sustenance from the labour of the masses and I beg the classes to make some small return to the masses for what they receive from them. I, therefore, say to every Indian, also to every Englishman domiciled in India, or who derives his livelihood from India, let him adopt khaddar. In his own home let him dress himself from top to toe in khaddar and make a return to the masses. (Cheers.)

I say to the women of Kottayam and the surrounding places and to the men: "If you will reinstate the spinning-wheel in your homes, you will find that you have delivered to the famishing millions of India a message of hope and comfort."

Referring to untouchability he said:

Her Highness and the Dewan have assured me of their sympathy with the reformers and if I have understood them correctly I know that they are only waiting for an emphatic, unequivocal, disciplined and articulate expression of public opinion on the part of the *savarna* Hindus in order to do away with this disgrace and if the Hindus are true to their faith and will consider themselves as the custodians of the dignity of their religion, and if they feel as keenly as I do about this untouchability, they will not rest satisfied unless they have convinced the Maharani Regent and the Dewan that the whole public opinion of Travancore demands this reform.

The Hindu, 16-3-1925

253. ALL-INDIA COW-PROTECTION SABHA

[March 15, 1925]¹

Readers will recall that among the many conferences held at Belgaum last December, there was one for the protection of cows. Reluctantly I yielded to importunity and became its chairman. I believe that the protection of cows is an important and necessary task in this age for those who believe in Hinduism. I think I have been carrying on this work for many years in my own way. The whole of India is aware that the protection of cows is one of the vital reasons for the friendship that I deliberately wish to cultivate with the Muslims. However, I do not regard saving cows from Muslims as the most important aspect of cow-protection. The most important aspect is to make Hindus protect cows. My definition of cow-protection includes sparing cows and bullocks from the cruelty to which they are subjected.

However, I have taken little direct interest until today in this great task of protection. I have practised penance in order to be worthy of taking such a part but have not yet attained such worthiness. I was, therefore, hesitant to accept the chair, and yet I did accept it. One of the resolutions of the conference related to establishing a permanent committee. I had to take part in that too. Hence, the committee nominated by the conference met in the last week of January² in Delhi. At that meeting it was decided to establish an All-India Cow-protection Sabha; its constitution was framed and accepted by the committee. The fact that this Sabha could progress so far is primarily due to the famous worker for the cause of the cows, Chaunde Maharaj, who comes from Wai. I am being drawn to it by his earnestness and initiative. The members of the committee included Dadasaheb Karandikar, Lala Lajpat Rai, Babu Bhagwandas³, Shri Kelkar⁴, Dr. Moonje⁵, Swami Shraddhanandji⁶ and others. However, I

¹ From the reference to Gandhiji's visit to Kanyakumari "yesterday", the article appears to have been written on March 15.

² On the 24th, according to Bombay Secret Abstracts, 1925

³ Scholar and public worker of Banaras; took leading part in establishing Kashi Vidyapith, a National University at Banaras

⁴ N. C. Kelkar (1872-1947); leader from Maharashtra; auther and journalist

⁵ Dr. B. S. Moonje, Eye Surgeon, Nagpur; leader of the Hindu Mahasabha; attended the Round Table Conference in 1930

⁶ Mahatma Munshiram (1856-1926); nationalist leader of Arya Samaj who took prominent part in public activities in Delhi and the Punjab and co-operated with Gandhiji

would regard the existence of such an Association an impossibility without Shri Malviyaji, the jewel of India. Hence, I suggested that it was necessary to obtain his approval before announcing the constitution of the proposed society. This suggestion was unanimously accepted. Hence, the task of showing him the draft constitution fell to me. I did so and he gave his approval.

Nevertheless, I hesitate to publish it because the chairmanship still rests with me. Moreover, the founders would like me to continue. I am doubtful about my suitability. I feel that so long as those who are regarded as leading Hindus do not approve of this great task, it cannot make any significant progress. I also fear that in view of my firm views on untouchability, my chairmanship may prove harmful. I expressed my doubts of Chaunde Maharaj again. He believes that my views on untouchability have nothing to do with this work and even if some individuals keep away on that score, it is our duty to carry on this work inspite of such a risk.

I do not know whether it is our duty or not. However, I put before the people the constitution which has been approved by the committee. I expect to reach Bombay on the 26th; a date has then to be fixed for holding a general body meeting to pass the constitution. The meeting will then be held.

May He, who came to Draupadi's rescue, also come to my help. I am an orphan and look to Him for assistance. He alone knows what love I have for the cause of cow-protection. Should that love be pure, may He make this unworthy servant worthy. I have taken upon my shoulders many responsibilities that He has burdened me with. He may add one more to these, if He so desires. He alone can make me overcome my fears.

The readers may, perhaps, be unable to realize the nature of my suffering. I am writing this in the early hours of the morning. My pen shakes as I write this. There are tears in my eyes. Yesterday, I have had the *darshan* of Kanyakumari. If time permits, I will put before the reader the thoughts which overwhelm me. My predicament is very much that of a child who weeps profusely because he does not have the stomach to eat all that he wishes to. I am greedy. I am impatient to see and to demonstrate the victory of dharma. I am ever anxious to do all that may be needed for it. It is for this reason alone that I want swaraj as also the spinning-wheel, Hindu-Muslim unity, cow-protection, abolition of untouchability and prohibition. Which of these should I pursue and which should I give up? The ship of my

longings is thus rolling back and forth on a stormy sea.

Once there was a fearful storm on the sea. All the passengers were agitated. All prayed for the help of Lord Krishna. The Muslims cried out in the name of Allah. The Hindus started uttering the name of Rama. The Parsis too started chanting their scriptures. I saw suffering on the faces of all. The storm subsided and all were happy. The very moment they were happy they forgot God and started behaving as if the storm had never been.

I am in a strange plight. I am ever in the midst of a storm. Hence I cannot but remember Rama, Sitapati¹. However, sometimes, when I experience a great turmoil, I am even more perturbed than my fellow-voyagers and cry out, "Save me, save me."

With this preface, I remember the mother-cow, kneel before God and place this constitution² before the public.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 22-3-1925

254. LETTER TO KALYANJI V. MEHTA

Monday [March 16, 1925]³

BHAI KALYANJI,

I felt at first like sending you a wire, but succumbed to my tendency to thrift. Only today I read in *Navajivan* about your release. Well and good. I shall reach the Ashram on the 27th. You will no doubt come to see me there. I hope you are perfectly all right now.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of Gujarati: G.N. 2678

¹ Husband of Sita

² Not translated here; *vide* "Draft Constitution of All-India Cow-Protection Sabha", 24-1-1925.

³ The news of Kalyanji's release from Sabarmati Jail appeared in *Navajivan*, 15-3-1925.

255. LETTER TO W. H. PITT

ALWAI,
March 18, 1925

DEAR MR. PITT¹,

With reference to the conversations² we have had as to the possibility and desirability of removing the barriers at Vykom and the picket which prevent satyagrahi volunteers from crossing the boundary-line on the roads leading to the temple, the position as I understand is this. It is common cause between Government and the reformers that the embargo upon the so-called untouchables making use of the roads around the temple should be removed. In your opinion the cause I have at heart will succeed earlier if I advise the satyagrahis to respect the boundary line pending final decision without the barricades and the picket. You tell me that the orthodox opinion gathers strength from the presence of the barricades and the picket, because the orthodox people wrongly infer that the intention in putting up the barricades and keeping the pickets is to help them to maintain their position. I have gathered from our conversations that it would be possible for you to have the existing orders withdrawn under which you are acting, if I undertake to respect the boundary-line in the manner suggested by you. Whilst I hesitate to believe that the action proposed by you, if taken by the satyagrahis, will soften the hearts of the orthodox people and weaken their position, I fully appreciate the motive that lies behind your suggestion. I am, therefore, prepared to advise, by way of trial, adoption of the suggestion made by you. After all, what the satyagrahis want is to create an active and overwhelming public opinion in their behalf. Their object is not to irritate orthodoxy but to win it over to their side. Their object moreover is in no way to embarrass the Government in the prosecution of the campaign but, so far as it is possible, to enlist its sympathy and support on their side. I am therefore prepared to act upon your suggestion immediately on learning from you that the prohibitory order referred to herein is withdrawn. The effect of this would be that a very small number, not larger than at present, will continue to march up to the boundary-line by way of pleading their cause and stand or spin as they are now doing in front of the lines.

¹ Commissioner of Police, Trivandrum

² The interview took place on March 10 at Trivandrum.

They will not cross it on any account whatsoever whilst their agreement lasts and I expect that if it ever becomes necessary to challenge in a court of law the so-called right or custom under which the so-called untouchables are prohibited from making use of the roads round the temple the prosecution would be under the ordinary criminal law of Travancore. But I am hoping, with the assistance of the Travancore Government, to formulate public opinion so that it becomes irresistible and that without recourse to law on either side the common right of using public or semi-public roads is not denied to any class of people by reason of their birth. I have already discussed with you the three proposals made by me, namely, referendum by taking the vote of the *savarna* Hindus in select areas; arbitration; or interpretation and examination of the authority of texts from Hindu Shastras supposed to be available to the orthodox in support of their contention as to the use of roads round certain temples. It must be a very simple matter to adopt one or all of the suggestions.

In closing this letter I would place on record my sincere thanks for the perfect arrangement made by you during the whole of my sojourn in Travancore.¹

*I am,
Yours sincerely,*

From a microfilm: S.N. 13267

256. *SPEECH IN REPLY TO ADDRESSES, PARUR*²

March 18, 1925

Mahatmaji in his reply observed that it was in keeping with their traditions that they carried to the very letter whatever they resolved upon and hoped that the resolve, the Municipal Councillors had expressed that they would spin and wear khaddar hereafter, would be followed in earnest. He regretted that untouchability and unapproachability prevailed in worst forms in Travancore and they owed it to the Motherland and Hinduism to eradicate them. He observed that their tastes were so simple that neither men nor women considered it civilized to have multiplicity of clothing. He considered it a matter of shame and humiliation to wear foreign or mill-made clothes. The *Ezhavas*³ were weavers who at one time produced all their clothing.

¹ For the Police Commissioner's reply, *vide* footnote 1 to "Telegram to W. H. Pitt", 24-3-1925.

² Presented by the Municipality, the Parur citizens and the *Ezhavas*

³ Community in Malabar traditionally regarded as untouchable

He was informed by a Christian that it was impossible to wear khaddar and refused to believe that any Archbishop or Roman Catholic priest could command his flock not to use pure hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. Organization and expert assistance were required in enforcing their promise to wear khaddar and he appealed to them to get help from Tamilnad friends.

The Hindu, 19-3-1925

257. SPEECH AT UNION COLLEGE, ALWAYE

March 18, 1925

Gandhiji in his reply congratulated the college on its splendid site and on the hostel being opened by the great poet¹ of Asia. To think of earning one's livelihood out of mental culture was prostitution of education. He was afraid they neglected culture of heart and body. Concluding, the Mahatma asked the students not to be satisfied with benevolent neutrality with regard to khaddar and the spinning-wheel and placed before them the notable example of Dr. P. C. Ray who had dedicated himself to relieve the poor.

The Hindu, 19-3-1925

258. SPEECH AT ADVAIT ASHRAM, ALWAYE²

[*March 18, 1925*]³

I am grateful to you for the beautiful address you have given me, which was well read out by an *Antyaja* boy. I am sorry that I cannot reply to you in Sanskrit. But had I been a Sanskrit pundit, even then I would not have replied in Sanskrit, because unfortunately today we Hindus have neglected the study of Sanskrit and therefore the masses cannot be expected to understand that language. But in order to be in tune with the Sanskrit atmosphere here, I would have spoken in Hindi, had it been possible to do so. However, you would not understand it; this proves our sad plight. I hope that the organizers of the Ashram will provide facilities to enable every student to understand. Hindi. It is essential for us to recognize our limitations. It is beyond our power today to steep our minds in Sanskrit so that all

¹ Rabindranath Tagore who had visited the college

² In reply to an address of welcome in Sanskrit which was read out by a *Pulaya* student.

³ From *The Hindu*, 19-3-1925

our communication may be carried on in that language. It is not a difficult thing, however, to start communicating in Hindi.

Your motto is, "One community, one religion, one God". I had discussions with Shri Narayan Guru Swami on this subject and since you have given the subject the first place in your welcome address, I am also obliged to mention it in my reply. I feel that the attainment of what is implied by this motto is also beyond our powers. I can understand the principle of one God. In spite of our worshipping Him in a million different ways, our adoration finds its way to Him. However, I feel that so long as the human race continues, differences of creeds and religions will indeed exist, since there are many minds and not one. If we look at Nature, we shall find that it is full of diversities and it is through them that the one God becomes many. To expect that at any stage in the history of the human race the world will have a single religion and a single creed is, I think, as good as wishing that the laws of Nature should become topsy turvy. As a result of my limited reading, reflection and meditation, I feel that human society cannot do without the four-fold divisions of *varna* and *ashrama*. Hence, diverse religions and diverse creeds seem to be inevitable. Tolerance should be our aim. If all of us hold uniform views, where then is the scope for this generous virtue of tolerance? However, this search for uniformity is as futile as looking for flowers in the sky. Hence, the only possible alternative for us is to tolerate one another's views. According to my Muslim friends, I, a born idol-worshipper, a believer in incarnation and rebirth, must necessarily cultivate tolerance for Muslims who do not believe in idol-worship, who do not believe in incarnation and perhaps in rebirth. I, a believer in incarnations, do not think that Christ alone was God, or that he alone was the son of God. Nevertheless, I should tolerate the fact that my Christian friends look upon Christ as God and, similarly, Muslims and Christians should tolerate the fact that I bow in reverence to Kanyakumari and Jagannath. I can see that the age of tolerance is dawning in my own lifetime, because tolerance is at the root of the dharma of *ahimsa*. That very same tolerance is at the root of the dharma of truth. Truth, like God, has a thousand diverse aspects. I cannot therefore insist that my view about the nature of truth is the correct one, and those of others wrong. That is why I feel we are fast approaching the age of mutual tolerance and mutual love. If, therefore, I cannot persuade Shri Narayan Guru Swami to accept the ideal of tolerance, I shall content by understanding the ideal in my own way.

Leaving aside this abstract discussion, let us come to more concrete things. While we cannot have before us the ideal of one caste, one religion and one creed, we can certainly have before us the ideal of performing one task daily and regularly for the good of the country. When shall We learn to wear khadi and thereby establish a bond of union with the poorest of the poor? We can learn this one *mantra* of making common cause with the poor. Instead of talking of universal love, it would be enough if we give up the calico made in the mills of Ahmedabad, Japan or England and win instead the simple love of the poor by wearing cloth spun and woven by our own brothers and sisters. Shri Narayan Guru Swami has assured me that he will himself take up spinning and forbid his followers from approaching him unless they are clad in khadi.

We have to practise the dharma of ahimsa and love in another matter as well. We must free our country from the sin of keeping our own brothers away as untouchables. A caste Hindu approached me and told me that the *Ezhavas* too treat those who belong to lower castes as untouchables. This must stop. More- over, he also told me that if the *Ezhavas* and *Pulayas*¹ gave up liquor, the problem of untouchability would be automatically solved. I do not regard this as a proper defence. However, the only way open to us is to profit from this advice and do whatever needs to be done. We cannot answer back that caste Hindus too drink secretly. It is sufficient for us to be aware of our own faults and get rid of them. I hope that, in this Sanskrit atmosphere, you will bear in mind whatever I have briefly told you and speedily advance towards the religious ideal which Shri Narayan Guru Swami is placing before you.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-4-1925

259. SPEECH IN REPLY TO ADDRESSES, TRICHUR²

March 18, 1925

I am sorry that I cannot be in these pleasant surroundings for any length of time. I shall be leaving this beautiful country, I do not know for how long. It is difficult to tear myself away from all the

¹ Community in Malabar traditionally regarded as untouchable

² Presented by the Municipality, the Nambudiri Yogakshema Sabha and the Trichur students at the Tekkingad Maidan

overwhelming kindness. It is equally difficult to tear myself away from the beautiful scenery that I have witnessed around me. But among all these pleasant recollections the one bitter recollection that I shall carry with me is that this fair land should be blotted with the curse of untouchability and unapproachability. But I was reminded only just now that there is also in this land the curse of invisibility, that the very sight of man offends. If this is Hinduism I would renounce it today, but as a *sanatani* Hindu that I call myself, and one brought up in an orthodox family, I know that it is no part of Hinduism to have untouchability, unapproachability or invisibility as they are practised today. But I shall be leaving this land in the hope that all those crowds that have attended such gatherings and all those crowds who have associated themselves in the sentiments expressed in the addresses which have censured this caste custom will see to it that this blot is removed from Travancore and Cochin.

I have seen thousands of sisters in Travancore and Cochin. To see them in their beautiful white dress has been a perfectly pleasant and ennobling sight for me. But it has equally depressed me to find that they have taken to calico instead of khaddar. If you intend to do so it is possible for you to clothe yourself, both men and women, in khaddar without the slightest difficulty and without any loss of time. Not very long ago, every home in Malabar had a spinning-wheel. I ask you to reinstate the spinning-wheel in every home. You have even now thousands of *Ezhava* weavers weaving beautiful cloth. Spin, and they will weave the yarn spun by you. If you will only do this you will find out for yourselves that you have saved lakhs upon lakhs of rupees for your land. Both Travancore and Cochin together have a population of nearly 70 lakhs. If I were to count the cost of spinning and weaving, it will come to rupees three on an average per head. That means nearly two crores and ten lakhs. Just think what it means for this land and it costs no effort to you to clothe yourself in khaddar.

The Hindu, 19-3-1925

260. NOTES [-I]

VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

I offer no apology to the reader for giving much space in these pages to Vykom satyagraha by reproducing the whole of that portion

of the address¹ of the Dewan of Travancore to its Popular Assembly which deals with the Vykom satyagraha. It enables the reader to understand and appreciate the nature of the brave struggle that is being carried on by a band of satyagrahis as also the importance of the cause for which satyagraha is being offered. Vykom is a test case so far as Travancore and, for that matter, Malabar is concerned. It affects the common rights of more than one sixth of the entire population of Travancore. Those therefore who are interested in the removal of the curse of untouchability cannot but read the Dewan's address with interest. I do not propose to comment on it this week as it would be unfair to do so in view of the fact that I am to have the honour of meeting him before this will have been printed and in view of the further fact that I have not at the time of writing completed my investigations. But I cannot help endorsing the remark of Dewan Bahadur T. Raghaviah that

there is a world of difference between satyagraha meant to be an educative force and satyagraha intended as an instrument for the coercion of the Government and through them of the orthodox Hindu. What the satyagrahis should aim at is the conversion of the orthodox to whom untouchability is a part of their faith.

I make bold to state that from the very outset satyagraha at Vykom was intended to be an educative force and never an instrument of coercion of the orthodox. It was for that reason that the fast against the orthodox was abandoned. It was to avoid coercion of the Government by embarrassment that the barricades have been scrupulously respected. It was for that reason that no attempt was made to dodge the police. It has been recognized that what appears to the reformers as a gross and sinful superstition is to the orthodox a part of their faith. The satyagrahi's appeal has therefore been to the reason of the orthodox. But experience has shown that mere appeal to the reason produces no effect upon those who have settled convictions. The eyes of their understanding are opened not by argument but by the suffering of the satyagrahi. The satyagrahi strives to reach the reason through the heart. The method of reaching the heart is to awaken public opinion. Public opinion for which one cares is a mightier force than that of gunpowder. The Vykom satyagraha has vindicated itself in that it has drawn the attention of the whole of India to the cause and it has been instrumental in the Travancore

¹ *Vide* Appendix "Extract from Dewan of Travancore's Speech on Vykom Satyagraha", March 19, 1925.

Assembly considering in a remarkable debate a resolution favouring the reform sought for and lastly in eliciting a considered reply from the Dewan of Travancore. I am sure that victory is a certainty if only the satyagrahis will retain their patience and their spirit of suffering.

MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN

In the midst of the incessant rush I am going through in this land of palms (Travancore) where I am writing these notes, I cannot resist noting down a never-fading sight I had to witness at Cochin. Cochin has imported from Japan numerous rickshaws which its well-to-do citizens use for their convenience. These are drawn not by animals but by men. I carefully noted as many of these carriers as passed. Not one impressed me with his physique. They had neither the calves nor the chest nor the arms well-formed for the arduous task of carrying a burden in the hot sun and melting heat. The rickshaws are built for carrying one passenger only. In my opinion, it is bad enough for a healthy and full-limbed man to be carried by man, but I was ashamed of my species and pained beyond measure to see two and even three passengers huddled together in some rickshaws. It was no doubt wrong for the carrier not to refuse to carry more than one burden. But what is one to say of the pair or the trio who in order to save a few coppers would not be ashamed to be carried by a member of their species who is hardly fit to carry even one of them. I hope there is a law in Cochin prohibiting the carrying of more than one passenger in these rickshaws. And if there is one, I hope the kindly citizens will see to it that it is strictly obeyed. But if there is no such law, I hope that one would be passed making the carriage of more than one passenger an impossibility. If I had the power I would abolish the rickshaw. But that I know must remain a pious hope. But is it too much to hope that men who ply these rickshaws will be subjected to a strict medical examination as to their fitness for the heavy work?

INTER-DINING

A correspondent asks: "Should children belonging to different castes and living in one boarding-house be made to dine together in a common dining-room?" The question is not well put. But the answer to the question as it is put would be that children cannot be *made* to inter-dine. If, however, it be urged that no boarding-house keeper can make rules requiring all who care to join it to inter-dine, it would be as unreasonable a demand as it would be to compel children who are

admitted without such stipulation as to inter-dining to dine in company with children belonging to other castes. In the absence of any rule to the contrary, I should imagine that the presumption would be that the usual rules for separate dining arrangements would apply. This question of inter-dining is a vexed one and in my opinion no hard and fast rules can be laid down. Personally, I am not sure that inter-dining is a necessary reform. At the same time I recognize the tendency towards breaking down the restriction altogether. I can find reasons for and against the restriction. I would not force the pace. I do not regard it as a sin for a person not to dine with another nor do I regard it as sinful if one advocates and practises inter-dining. I should, however, resist the attempt to break down the restriction in disregard of the feelings of others. On the contrary I would respect their scruples in the matter.

THE "KISANS" OF OUDH

Mr. Manilal Doctor of Fyzabad sends me the following for publication:

I have been brought over from Gaya to Fyzabad at the request of thousands of *kisans*.

In Bihar—in Champaran—I was disillusioned. India is by no means a bed of roses for the workers on land. It is not surprising that Assam, Calcutta, Cawnpore, Ahmedabad, Burma and the distant Colonies are able to attract coolies. Oudh seems to be in a worse condition still. The cry is: "Let us be free from this foreign yoke and labour will have its due." I am not sure in my mind that workers and peasants will get justice at the hands of those who are likely to succeed the British Government.

Anyhow, the position that I am prepared to act upon is this: The workers and peasants should not allow themselves to be made tools of by either Indian capitalists or the British Government. They must look after their own interests and only so far as may be consonant with them, that they may "co-operate" or "non-co-operate". Of course the charkha should spread amongst them and it will be better for them to spin yarn for clothing themselves with, than spin litigation during the slack months of the Indian year, which is absolutely dependent on the favours of the four rainy months (unlike the tropical colonies, where there are showers throughout the year).

India is a good country, but human beings—Indian and foreign—have "co-operated" to make a hell of it!!! How long Oh! Lord!! How long !!!"

I hope that Mr. Manilal Doctor will succeed in introducing the charkha in every ptals village and in the act make a careful study of

the economic position of the *kisans*. What we need is a patient and exact study of typical Indian villages of India such as Dr. Mann¹ published some years ago regarding a few Deccan villages.

Young India, 19-3-1925

261. A DIFFICULT PROBLEM

An Andhra correspondent invites attention to his difficulties as follows:

In last week's *Young India* in one of your answers to a Bengal correspondent on untouchability you have stated thus: "Since 'we' do take water from the hands of Sudras we should not hesitate to accept it from the hands of untouchables", meaning by "we" the high-caste Hindus. I do not know the customs *prevalent* in Northern India. But are you aware of the fact that in Andhra as well as in still Southern parts of India Brahmins do not only not take water from the hands of non-Brahmins (of any of the other three castes) but the more orthodox of them observe strict untouchability with non-Brahmins.

You have often said that you do not advocate inter-dining as essential to the removal of the present false notions of superiority of castes. You have quoted once an instance of Pandit Malaviyaji to bring out the fact that, living as you are in mutual admiration and respect, you could not think Malaviyaji meaning any contempt to you if he refused water or anything else from your hands. I agree there it might have meant no contempt. But do you know that the Brahmins of our part do not take food if seen by a non-Brahmin even if it be from a distance of hundred yards, let alone the touching of it by him? May I also point out that a word or two escaping the mouth of a Sudra in a street is enough to rouse the orthodox Brahmin at meal to anger—and he will go without meal the whole day? In what way can these facts be interpreted if they can mean no contempt? Has not the Brahmin put an air of superiority? Will you please enlighten me on these points? I am myself a Brahmin youth and hence write with first-hand knowledge.

Untouchability is a hydro-headed monster. It is a deeply moral and religious question. Inter-dining, to me, is a social question. Behind the present untouchability there is undoubtedly and necessa-

¹ Dr. Harold H. Mann; first Principal of the Poona Agricultural College; Director of Agriculture, Government of Bombay, 1923-27; author of *Land and Labour in a Deccan Village*

rily contempt for a portion of one's species. It is a canker that is eating into the vitals of society. It is a denial of the rights of man. It does not stand on a par with inter-dining. And I would strongly urge social reformers not to mix the two. If they do, they would injure the sacred cause of "the untouchables and the unapproachables". The Brahmin correspondent's difficulty is real. It shows the length to which the evil has been carried. The name Brahmin should be, as it once was, a synonym for utter humility, self-effacement, sacrifice, purity, courage, forgiveness and true knowledge. But today this sacred land is cursed with divisions between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. In many instances the Brahmin has lost the superiority which he never claimed but which was his by right of service. He is now desperately striving to assert what he cannot claim and has, therefore, roused the jealousy of non-Brahmins in some parts of India. Fortunately for Hinduism and fortunately for the country there are Brahmins like the correspondent who are fighting with all their strength the tendency towards the ominous assertion and are serving the non-Brahmins with a selfless pertinacity which is worthy of their high traditions. Everywhere one finds Brahmins in the forefront fighting the evil of untouchability and supporting their brief with authorities from scriptures. I urge the Southern Brahmin of the type mentioned by the Andhra correspondent to recognize the signs of the times and rid himself of false notions of superiority or of superstition that smells sin in the visible approach of a non-Brahmin or regards his dinner as polluted if he hears the voice of a non-Brahmin. The Brahmins taught the world to see *Brahman* in everything. Surely then there can be no defilement from outside. It comes from within. Let the Brahmin re-deliver the message that the untouchables and the unapproachables are the evil thoughts that one harbours. He taught the world to believe that "man is truly his own deliverer as he is also his own defiler or captor".

The non-Brahmin must not be ruffled by the things mentioned by the Andhra correspondent. Brahmins like the Andhra correspondent will fight, as they are fighting, his battle. He must not, as I fear is the growing tendency, despise the whole race of Brahmins because of the sins of a few. Let him be dignified enough not to claim right conduct towards himself from those who will misconduct themselves. I need not feel insulted because the passerby does not acknowledge me or because he feels polluted by my touch or presence or voice. It is enough that I refuse at his bidding to move

from my path or to desist from speaking for fear of his hearing my voice. I may pity his ignorant assumption of superiority or his superstition but I may not get irritated and develop the contempt I would fain resent when directed towards myself. The non-Brahmin will lose his case by loss of self-restraint. Above all let him not, by overstepping the mark, embarrass his Brahmin champions. The Brahmin is the finest flower of Hinduism and humanity. I will do nothing to wither it. I know that it is well able to take care of itself. It has weathered many a storm before now. Only let it not be said of non-Brahmins that they attempted to rob the flower of its fragrance and lustre. I would not have the non-Brahmins to rise on the ruin of the Brahmins. I would rather that they rose to the height that the Brahmins have occupied before now. Brahmins are born, not so Brahminism. It is a quality open to be cultivated by the lowliest or the lowest among us.

Young India, 19-3-1925

262. NOTES [-II]

“A MAD MAN OR A SAINT”

A friend has taken the trouble of copying out the following extracts from *My Magazine* which he tells me is intended for children and asks me to reply to it:

Something happened to his soul in 1918 which was fatal to its power. He became neither a saint nor a statesman, but a fanatic. . . . In losing heart in Britain's word Gandhi also lost his head.

In his anger against European civilization he has gone to the extreme point of condemning all science and all culture. He would abolish the schoolmaster and the doctor as well as the engineer. He would do away with the bacteriologist as well as the manufacturer. No one is to learn anything. The body of man is to dwell in everlasting passiveness and the soul is to do nothing but receive the whispers of God.

We may seek to justify him, and say that European civilization is a disease. We may speak of disease and strikes, of slums and destitution, of vice and shameless luxury; and yet, when all is said and done, it is the engineer who has irrigated the deserts of India, the doctor who has fought down plague, and the schoolmaster who has quickened the Indian mind. Without the ceaseless toil of scientific men, India would be decimated by disease; and without the protection of Britain she would become the slave of Japan.

Gandhi believes that the soul of men must get back to some fabulous time in the past when all was peace and love; we believe that the soul of man must march forward from barbarism and inertia to knowledge, power and dominion. Gandhi thinks we are on the wrong road; we think our road, difficult as it is, leads to a better world. Gandhi thinks a man is elevated only by his spirit; we think that a man's spirit can best be elevated by a mind that is never satisfied. We believe in work, knowledge, and dominion. Gandhi believes in non-resistance, ignorance and passiveness.

There is something in this indictment against European civilization, but we must not be led away to suppose that India is a land of beauty, peace, and goodness, reposing in the love of God. There are things in India not to be spoken of, so horrible are they; and there are slums in India not to be matched by anything in Europe. If our civilization is dangerous to spiritual life the civilization of India is fatal. Let the mind of man drowse, and it will perish.

It is not immodest to think that we can help Gandhi if he will do us the courtesy of regarding what is best in our civilization, and not only what is worst.

A LIBEL

The article from which the extracts are taken is said to be devoted to a critical examination of what I am supposed to stand for and is headed "An Extraordinary Man. Is He a Mad Man or a Saint?" I have often said that I do not claim to be an extraordinary man unless one who is mad after the search for truth be called extraordinary. I am certainly mad in the sense that every honest man should be. I have disclaimed the title of a saint for I am fully conscious of my limitations and imperfections. I claim to be a servant of India and therethrough of humanity.

The writer of the article is honest but ignorant and yet writes with an assurance which is amazing. The pity of it is that the writing of that character is not an uncommon thing in modern literature. If palpable untruth can be put before the public about contemporary men and women, one shudders to think of the distortion that must appear years after they are gone.

Let us see how truth has suffered at the hands of the writer of the article. "In his anger against European civilization, he has gone to the extreme point of condemning all science and all culture," says the writer. Though I have undoubtedly spoken and written strongly against European civilization, I cannot recall ever having condemned "all science and all culture". My life is a standing testimony against

the libel. Every sentence that follows thereafter is the reverse of truth. Where the writer has derived his idea of desire to abolish schoolmasters and engineers I do not know. Anybody who knows anything of me knows that I loathe passiveness of the body. I recognize the everlasting activity of nature going on about me and I respond to it by keeping my own body and those of my co-workers in incessant activity, always, I hope, of a beneficial character. The writer tells us that “without the protection of Britain she (India) would become the slave of Japan”. If a schoolboy was called upon to point out the inaccuracy of the statement, will he not say that without the slavery of Britain, India would be a free nation living in peace and alliance with Japan and her other Asiatic neighbours? The writer considers the civilization of India fatal to spiritual life. No European scholar to my knowledge has made such a statement. Whatever else India may not be, she is at least one thing. She is the greatest storehouse of spiritual knowledge. She is the best representative of spiritual life. She does not let the mind “drowse” for one single moment.

“HOW TO LIVE”

On reading an article of his in *Young India*, a correspondent sent Mr. Andrews the following poser which he handed to me for reply some months ago:

I was born and bred up in a village. My father used to repeat *Ahimsa paramo dharmah*¹ off and on, while engaged in religious conversations with his friends. It is, as you say, the complementary truth following from the original truth of the *Advaitam*². Let me admit the truth substantially. Let me further submit that *Advaitam* is not confined to oneness of all spiritual life. It is, as you appear to hold, the oneness of all things in the universe, without any exception of whatever kind.

The moment one gets himself fitted to catch *Advaitam* as his guide, his progress is assured. All differences must disappear. We are all one. How am I justified in injuring that which is myself? Here doubts begin to crop up. Is the idea of ahimsa to be carried into practice to its logical end? If so carried to the end, will it remain a virtue?

My father used to repeat *Ahimsa paramo dharmah*. However, when the family buffalo took into its—why not ‘her’—head not to stand still for being

¹ “Non-violence is the highest dharma.”

² Absolute monism; literally, non-dualism

milked, my father used to take up the stick and beat her to her senses. That was for securing milk for his children. Did he do the right thing?

The Hindus call the avatar of Rama as *Dharma Avatar*¹. Rama killed Ravana. Was it a wrong deed? Rama killed Bali and, Bali protesting, Rama replied:

अनुजवधू भगिनी सुतनारी
सुनु सठ यह कन्या सम चारी
इन्हें कुदृष्टि विलोकहि जोई
तेहि धे कछु पाप न होई

Here there is the doctrine of “Killing no murder” put in the mouth of the very avatar of dharma.

We may descend further and come to the time of Lord Krishna. Here we have the *Bhagavad Gita*. Arjuna is unwilling to kill those who are, after all, his nearest relations. Lord Krishna urges him to fight and “kill” and the doctrine of ahimsa is left in the background.

One has thus to inquire whether there is a limit to the practice of ahimsa. A girl is being outraged. Is she not justified in killing the devil to escape from his clutches? Is she to observe non-violence?

Catching fish is violence. Uprooting plants for use as vegetable is violence. Use of disinfectants for germs of disease is violence. How to live?

A Brahmin

If the father had not milked the unwilling buffalo, the world will have lost nothing. There are many things put in the mouth of Rama by Tulsidas which I do not understand. The whole episode about Bali is of that type. The literal application of the lines attributed to Rama by Tulsidas will land the doer in trouble if it will not send him to the gallows. Everything related of every hero in *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata* I do not take literally, nor do I take these books as historical records. They give us essential truths in a variety of ways. Nor do I regard Rama and Krishna as portrayed in the two poems as infallible beings. They reflect the thoughts and aspirations of their ages. Only an infallible person can do justice to the lives of infallible beings. One can therefore only take the spirit of these great works for

¹ Incarnation of dharma

² “Wife of a younger brother, sister, and the daughter-in-law—all these, O wicked one, are as one’s own daughter. There is no sin in killing a person who casts an evil eye on them.” —*Kishkindha Kanda* (Book Four) of Tulsidas’s *Ramacharitamanasa*

only guidance, the letter will smother one and stop all growth. So far as the *Gita* is concerned, I do not regard it as a historical discourse. It takes a physical illustration to drive home a spiritual truth. It is the description not of a war between cousins but between the two natures in us—the good and the evil. I would suggest to “A Brahmin” an examination of the doctrine of ahimsa apart from the incidents he quotes. *Ahimsa paramo dharmah* is one of the highest truths of life. Any fall from it must be regarded as a fall. Euclid’s straight line may not be capable of being drawn on a blackboard. But the impossibility of the task cannot be permitted to alter the definition. Judged by that test even the uprooting of a plant is an evil. And who does not feel a pang on plucking a beautiful rose? That we do not feel a pang on plucking a weed does not affect the doctrine. It shows that we do not know the place of weeds in nature. Therefore all injury is a violation of the doctrine of ahimsa. The fullest application of ahimsa does make life impossible. Then, let the truth remain though we may all perish. The teachers of old have carried the doctrine to its logical extent and laid down that the physical life is an evil, an embarrassment. *Moksha* is a bodyless superphysical state in which there is neither drinking nor eating and therefore neither the milking of buffalo nor the plucking even of a weed. It may be difficult for us to grasp or appreciate the truth, it may be and is impossible fully to live up to it. Nevertheless, I have no doubt that it is the truth. And virtue lies in regulating our lives in accordance with it and to the best of our ability. A true perception is half the battle. Life becomes livable and lovable only to the extent that we apply the grand doctrine in actual practice. For then we hold the flesh in bondage rather than live in perpetual bondage to the flesh.

Young India, 19-3-1925

263. KOHAT

[*March 19, 1925*]

I am able only now to publish my statement¹ and that of Maulana Shaukat Ali on the Kohat tragedy. It was not possible to do so earlier as both Maulana Shaukat Ali and I have been travelling and not staying at the same place. I am not sure that the publication at this

¹ A draft (S. N. 10676 R) of this was prepared earlier; *vide* “Kohat Hindus”, 9-2-1925.

junction of our statements on the tragedy can do any tangible good except in so far as the fulfilment of a promise must do in any case. The publication will, however, do one indirect good. There are material differences between us on the inferences we have drawn from the same facts. There are differences too in the degree of reliance we have placed upon the evidence given to us by witnesses. When we discovered the differences between us we both felt grieved and tried to come nearer each other. We even referred our differences to Hakim Saheb and Dr. Ansari for our guidance. Fortunately, Pandit Motilalji was present at our discussion. We could find nothing in the discussion to induce us to make any radical alteration in our view-points. These discussions took place at Delhi. We then decided to travel together a few hours to re-examine ourselves and to see whether we could remodel our statements. Beyond making some alterations we were not able to come nearer. We also examined the suggestion made by Hakim Saheb and supported to an extent by Pandit Motilalji not to publish the statements. But we, or at least I, came to the conclusion that the public which had hitherto known the Ali Brothers and me to be always in agreement about so many public things should know that we too might differ on some matters, but without suspecting each other of conscious bias or wilful perversion of facts and without mutual affection being in any way affected. Our open acknowledgment of our differences will be an object-lesson in mutual toleration. Let the public know that neither the Maulana Saheb nor I have spared pains to come near each other. But there was no desire for suppression of opinion. We have made alterations in our original drafts. But in no case has either party surrendered his confirmed opinions. We have each softened expressions here and there so as not to wound susceptibilities. But beyond that the originals have not suffered material alterations.

M. K. G.

MR. GANDHI'S STATEMENT

TIRUPUR,

March 19, 1925

Maulana Shaukat Ali and I went to Rawalpindi on the 4th February to meet the Hindu refugees and the Mussalmans of Kohat to whom the Maulana had written and who were expected to come to Rawalpindi. Lala Lajpat Rai followed a day later. But unfortunately he came with a predisposition to fever and was laid up in bed the whole

of the time we were in Rawalpindi.

Of the Mussalmans Maulvi Ahmad Gul and Pir Saheb Kamal were the principal parties whose evidence we took. The Hindus had their written and printed statements to which they had nothing to add. The Muslim Working Committee which is functioning in Kohat did not and would not come. They sent a wire to Maulana Saheb saying:

A reconciliation has already been effected between Hindus and Muslims. In our opinion this question should not be reopened. The Muslims should therefore be excused for not sending their representatives to Rawalpindi.

Maulvi Ahmad Gul and another gentleman who came to Rawalpindi with him were members of the Working Committee but they said they came not as such but as members of the Khilafat Committee.

It was difficult to come to any conclusions on details without a thorough examination on the spot and without examining many more witnesses. This, however, we could not do. We could not go to Kohat nor was it our purpose to rake up the whole controversy again by going into minute details. Our purpose was to bring together the two parties if it was at all possible. We therefore confined ourselves to elucidating the main facts.

As I am writing this without a detailed consultation with the Maulana Saheb, I state my own conclusions, leaving him either to confirm mine or to state his own.

The causes of the events of the 9th September and after were many. Among these was the resentment felt by the Mussalmans over the resentment felt in their turn by the Hindus over the conversions (so-called in my opinion) of Hindus—men and married women, and consequent steps taken by them, the Hindus. The desire of the *parachas* (Mussalman traders of Kohat) to oust the Hindus of Kohat was another.¹ The resentment felt over the alleged abduction by Sardar Makhan Singh's son of a married Mussalman girl was the third.²

The cumulative effect of these causes was to create great tension between the two communities. The immediate cause that lighted the

¹ The original draft here has: "(3) Resentment over the Hindu abstention from the rejoicings over the Turkish Victory celebrations."

² The original draft here has: "The case has been since found to be false."

conflagration was a poem in the notorious pamphlet published by Mr. Jiwandas, Secretary, Sanatan Dharma Sabha at Rawalpindi, and imported by him into Kohat. It contained a number of *bhajans* or poems in praise of Shri Krishna and Hindu-Muslim unity. But it also contained the one in question. It was a highly offensive poem, undoubtedly calculated to wound Muslim susceptibility. Mr. Jiwandas was not the author. He did not import the pamphlet in order to irritate the Mussalmans. As soon as the matter was brought to the notice of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha, it sent a written apology to the Mussalmans for the offending poem and removed it from the unsold copies. This might have satisfied the Mussalmans, but it did not. The unsold copies, over 500 according to Mussalman testimony and over 900 according to Hindu testimony, were brought to the Town Hall and publicly burnt in the presence of the Assistant Commissioner and a large concourse of Mussalmans. The cover of the pamphlet contained a portrait of Shri Krishna. Mr. Jiwandas was arrested. This took place on the 3rd September, 1924. He was to be brought before the Court on the 11th. The Hindus tried to avoid the Court proceedings and to settle the matter amicably. A Khilafat deputation, too, came from Peshawar for the purpose. The Mussalmans wanted to try Mr. Jiwandas according to *Shariat*. The Hindus declined but offered to submit to the award of the Khilafatists. The negotiations fell through. The Hindus, therefore, applied for discharge of Mr. Jiwandas. He was released on the 8th September under security and under instructions to leave Kohat. He did leave Kohat immediately. This anticipation of the date of trial enraged the Mussalmans. During the night of the 8th September they held an excited meeting at which fiery speeches were made. It was resolved to approach the Deputy Commissioner in a body and to demand the re-arrest of Mr. Jiwandas and the arrest of certain other members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha. Reprisals against the Hindus were threatened if the Deputy Commissioner did not listen to the demand. Messages were sent out to the neighbouring villages to join the assembly in the morning. About two thousand angry Mussalmans, according to Pir Kamal, marched to the Town Hall. The request of the Deputy Commissioner that a small party from among the assembly should see him in the Town Hall was rejected and he was compelled to face the vast crowd outside. He yielded to the demand and the elated crowd dispersed.

The Hindus had become nervous through fright during the preceding week. On the 6th of September they sent a letter to the

Deputy Commissioner informing him of the prevailing excitement among the Mussalmans. But no precautions were taken by him for their safety. They were aware of the proceedings of the meeting during the night of the 8th. They therefore sent in the morning of the 9th telegrams notifying the authorities of their fears and requesting them not to re-arrest Jiwandas. The latter still took no notice. There is a hot dispute as to what the crowd did after dispersal near the Town Hall. The Mussalman version is that the Hindus fired the first shot killing a Mussalman boy and wounding another, that this infuriated the mob resulting in the burning and looting that took place that day. The Hindu version is that the first shot was fired by the Mussalmans, that they, the Hindus, fired afterwards and in self-defence and that the whole of the looting and burning was according to a pre-arranged plan and after pre-arranged signals.

There is no direct evidence on the point and I am unable to reach a definite conclusion. The Mussalmans contend that no damage would have occurred if the Hindus had not fired the first shot. I am unable to accept the contention. In my opinion some damage was bound to be done, whether the Hindus had fired or not.

It is certain to me that Sardar Makhan Singh's suburban residence was burnt and its garden damaged by the crowd before the firing, no matter from which side it was begun. But there is no doubt that the Hindus did fire and kill or wound some Mussalmans at some stage or other. My opinion is that the crowd elated by its success dispersed itself in several directions and made hostile demonstrations in front of Hindu houses or shops. I should not be surprised if the Hindus who, as shown above, were already nervous and were expecting trouble, took fright at the demonstration and fired in order to scare away the mob. But such an attitude of resistance would infuriate the Mussalmans who were unused to resistance on the part of Hindus. For as Pir Kamal said, the Frontier Mussalmans regarded themselves as *Nayaks* (protectors) and the Hindus as *Hamsayas* (here meaning protected). The more, therefore, the Hindus showed resistance the greater became the fury of the mob.

To me, then, who fired the first shot has not much significance for the purpose of the distribution of blame. No doubt, if the Hindus had not defended themselves at all or if they had not fired the first shot, assuming that they did, the Mussalman demonstration would have exhausted itself sooner. But such was not to be expected of the

Hindus who were in possession of arms and knew more or less indifferently how to use them. Mussalman witnesses questioned Hindu deaths or even injury to Hindus on the 9th. I am, however, certain that several Hindus died or were wounded on the 9th at the hands of the Mussalmans. It is difficult to give the total number. It is a pleasure, however, to note here that some Mussalmans befriended the Hindus and gave them shelter.

It is generally admitted that on the 10th September the Mussalman fury knew no bounds. No doubt highly exaggerated reports of Mussalman deaths at Hindu hands were spread and tribesmen from all parts stole into Kohat by making breaches in the walls and otherwise. Destruction of life and property, in which the constabulary freely partook, which was witnessed by the officials and which they could have prevented, was general. Had not the Hindus been withdrawn from their places and taken to the Cantonment, not many would have lived. Much has been made of the fact that Mussalmans too suffered and that tribesmen, once their passion for looting is let loose, make no distinction between Hindu property and Mussalman property. Whilst this statement is true, I do not believe that the Mussalmans have suffered in any way proportionate to the Hindus. And I must respectfully mention that even some Khilafat volunteers, whose duty it was to protect Hindus and regard them as their own kith and kin, neglected their duty and not only joined in the loot but also took part in the previous incitement.

But the worst is yet to be related. During these days temples including a Gurdwara were damaged and idols broken. There were numerous forced conversions¹, or conversions so-called, i.e., conversions pretended for safety. Two Hindus at least were brutally murdered because they (the one certainly, the other inferentially) would not accept Islam. The so-called conversions are thus described by a Mussalman witness:

The Hindus came and asked to have their *shikhas*² cut and sacred threads destroyed, or the Mussalmans whom they approached for protection said they could be protected only by declaring themselves Mussalmans and removing

¹ Shaukat Ali in his statement published in *Young India*, 26-3-1925, wrote : "As for the so-called conversions to Islam during the days of the riots, my position is clear. I detest forced conversions. They are against the spirit of Islam. If there were any, they deserve the greatest condemnation. But I am not satisfied that there were."

² Tufts of hair

the signs of Hinduism.

I fear the truth is bitterer than is put here if I am to credit the Hindu version. I must say in fairness to the Mussalman friend that he did not regard these acts as conversions at all. Taking it at its lowest, the performance is humiliating alike for the Mussalmans and the Hindus. It would have redounded to the credit of the Mussalmans concerned, if they had steeled the hearts of the unmanly Hindus and offered them protection in spite of their remaining Hindus and retaining the symbols of Hindu-ism. The Hindus would have gone down to posterity as martyrs and heroes of whom mankind, let alone Hindus, would have been proud if they had preferred death to denying their faith, albeit outwardly, in order to live.

I must now say a word regarding the Government. The authorities on the spot betrayed callous indifference, incompetence and weakness.

It was an error to have burnt the pamphlet after the offending poem was withdrawn.

It was right to arrest Mr. Jiwandas in the first instance, but it was an error of judgment to have released him before the 11th.

It was criminal to have re-arrested him after release.

It was criminal to have disregarded the warnings given by the Hindus on the 6th September and repeated on the 9th that their lives and property were in danger.

It was criminal not to have offered protection when the riot eventually broke out.

It was inhuman not to have provided the refugees with food after their removal and to have left them to their own resources after their removal to Rawalpindi.

It was a gross neglect of their duty on the part of the Government of India not to have appointed an impartial commission to inquire into the events and the conduct of the officials concerned.

As to the future I am sorry that it is no brighter than the past. It is a matter of great pity that the Muslim Working Committee was not represented at our inquiry. The so-called reconciliation is a reconciliation brought about under threat of prosecution against both. It passes comprehension how a strong Government could be party to such a compromise. If it wanted to avoid prosecutions for fear of another demonstration on the part of the tribesmen, it should have

boldly said so and declined to prosecute and then tried to bring about an amicable and honourable settlement between the parties.

The compromise is intrinsically bad, because it makes no provision for restoration of lost and damaged property. It is also bad because it still involves prosecution of Mr. Jiwandas who is being made the scapegoat.

It is therefore necessary, if there is to be real cleansing of hearts and genuine reconciliation, for the Mussalmans to invite the Hindu refugees and give them assurances of protection and help in reinstating their temples and Gurdwaras.

But the most important assurance that should be given is, that in future no conversions are to take place except in the presence of the elders of the communities and except in the cases of those who understand the full meaning of what they are doing; and if such conversions are attempted they should receive no recognition. I would personally like the stopping of all conversions and *shuddhis*. One's faith is a personal matter with oneself. It is open to any person of mature age to change his or her faith when and as often as he or she wishes. But if I could do so, I would stop all propaganda except through one's conduct. Conversion is a matter of heart and reason. An appeal to heart and reason can only be made through conduct. I am unable to conceive genuine conversions on the Frontier where Hindus live purely for purposes of gain and where they, a hopeless minority untrained in the use of arms, live in the midst of an overwhelming majority who are, moreover, by far their superiors in bodily strength and use of arms. The temptation for a weak man in such circumstances to embrace Islam for worldly gain is irresistible.

Whether such assurances are forthcoming or not, whether a genuine change of heart is possible or not, I am quite clear on the course that should be adopted. Whilst this foreign domination is in existence some contact with it somewhere is inevitable. But all voluntary contact must be avoided wherever possible. This is the way to feel independent and to cultivate independence. And when a large number feels independent we are ready for swaraj. I can only suggest solutions of questions in terms of swaraj. I would therefore sacrifice present individual gain for future national gain. Even if Mussalmans refuse to make approaches and even if the Hindus of Kohat may have to lose their all, I should still say that they must not think of returning to Kohat till there is complete reconciliation between them and the Mussalmans, and until they feel that they are able to live at peace with

the latter without the protection of the British bayonet. But I know that this a counsel of perfection and not likely to be followed by the Hindus. Nevertheless, I can tender no other advice. For me it is the only practical advice I can give. And if they cannot appreciate it, they must follow their own inclination. They are the best judges of their own capacity. They were in Kohat not as nationalists. They want to return not as nationalists but for the purpose of regaining their possessions. They will therefore do what to them seems feasible and advantageous. Only they must not try to do two things at a time—to try to follow my advice and at the same time to negotiate with the Government for terms. I know that they are not non-co-operators. They have ever relied upon British help. I can but point out consequences and leave them to choose their course.

My advice to the Mussalmans is equally simple.

There was no cause for offence at the Hindus feeling perturbed at the so-called conversions or Hindu husbands taking means to regain lost wives.

I know that in spite of the discharge of Sardar Makhan Singh's son upon the charge of abduction, many Mussalmans continue to believe in the guilt of the Sardar's son. But assuming the guilt of the young Sardar, his crime was no warrant for the fearful vengeance wreaked upon a whole community.

The importation of the pamphlet containing the highly offensive poem was undoubtedly bad, especially in a place like Kohat. But the Sabha made enough reparation by its apology. It was, however, held insufficient by the Mussalmans, and the Sanatan Sabha was compelled to make further reparation by the burning of the copies of the whole pamphlet including the portrait of Shri Krishna. Everything done thereafter to the Hindus was far in excess of the requirements. As I have said before, I am not sure who fired the first shot; but assuming that the Hindus did it, it was done in panic and in self-protection and therefore excusable even if not justifiable, and that the reprisals taken were wholly unwarranted. Therefore it is the Mussalmans who owe them such reparation as is possible in the circumstances. They, the Mussalmans, need no Government protection or aid against the Hindus. The latter can do them no harm even if they wished. But here again I am on unsafe ground. I do not possess even the honour of an acquaintance with the present advisers of the Mussalmans of Kohat. They must therefore be the best judges of what is good for the Mussalmans and good for India.

If both the parties desire Government intervention my services are perfectly useless as I do not believe in the desirability of seeking such intervention and I could take no part in any negotiations with the Government. Whilst the Hindus are entitled to and must claim fair treatment from the Mussalmans, both need to protect themselves against the Government whose policy it is to set the one against the other. The Frontier is a non-regulation province where the will of an official is the law. It should be the pride of the Hindus and the Mussalmans to co-operate with one another to achieve full representative government. Such cannot be the case unless the two communities can trust one another and the desire is common to both.

M. K. GANDHI

Young India, 26-3-1925

*264. SPEECH IN REPLY TO RAILWAY LABOURERS'
ADDRESS, PODANUR*

March 19, 1925

Mahatmaji in reply said he was pleased to hear that all races were living together in perfect amity and goodwill and that they had no problem of untouchability or Hindu-Muslim problem. He exhorted the labourers to spin half an hour daily for the sake of the country and wear khaddar. If Maulana Shaukat Ali had been with him, he would have been glad to hear that there was no inter-communal strife among the labourers. Concluding, Mahatmaji advised the labourers to eradicate the drink evil.

The Hindu, 19-3-1925

*265. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS,
TIRUPUR*

March 19, 1925

FRIENDS,

I am very much obliged to you for all these addresses. I am sorry that the last address from my Mussalman friends I have not been able to understand for want of translation, but I presume that it contains very much the same sentiments that are contained in the other addresses. You will share my sorrow that this time the Ali Brothers or one of them is not with me; owing to their preoccupations

in Delhi and Bombay, it was not possible for any of them to accompany me.

The municipal address calls this the khaddar capital and calls me the khaddar king. I am certainly flattered by the description given to me, and I do feel that if any place can be khaddar capital, Tirupur certainly deserves to be so called, but I am quite aware of my limitations. I realize what a poor khaddar king I must be. (Laughter.) For this khaddar capital shows no more than ten thousand spinning-wheels and one thousand looms. The sales do not amount to more than three lakhs and a half or thereabouts. When you realize what a khaddar king aspires after, you will realize what humility must cover him when he hears of these figures. I was told that although this district was capable of producing 50 lakhs worth of khaddar per year, this district could not be made to use more than ten per cent of khaddar and when I look about me in this meeting, you men and women, I realize how true that remark is.

During my visits to the several khaddar stores in this town I was given this book of samples by the Khaddar Board Bhandar. I do not know if all of you know what Tirupur is capable of giving you in the shape of khaddar. You have here different kinds of checks. You have also a variety of colours. All the khaddar is by no means too thick for weaving in this climate. There are women here who are capable of spinning 20 counts and even finer counts. You can see here a variety of chintz also, and you can see spotless white khaddar calico, and those who like borders can also see from that distance a variety of border too. Yard for yard the price of this stuff is no doubt greater than the price of calico from Manchester, Japan or Bombay and Ahmedabad and when you compare the durability of this khaddar with the durability of the stuff that you get from Manchester, I am sure that you will find this khaddar cheaper than calico. I also present you with the universal experience of those who are habitually using khaddar that their tastes are so refined and become so simple that their clothing requirements are immediately reduced when they begin to use khaddar, and what is more, do you not owe it to those poor men and women who are living in this district that even though their wares may be a little dearer than what may be sent to you from Manchester or Japan, or even Bombay and Ahmedabad, you should prefer your wares to those foreign wares? Your love of the country must be of an

indifferent character if you neglect your neighbours, though all are your neighbours, [for] your distant neighbours of the Punjab, even though the Punjab may be in India. If everyone of you will look after his or her immediate neighbours, you will realize that there will be no difficulty and there will be no distress in India. All of you are agreed that this message of khaddar is an inestimable message. I therefore ask every one of you to immediately adopt khaddar if you have not done so already; and I ask you also to reinstate the spinning-wheel in every home here, for unless hundreds and thousands take to voluntary spinning, it will not be possible for us to reach that fineness in yarn which we want to realize, and unless we take to voluntary spinning, it will not be possible for us to cheapen khaddar as we are able to, and it was because of the immense possibility of the spinning-wheel that I ventured to suggest to every Congressman that the franchise should include the spinning test. I had the pleasure of seeing so many of our sisters at the spinning-wheel today.

I have visited also the weavers of a model village. If you had seen these women working at the spinning-wheel, and if you had seen what happiness the spinning-wheel had brought to their homes, you will soon be converted to the message of khaddar. I understand that for want of your patronage the Khaddar Board is unable to engage thousands of women spinners. I ask the Municipal Councillors, I ask you, the citizens of this place, to visit these centres and realize the truth of what I am saying for yourselves.

I am glad that you are not pestered with the problem of untouchability or unapproachability as some other parts of the South, but I do hope that such untouchability or unapproachability as may still be lurking in our midst will be eradicated without the slightest hesitation. I am convinced this is no part of Hinduism.

The third thing, I have said times without number, is Hindu-Muslim unity. It is impossible to reach the fullest height that this nation is capable of unless we realize the value of the unity of all the races living in our midst. And the fourth is temperance. Throughout my wanderings in Cochin and Travancore, it was pressed upon me that the drink evil was destroying many a home. If the population in this district is given to the drink habit, I hope you will tackle that problem also. (Loud and continued cheers.)

The Hindu, 20-3-1925

266. SPEECH AT VILLAGERS' MEETING PUDUPALAYAM

March 21, 1925

FRIENDS,

It gives me very great pleasure to be able to meet you all in this out-of-the-way place, and on seeing the musical instruments here, I wished to hear some of your songs in your own natural way. I know that songs play an important part in the development of national life. But there is song and song and there is all the difference between different varieties. There is song that ennobles and there is song that degrades; and when you get a real, good song full of devotion and fervour, it ennobles. Such are some of our old songs all over India. In days of old, we had our own string instruments, but today the harmonium has displaced those noble instruments. I wish that we could revert to the stringed instruments. They produce a deeper melody and so far as I am concerned they have a far more soothing effect on me than a harmonium.

When I look at all of you and all these sisters who have come here, I find the majority of them have foreign cloth on. Now I would like you for a few minutes to consider what the wearing of foreign cloth means. Not more than a hundred years ago, every one of our ancestors—men and women—had a spinning-wheel in their homes. And just as today we have got a kitchen and a cooking stove in every house, so had we a spinning-wheel in every house at which the women spun. The village weavers wove the yarn that our sisters spun; and we clothed ourselves that way. Now if everyone spends for himself, say, Rs. 8 per year, for his clothing and supposing this village had a population of 5,000, we would have saved Rs. 40,000 a year. Today we are sending nearly Rs. 40,000 from our own village to Manchester or to Japan or to Bombay. In every case it is bad.

In ancient times, we were doing what was right and what was good for our country and which kept our country away from hunger. Now we have changed it; the result is, when there is famine here we do not know what to do. I would like you, therefore, everyone to take a vow never henceforth to wear anything but khadi—hand-spun and hand-woven.

I would ask you also, those of you who have not already introduced a spinning-wheel in your homes, to do so. That will be our *Kamadhenu*. I observe with the greatest pleasure, our friend Mr. Ratn-

asabhapathy Gounder¹ has introduced not one but many spinning-wheels in his family. It was for me a noble sight to see the ladies of his household spinning away, when I had the pleasure of visiting his house yesterday. He has his cloth woven out of the yarn thus spun. He and his people were clothed in khaddar from top to toe. God has given him plenty of money and it was not for the sake of money he took up the spinning-wheel and wears khaddar. But he has done it for the sake of his country and for the sake of his religion. But we who are poor should do the thing for our own sake.

Now a gentleman has given me some money to buy food and distribute it among the poor. I do not believe in distribution of food among even the poorest of men, if they have strong arms wherewith to earn their living. Nor do I believe in distributing robes when the people can work for them. In my opinion, our rich men practise wrong philanthropy when they indiscriminately distribute money among poor people, by which they merely want to please their fancy. Such charity is to be reserved only for those who are disabled, who are lame or blind or otherwise incapable of doing work.

Therefore, in consultation with Sjt. C. Rajagopalachariar, I have come to the conclusion that this money might be used for distributing cloth to the poor people in this village or in this audience, at a rate lower than the bazaar rate. Ordinarily, I must confess that yard for yard, the khaddar we can produce today is dearer than the cloth sold in the bazaar; and many poor people tell me that they would gladly wear khaddar if it is sold at the same rate as in the bazaar. Therefore, I make this offer to you that those of you who are really poor and cannot pay much money, will register their names and take a promise that they would henceforth wear khaddar only and they will be supplied with khaddar at a cheaper price than in the bazaar. And if there are more poor people here than can be supplied by the donation now on hand, I will see to it that I get a bigger donation, provided all of you present here, promise to wear khaddar only. Now, that is the good thing we have given up, but which we must now restore. And I must talk to you about the bad thing we are refusing to give up.

That bad thing is untouchability. It is one of the greatest curses which is damaging our country and our religion. Claiming to be a *sanatani* Hindu, I tell you our religion does not countenance untouchability as we practise it today. Untouchability I hold is a sin, if

¹ Mittadar (zemindar) of Pudupalayam

Bhagavad Gita is one of our Divine Books. There are only four *varnas* or castes, not five. There are undoubtedly some verses in the *smritis*¹, which refer to untouchability, but not to the untouchability of today. That untouchability is applicable to certain occupations and certain states—temporary states. When my mother or sister or wife has the monthly sickness, I may not touch her while the sickness lasts. When my mother cleans her other smaller children, she is an untouchable till she bathes; and so is the scavenger who cleans my closet an untouchable until he has cleaned himself after cleaning the closet. Untouchability is a temporary state to be practised only in connection with such occupations which involve dirty work. But it is a crime and a sin to regard a person as untouchable because he is born in a particular community. And after all, what the Shastras require of you and me is that we should bathe when we touch a particular person. But the untouchability of today has degraded a fifth of the race. It carries with it the suppression of our own countrymen. It has set up a system of superiority and inferiority. The so-called caste Hindus, Brahmins and non-Brahmins, treat the untouchables, the *Panchama*² caste, with contempt and derision. They sinfully give them bad, dirty food. They sinfully refuse to let them use public roads. They sinfully degrade them in every way imaginable.

I venture to say that there is absolutely no warrant in our scriptures for such inhuman treatment of our fellow-beings. It is contrary to humanity, it is contrary to the religion we profess—the religion of ahimsa—to say that caste Hindus may not serve an untouchable who is bitten by a snake or scorpion. On the contrary, my religion, the Hindu religion, teaches me that if I see my son and an untouchable side by side bit by a snake and I am given the option of saving first the untouchable or my son, it is my bounden duty to save the untouchable in preference to my son. God will never forgive me if I forsake that untouchable boy. There is no other way of self-realization, except the way of complete self-abandonment. I ask you, therefore, to shed this bad habit, no matter for how many years we have been practising it.

The third thing is the drink curse. I know that many in this southern Presidency are given to this drink habit. Everyone in this,

¹ *Smriti* means, literally, that which is remembered; a class of Hindu religious literature consisting particularly of law books

² Literally, belonging to the fifth class, traditionally regarded as untouchables

who is given to the drink habit, will, I hope, give it up completely. Drink makes a man forget himself. He ceases to be a man for the time being. He becomes less than a beast. He loses control over his tongue and every other limb. It never does the slightest good. I hope, therefore, that you will combat the drink evil with all your strength.

Now it is in order to combat the disease of untouchability and the disease of drink and in order to introduce people to take to khaddar and to the spinning-wheel that Sjt. C. Rajagopalachariar has planted himself in your midst.

He has a band of able, intelligent, self-sacrificing, young men to assist him. Sjt. Gounder has placed at his disposal his beautiful garden. They have left, all of them, their remunerative callings and have come in order to serve you. Already, within a few months' time, hundreds of spinning-wheels have been revived. Several hundreds of women are receiving cotton from week to week. They turn it into yarn and bring it from week to week and take away money for their yarn. That yarn is woven and is at your disposal in the shape of khadi. But he and the few men he has, cannot render you much assistance unless you co-operate with him. This is a poor district suffering from famine for the last three or four years and I assure you that there is no insurance so effective as the spinning-wheel against famine.

And you can help in a variety of ways. Those of you who are fairly well-to-do and cannot spare much money can spare half an hour daily to spinning. You can learn carding and spinning at the Ashram here, take sufficient cotton from week to week, turn it into yarn and deliver that yarn free to the Ashram. That will enable Sjt. Rajagopalachariar to sell khadi at a lower cost than today. Those of you who cannot afford to give cotton may give cash. The Ashram is public property. You have a right to see it at any time you like. It is in your midst. And so long as you find that its activity is a helpful activity and serves your district, it is your bounden duty to help it in every way.

After the close of the address, Sjt. Rajagopalachariar invited the poor, who promised to boycott foreign cloth and wear only khaddar, to register their names at the Ashram, when they would be supplied with khaddar at a price cheaper than the bazaar price of mill-cloth.

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

267. SPEECH AT ASHRAM, PUDUPALAYAM¹

March 21, 1925

I have read the translation of the address very carefully. Naturally my sympathies are entirely with you. It was at Cocanada that for the first time I came into touch with this class of people and ever since that time, I have been deeply interested in their problems and difficulties. It is a very horrible thing what we are practising everyday in the name of religion. I agree that it is very difficult to solve the problem so long as there are men who are willing to tamper with the chastity of women and so long as there are women ready to sell away their honour for the sake of money. So long as there are such people, so long will this go on. But one thing we can do is to bring discredit on this profession and destroy the air of respectability which it now has. We must rob it of every vestige of respectability. That we shall do by mercilessly condemning the custom.

I would advise you to take census of every family in which the custom of setting apart a girl for prostitution exists. We must persuade these people to consider such a course as absolutely wrong. Secondly, we must take up the case of these unfortunate women and find them suitable employment. I discussed this matter for over two hours with such classes of women in Barisal, Bengal.² The income of these women is large; we cannot promise them the same income in their alternative professions as they are getting from their sinful practice; nor would they require such an income if they lead a reformed life. Spinning may not secure a living for them. They could take to it only as a recreation, as a sacrificial practice. I place it before them only as purification. But other occupations can be found for them which they can easily learn and follow. There is weaving, tailoring or fancy-work on khaddar. Some Parsi women have taken to fancy weaving. There is also lace-work, embroidery and other handicrafts which can easily yield them an income of three quarter of a rupee to one and a half rupees per day. The *Devadasi*³ class being small, it must not be a difficult matter to find five or six handicrafts for them. We require men and women —preferably women who have

¹ In reply to a welcome address presented in Tamil by the members of the Coimbatore District Sengunthar Mahajana Sangham who had specially come for the purpose

² *Vide* "Fallen Sisters", September 11, 1921.

³ Literally, servant of God; a female dancer attached to a temple

been trained in these handicrafts and lead a pure life—to take up this cause of reformation of their fallen sisters. You may also study and copy the institutions with similar objects working in other places. There should be a specialist to devote his life to this noble work of reclamation.

After the close of the reply, there was an interesting incident when Mahatmaji solicited and got the earrings and finger-ring of Lakshmana Mudaliar for public work and presented them back to Mr. Lakshmana Mudaliar himself to form the nucleus of a fund to be raised and devoted for the reform of the *Devadasis*.

The Hindu, 22-3-1925

268. *SPEECH IN REPLY TO WELCOME ADDRESSES,
TIRUCHENGODE¹*

March 21, 1925

FRIENDS,

I thank you for all these addresses. I note that you endorse my activities in connection with khaddar. The more I think of the possibilities of the spinning-wheel and khadi, the more certain I feel that it is the only thing which can solve the problem of the deep distress which has overtaken our land. And as I saw this morning at the Ashram, old women and old men streaming in, and as I saw old women being served with cotton, I felt millions of men and women like this had and could have no other occupation than the spinning-wheel. If it were not for our self-satisfaction with our own lot and happiness so called, the contemplation of the pauperism of India would make life a terrible burden to us. Just picture to ourselves an India with a whole one-tenth of her population living on merely one meal a day, living on a bread and a pinch of salt, and you will have some conception of the poverty prevailing in India. It is not a picture drawn from my imagination but it is a statement based on facts collected by the inexhaustible energy of the Grand Old Man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji. It was he who first introduced us to the statistics that were prepared by English administrators and from these statistics he showed that India was daily growing poorer and poorer.

Now, the remedy for removing the distress lies in our own hands. We are responsible for the distress. We gave up the use of cloth

¹ Presented by members of the Tiruchengode Union, the local Congress Committee and Valiba Swarajya Sangam. The speech was translated by Dr. T. S. S. Rajan.

that was woven by our own weavers out of yarn spun by millions of our own sisters. We chose to adopt the calico from Manchester, Japan and lately from Bombay and Ahmedabad. And in doing so, we did not care a straw as to what happened to our own neighbours. We did not stop to think that the use of calico from mills, no matter where they were situated, deprived the poor labourers who were devoted to agriculture of the profit they received from working during their spare hours. It was a crime for which we have paid heavily and we are still paying heavily. But happily it is not yet too late. If only we will cease to be callous and indifferent to the sufferings of our own countrymen and countrywomen, we can adopt the remedy today and help to remove the poverty from our land.

I have been visiting the khaddar centres in the South and I have been told that if the people of this Presidency were to patronize or rather do their duty by the people by buying khaddar, thousands of these men and women would get a few coppers more into their pockets. Everywhere they complain they are obliged to turn away the women that flock to them for cotton because they are unable to sell all the khaddar they produce. I plead with you, therefore, every one of the men and every one of the women who are able to hear my voice, that you would speedily remove all the mill-made cloth you wear and put on khaddar which will help your poor sisters and brothers. It is the highest service you can render to your motherland. If you will only be good enough to be satisfied with the khaddar produced here, you will be able to serve your country and in order that we can reach the fineness of yarn which is necessary to produce fine khaddar and in order that we can issue khaddar to rich and poor at cheap rates almost comparable to Manchester cloth, I would request you to devote half-an-hour daily to the spinning-wheel. It is an incredibly simple and certain solution of the problem which has been engaging the attention of the best of our countrymen for a generation. You are unable now to complain of want of means to learn spinning or secure khaddar. You have now in your midst an Ashram established which is devoting the whole of the energy of some of the best of the youth of our country to the propagation of khaddar. You have but to walk there and you can have your spinning lessons for nothing, you can have good spinning-wheels and you can have khaddar to your heart's satisfaction.

Equally important is the question of untouchability if we are to serve our religion. I am not tired of repeating that untouchability is a

curse. As we practise it today, it has no warrant in our scriptures. It is contrary to humanity and reason. It is a denial of God. God never made man that he may consider another man as an untouchable. I do not ask you to dine with anybody, I do not ask you to give your daughters to anybody you do not like, but I do ask you not to treat anybody as untouchable merely because he is born in a particular community. God will cease to be God if he brought to being a single person with the hall-mark of inferiority. Go to the Ashram, look at the *Panchama* boys who are brought up there and I defy you to be able to distinguish between the *Panchama* boys and other Brahmin or caste Hindu boys there. A little touch of kindness, a little touch of humanity and love has made them one flesh with everyone else in that Ashram. They are as intelligent, as attentive and as lovable as any single one in the Ashram. They are as clean and as godfearing as the highest Brahmin in the Ashram. Let us therefore shed our arrogance and save Hinduism from the destination that is impending, if we do not take warning betimes.

The problem of drink is another problem which awaits instant solution. It is destroying many a home and I hope those of you who are patriotic, who consider yourselves as servants of the country, will bestir themselves and go into the midst of those given to the drink evil and try to convert them. Copy the noble example of Mr. Ratnas-abhapaty Gounder and do what he is doing in order to save the country from being ruined by the drink curse. It gave me joy and comfort to find his cousin brother only a few months ago making a solemn vow to me that he would throw himself heart and soul into temperance and khaddar work. It gave me the greatest joy to see his wife spinning away at the wheel. She needed no money. She spins for the sake of the country. But I ask every man and woman to spin from today.

I thank you once more for your address and I hope you will bear what I have ventured to say in mind and carry out these three things as best as you can.

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

M. N. ROY ON BOLSHEVISM

Some of his American friends wrote Mahatma Gandhi that, in the name of religion, he was probably introducing Bolshevism into India. These gratuitous “friends” obviously taking their cue from the spokesmen of Anglo-Saxon Imperialism (who often masquerade as pacifists), depict the revolt of the Moslem peoples as a menace to the world, because this revolt is supported by Bolshevist Russia. It should have been very simple for Mahatmaji to give a fitting reply to this impudent communication. He could have told his “responsibly (?) foreign friends” that the Moslem peoples have legitimate reason to revolt, and that any political doctrine or government supporting this revolt is to be considered favourably by all apostles of freedom. Besides, he could have requested his American friends to get busy at home, if they sincerely dreaded any menace to the world. What is menacing the world more today than American Imperialism? Is the revolt of the Moslem people more sinister than the Ku-Klux-Klan and the American Legion? Is Bolshevist atheism more godless than the anti-Asiatic spirit of the American democracy?

The Mahatma, however, did not give such a direct answer. He preferred to justify himself—to absolve himself from any possible suspicion of Bolshevist tendency. But the curious thing is, that although by his own confession he did not know anything about Bolshevism, nevertheless he was extremely solicitous to disown any leaning towards it, so sure is his instinctive antipathy for it. In an article in *Young India* he writes: “In the first place I must confess that I do not know the meaning of Bolshevism.” This is indeed a very damaging confession, in view of the fact that it is made by one standing at the head of a great popular movement. The Mahatma said in the same article that he knew that there were two opposite pictures of Bolshevism, “one painting it in the blackest colour, the other hailing it as a deliverance for the downtrodden masses all the world over.” But he does not know what to believe. Here again he could follow a simple human course. He could easily find out who paints the first picture. It is done by those who are ruling over the world with the policy of blood and iron. In deference to his scruples of impartiality, he might not believe those giving the second picture; but certainly Mahatmaji does need to be convinced that the first party is not the friend or deliverer of the human race. Therefore when they depict a thing in the blackest colour, the oppressed section of humanity can instinctively sense some sinister motive, they feel that the “blackest colour” is for deceiving them. By this unerring instinct, Indian nationalists during

the War used to read two German victories in the place of each allied victory cabled by Reuter, and the Mexican peon calls himself proudly a Bolshevik, for the simple reason that the American capitalists are so much against Bolshevism. But I suppose, the mentality of a Mahatma is too complicated an organism to admit of such a simple instinctive process.

Since the deplorable ignorance of Bolshevism is not the Mahatma's alone, but is shared by many in India, and since this ignorance does not preclude them from forming an opinion on the subject, it may not be uncalled for to say a few words about this "monstrous" doctrine. It is the more called for, in view of the fact that Bolshevism (which, by the way, is not the result, as is commonly believed, but the basic principle of the Russian Revolution of 1917) is the most dominant political factor of the contemporary world. Just as the great French Revolution of 1789 affected the political thought and life of Europe at that epoch, the Russian Revolution is bound to play the same role in our time, with the difference that the geographical situation of Russia, coupled with the principles of her revolution, will bring wider spheres, including Asia and Africa, under its sway. This is the case, despite the explicable apprehension and righteous indignation of the pacifically minded ladies and gentlemen, whose good faith is taken for granted by Mahatmaji, but is seriously doubted by more practical men of the world.

Now, as far as Mahatmaji is concerned, the main principles of Bolshevism will not be anything new. He himself will think so. But principles become a bundle of dead formulas if they are not put into action. By his own declaration, the Mahatma desires to see the masses freed from the domination of capitalism. Well, Bolshevism does not propose anything more monstrous. The Bolsheviki are generally in agreement with Mahatmaji when he says, "the greatest menace to the world today is the growing, exploiting, irresponsible imperialism which is threatening the independent existence and expansion of the weaker races." But the difference between Mahatmaji and the Bolsheviki is that in the hands of the former, this gospel of freedom loses all practical value, being subordinated to an intricate conception of morality, religion and God, while the latter do not permit their vision to be clouded by illusions, and deal with the world as it is. The result is, that while Bolshevism forges ahead, breaking one link after another of the mighty chain of time-honoured servitude, in the face of united and determined Opposition of the powers that be, Gandhism gropes in the dark, spinning out ethical and religious dogmas, that only prevent the masses from developing the will to fight for freedom.

It can be taken for granted that Mahatmaji is acquainted with the general principles of Socialism; not the Utopian brand of St. Simon, Thomas More, Tolstoy, etc., but that formulated on the basis of scientific knowledge and economic facts by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The principles of Socialism are (1) to overthrow the

capitalist system of production; (2) abolition of private property; (3) reorganization of the means of social production and distribution on the basis of communal ownership and (4) transformation of the class-ridden society into a human fraternity. These are also the principles of Bolshevism, the latter being Socialism in its militant and initial stages of victory.

The term “Bolshevism” which has come to be associated with bloodshed, destruction, terror and what not, is very harmless in its meaning. It is derived from the Russian word *bolsheviki*, which is the synonym for the adherents of the majority. The term was first used when the Russian Socialist Democratic Labour Party split in 1903 into two factions on the questions of programme and tactics. The programme and tactics advocated by the majority, led by Lenin together with others, came to be known as Bolshevism; and since the Russian proletariat scored the victory in October 1917, having fought according to the programme and tactics advocated by the majority of the party ever since 1903, the October Revolution is called a Bolshevik victory, which means the first triumph of Socialism. What are the concrete results of the Russian Revolution? (1) A corrupt, irresponsible despotism was overthrown. (2) The bourgeoisie, which under the guise of democracy, sought in conjunction with foreign powers to deprive the Russian masses of the benefits of the Revolution, was also overthrown. (3) The landed aristocracy, the mainstay of the Czarist despotism, was destroyed, land declared to be the property of the entire nation and distributed among the cultivators. (4) Large industries were nationalized. (5) Foreign trade made a State monopoly. (6) All legislative and administrative power was transferred to the overwhelming majority of the people, namely, the workers, peasants and soldiers, who exercised this power through their councils (soviets). (7) All right of private property and the class privilege accruing therefrom was abolished. These in general are the principles of Bolshevism, applied practically in Russia in consequence of the Revolution. Now that he knows what Bolshevism is, what is the attitude of the Mahatma towards it? It will be interesting for India, as well as the whole world, to know the reply.

Now comes the thorny question. Mahatmaji might not take exception to these principles, but he would certainly make many a stipulation as to the method of realizing them. For him there is only one touch-stone for everything. If Bolshevism is atheistic, he is against it. That is all. Well, there we have given him a definition of Bolshevism in a nutshell. It is for him to pronounce whether it is a negation of God or what. He cannot maintain that it is a negation of God, unless he holds private property and vested interests to be a divine ordinance, because Bolshevism is certainly a negation of private property and vested interests, which from the dawn of civilization, have been the curse of human society. In the practical programme of Bolshevism there is no question of God or religion. It is neither theistic nor

atheistic. It concerns the worldly life of man. The possible conflict with God and religion occurs only when the latter stands in the way; when the conception of God or religion clashes with this practical programme. In that case, Bolshevism does not hesitate to take up the challenge even of the supposed Almighty, and become atheistic, thus running the risk of forfeiting the approbation of the Mahatma. But by doing so, it not only becomes the champion of the material rights of the masses, but holds up as well the torch of intellectual and spiritual emancipation to dissipate the gloom of ignorance and superstition in which the masses have been kept for ages by the dominating class.

The programme of Bolshevism, which Mahatmaji cannot deny to be humanitarian (unless he chooses to take up openly the cause of the upper class) is, however, not easily put into practice. The reign of terror and devastating civil war, that undeniably took place in Russia after the revolution, owe their origin to the fact that a brutal resistance was put up to prevent the realization of this programme. Not only the Russian aristocracy and bourgeoisie, who naturally frantically tried to regain their lost position, put up this resistance; they were openly backed by the international bourgeoisie, who saw in the Russian Revolution the first breach in their vital citadel. A part of this ceaseless campaign was the picturing of Bolshevism in the darkest colours, which did not altogether fail to impress even the Mahatma. Now what were the Bolsheviks to do in that situation? There were two alternatives: to call upon the Russian workers and peasants to be godfearing and meekly slip back into the bondage they had so heroically broken or to keep on fighting even against God and religion, if they stood in the way, to protect and consolidate the freedom won. Bolshevism was obliged to accept the second alternative, because not only all available material forces were concentrated in order to force the Russian workers and peasants back under the capitalist and Czarist tyranny; all the arms of God and religion were also mobilized for the same purpose. Bolshevism is not a gospel of God: Bolsheviks are not angels. But neither is Bolshevism the spirit of demons. The Mahatma proposes "to touch the masses through their hearts, their better nature" It is a fascinating proposition, to which Bolshevism would not object, had it been found workable in the practice of liberating the masses from class domination and imperialist oppression. His theory of "discipline" is also very questionable. It may be good for the spiritual well-being of the masses; but it certainly weakens their will to fight for freedom. All these doctrines about "heart", "better nature", "discipline" and the like have been adumbrated from time immemorial by those who were the (perhaps unconscious) instruments of class domination. Bolshevism does not shirk any task, however disagreeable or difficult it may be. It challenges the existence of God and denounces all the codes of religion and ethics originating therefrom because in the struggle for freedom they are all found arrayed on the side of despotism, tyranny and oppression.

Bolshevism is prepared to leave God alone, if He and His agents on earth agree not to meddle in things temporal. But if they do not agree to be satisfied with their super-material position and seek to make trouble on earth, Bolshevism will preach atheism to liberate the masses from the snare of ignorance woven by religion.

M. N. ROY

Young India, 1-1-1925

APPENDIX II

EXTRACT FROM C. RAJAGOPALACHARI'S COMMENT ON CHARKHA

No-changers who feel that the salvation of the country, the permanent anchor of its hope, rests on the charkha, must not look up, on this side or that, but prayerfully carry the burden. There is no rest or fatigue for us. The wheel is our hope, our joy, our friend, our good angel. We must work for it in our waking hours, and dream about it when we sleep. I did not see fully the meaning of things at first. I therefore thought Mahatmaji went along paths where I saw no logic or light. But I now see things clearly, and hope all those who felt distracted by doubts like myself will also see. Spin, spin and spin and make others spin—this is our single *mantra*, our *Gayatri*.

While I saw all this, I felt at the same time that there was some sort of unreality, some sort of political playing with truth, casting a shadow over all this plan of Satyagraha. But here I depend on judgement of the guru whose instinctive sense of Truth is so much greater than mine, and I feel at ease.

C. R.

Young India, 15-1-1925

APPENDIX III

EXTRACT FROM DEWAN OF TRAVANCORE'S SPEECH ON VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

The third matter relates to the resolution that was moved by Mr. N. Kumaran recommending that the Government should throw open the roads around and in the vicinity of the Vykombathur temple to all classes. I propose to deal with this resolution at some length and explain the position of the Government. The custom prohibiting the use by certain communities of certain roads forms the basis of the Vykombathur satyagraha and has been the cause of considerable comment both in and outside Travancore. There are certain Hindu communities falling outside the fold of caste in Kerala, whose approach or touch has been, from time immemorial, unfortunately considered to carry pollution with it, both to the members of caste Hindu communities and to the deities

in the temples to which the latter communities have access. In consequence, these non-caste Hindu communities have not been allowed the use of roads lying within a certain distance from some Hindu temples even though such roads are public in the sense that they are open to certain classes of the public. The existence of this custom is admitted by the non-caste Hindus. The most important among the non-caste Hindu communities, so far as Travancore is concerned, are the *Ezhavas*, who constitute one-sixth of the entire population, and who have, within recent times, made rapid advance in education and in material prosperity. This community naturally feels that the prohibition is derogatory to its self-respect and it is a feeling with which every right-minded man is bound to sympathize. The case of the *Ezhavas* and their brethren has, as a matter of fact, secured a certain amount of sympathy from members of communities more fortunately circumstanced.

The satyagraha movement at Vykom was started nearly a year ago by a band of *Ezhavas* and their sympathizers to get this disability removed. The *modus operandi* of the movement consisted in the attempt to break through the long-established custom referred to above by entering the prohibited area, even though it meant wounding the religious susceptibilities of the caste Hindus, and by defying the orders of the local Magistracy forbidding entry into the prohibited area, such orders having had to be passed to preserve the public peace threatened by the action of the non-caste Hindu communities. The aim of the satyagrahis is to force the hands of the Government to authorize by an executive order the violation of an established custom, which has received the recognition of the Travancore High Court in a series of decisions commencing with the case in 5 T.L.R. and which is therefore the present law of the land.

It is not the intention of the Government to justify the existence of this custom. Some may call it prejudice and some superstition. But, by whatever name it may be called, the custom is there and has to be reckoned with. As I have already said, it is based upon religious belief; and, as you all know, such beliefs are dear to the people who hold them. Such customs based upon religious beliefs are not unknown in other parts of India. In the Madras Presidency, for example, non-caste Hindus are not permitted to use some of the public streets inhabited by caste Hindus, and an attempt to violate this custom in the Salem District led, within the last few months, to a riot attended with murder and in the Malabar District, to a disturbance of the public peace. Even among the non-caste communities, wells touched by some of them are not used by some others. In Upper India also similar customs are widely prevalent. It is the paramount duty of every Government not to interfere with the religious beliefs or usages based upon them, so long as they are not outrageously inhuman. It is also the duty to the Government to preserve the public peace, and maintain the *status quo ante*. Every Executive Government is bound to maintain and

carry out the laws as it exists and as it is interpreted by its courts of justice. This is what the Travancore Government have done, as pointed out by the Additional Head Sirkar Vakil at the discussion of the resolution in the Legislative Council and this is also the policy pursued by other Governments in India.

Now let us examine the position at Vykom in some detail. The roads immediately surrounding the temple are the private property of the temple and are not public roads. Those that converge towards the temple are, on the contrary, public roads. But, according to admitted and immemorial custom, they are up to within a certain distance of the temple public in a qualified sense only, viz., that they are open to certain classes of the public alone and are not king's highways open to all communities. There is no public institution necessitating the entry into them of the entire public. The only real material inconvenience occasioned by the prohibition of entry into this area is the necessity to take devious and more lengthy routes from one point of the town of Vykom to another. This inconvenience the Government promised to remove by opening new roads for the use of the entire public on the outskirts of the prohibited area. This offer was not accepted, so that the sole justification for the demand for the removal of the prohibition is a feeling of self-respect or, in other words, sentiment. I grant that this feeling deserves to be respected; but I ask, is it possible for a Government to respect it if, in so doing, it is compelled to act in violation of a well-recognized and well-established legal position and, in defiance of the religious beliefs entertained by another community?

It has been urged, in the course of the discussion on the resolution, that the Government having thrown open public institutions, public offices and the public service to these communities, they cannot now refuse to remove this disability which is derogatory to their self-respect. It is true that the Government have done their utmost to remove several disabilities under which these communities have laboured so long and to give them equal opportunities with the other communities as far as possible; but the grant of permission to enter areas considered sacred by certain other sections of the Hindu community is of quite a different character, as it would violate established rights based on religious faith.

It is a matter for deep regret that the *Ezhavas* and other non-caste Hindus of Travancore should have greatly prejudiced their cause by the methods they have adopted. The policy of attempting to secure the recognition of their claims by the caste Hindus through pressure put upon them by the Executive Government will be neither lasting nor far-reaching in its results. All settlements arrived at as the result of the exercise of *force majeure* are bound to be short-lived. It should have been far better had the *Ezhavas* devoted their energies to methods of peaceful persuasion and the education of the caste communities to a realization of the fact that the custom of untouchability is as degrading to the latter as it is unjust to the former. There is a

world of difference between satyagraha meant to be an educative force and satyagraha intended as an instrument for the coercion of the Government and through them of the orthodox Hindus. What the sayagrahis should aim at is the conversion of the orthodox to whom untouchability is part of their faith. The results of such a course of action will, no doubt, be slow but being based on voluntary assent, will be permanent.

A satisfactory solution of the question can be reached only through negotiations between the disputing communities and by a compromise acceptable to both. While the Government recognize the legal right of the caste Hindu communities to maintain the prohibition so long as the law is what it is, they cannot but feel that it would be wise for these communities not to insist too strongly on their legal rights but to recognize the time-spirit and give up, as quickly as possible, religious beliefs and prejudices which militate against communal harmony, and to admit claims which the world has come to regard as irrefutable. The Government are prepared to do everything in their power to explore the avenues along which negotiations to this end may proceed and the needed *rapprochement* reached. More than this it is unreasonable to expect the Government to undertake and further persistence of both sides in this struggle, without change in their angle of vision, would only serve to further intensify class hatred and endanger the public peace.

Young India, 19-3-1925